



Assembly

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Fourteenth session
Kingston, Jamaica
26 May-6 June 2008

Statement of the President on the work of the Assembly at the fourteenth session

1. The fourteenth session of the Assembly of the International Seabed Authority was held at Kingston from 26 May to 6 June 2008.

Adoption of the agenda

2. At its 114th meeting, on 26 May 2008, the Assembly adopted its agenda for the fourteenth session (ISBA/14/A/1).

Election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the Assembly

3. At the 115th meeting, Ryzsard Kotlinski (Poland) was elected President of the Assembly for the fourteenth session. Following consultations in the regional groups, the representatives of Indonesia (Asia), Uganda (African Group) and Italy (Western European and Other States) were elected as Vice-Presidents.

Report of the Credentials Committee

4. The Assembly elected a Credentials Committee in accordance with rule 24 of its rules of procedure. The Committee was composed of Burkina Faso, China, Finland, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, the Russian Federation, Suriname and the United Republic of Tanzania. Scott Sheeran (New Zealand) was elected by the Committee as its Chairman.

5. The Committee held one meeting, on 3 June 2008, during which it examined the credentials of representatives participating in the fourteenth session of the Assembly. The Committee had before it a memorandum by the Secretariat dated 2 June 2008 on the status of those credentials. The report of the Committee is contained in document ISBA/14/A/10. At its 118th meeting, on 5 June 2008, the Assembly adopted the report of the Committee with the oral revisions proposed by its Chairman. The decision of the Assembly relating to credentials is contained in document ISBA/14/A/11.

Annual report of the Secretary-General

6. At the 115th meeting, on 28 May 2008, the Secretary-General introduced his annual report to the Assembly (ISBA/14/A/2), as required by article 166, paragraph 4, of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

7. Statements on the report of the Secretary-General were made by the delegations of Algeria, Argentina, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Canada, Chile, China, Cuba, Egypt, Fiji, Ghana, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Lebanon, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Poland, the Russian Federation, Senegal, South Africa, Spain, the Sudan, Suriname, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United Republic of Tanzania and Viet Nam.

8. Members of the Authority expressed their general satisfaction with the detailed report and indicated their support for the work that had been undertaken by the Authority. One delegation, while expressing satisfaction at the depth of the scientific aspects of the work programme, was of the view that marine scientific research should remain the main focus of the work of the Authority. Other delegations expressed the view that the scientific work to be undertaken by the Authority should be synchronized with the adoption of the regulations on polymetallic sulphides and cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts. A number of delegations expressed their support for the workshops and seminars convened by the Authority. The delegation of Chile offered to host a workshop in 2009 and indicated that it would provide details to that effect after the session. The delegation of Tonga also proposed to host a regional seminar in cooperation with the Authority. In view of the high metal prices and perceived imminence of deep seabed mining, another delegation requested a seminar on the impact of deep seabed mining on the economies of developing land-based producing countries. Considerable support was expressed for the geological model of polymetallic nodule resources in the Clarion-Clipperton fracture zone, and several delegations voiced their interest in a model for those resources for the Central Indian Ocean basin.

9. A number of delegations expressed their satisfaction with the Authority's library and voiced appreciation for the redesigned website and the publications issued by the Authority.

10. Delegations urged the 23 members of the Authority that had not yet become parties to the 1994 Agreement to become parties to it as soon as possible. Delegations also welcomed Brazil and Uruguay, which had become parties to the 1994 Agreement in the last year.

11. Some delegations urged member States that had not yet ratified the Protocol on the Privileges and Immunities of the Authority to do so. It was noted that, as at 31 March 2008, 25 members were parties to the Protocol.

12. Many delegations expressed their appreciation for the voluntary trust fund, noting that it had helped to ensure the participation of members from developing countries in meetings of the Legal and Technical Commission and the Finance Committee. At the same time, delegations appealed for additional contributions to be made to the Fund.

13. The establishment of the Endowment Fund for the promotion of marine scientific research was welcomed by many delegations, which noted that it would help scientists from developing countries to participate in activities in the Area, thus

strengthening the concept of the common heritage of mankind. A contribution to the Fund by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the pledge of an additional contribution by Spain were noted with appreciation.

14. A number of delegations expressed their appreciation to the host country for its support of the Authority and the hospitality extended to representatives at sessions of the Authority.

15. On 9 June 2008, Kenneth Baugh, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica, made a statement to the Assembly in which he reiterated his Government's "unwavering commitment" to the International Seabed Authority and reassured the Authority of his country's cognizance of its obligations as host country.

Report and recommendations of the Finance Committee

16. At its 118th meeting, on 5 June 2008, the Assembly considered the report of the Finance Committee (ISBA/14/A/7). On the basis of the recommendations of the Council contained in document ISBA/14/C/10, the Assembly decided to adopt the budget for the financial period 2009-2010 in the amount of \$12,516,500. The Assembly also decided to authorize the Secretary-General to establish the scale of assessments for 2009 and 2010, based on the scale used for the regular budget of the United Nations for 2008 and 2009, as adjusted by the Authority, respectively, taking into account that the maximum assessment rate will be 22 per cent and the minimum rate 0.01 per cent. The decision of the Assembly relating to the budget of the Authority and related matters is contained in document ISBA/14/A/8.

Election of the Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority

17. At its 118th meeting, the Assembly elected Nii A. Odunton (Ghana) as Secretary-General of the Authority for a term of four years to begin 1 January 2009.

18. Member States paid tribute to the outgoing Secretary-General as one of the founding fathers of the law of the sea as well as of the Authority, and acknowledged his pioneering efforts with respect to the establishment of the Authority. The Assembly also decided to name the Authority's library the Satya N. Nandan Library in honour of the outgoing Secretary-General.

Election to fill the vacancies on the Council

19. At its 119th meeting, on 6 June 2008, the Assembly elected the following members to fill the vacancies in the Council of the International Seabed Authority for a four-year period as from 1 January 2009, subject to the understandings reached in the regional and interest groups:

Group A

China
Japan

Group B

India

Group C

Canada
South Africa

Group D

Bangladesh

Brazil

Sudan

Group E

Angola

Argentina

Czech Republic

Guyana

Kenya

Namibia

Netherlands

Poland

Senegal

Spain

Trinidad and Tobago

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

20. The decision of the Assembly relating to the election to fill vacancies on the Council is contained in document ISBA/14/A/12.

Date of the next session of the Assembly

21. The tentative dates for the fifteenth session of the Assembly are 13 to 24 April 2009. It will be the turn of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States to propose a candidate for the presidency of the Assembly in 2009.
