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Sensitization seminar entitled “Seabeds: The New Frontier”, held in Madrid from 24 to 26 February 2010

Submitted by the delegation of Spain

The first European sensitization seminar on the work of the International Seabed Authority, entitled “Seabeds: The New Frontier; exploration and exploitation of seabed mineral resources in the Area; challenges to the international community and opportunities for collaborative research (sensitization seminar on the work of the International Seabed Authority)”, was held in Madrid from 24 to 26 February 2010.

At this seminar, the Fundación Ramón Areces of Spain and the International Seabed Authority, in collaboration with the Instituto Geológico y Minero de España (Geological and Mineral Institute of Spain) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, brought together those engaged in the exploration and exploitation of deep seabed mineral resources to consider the challenges that lie ahead for the international community.

The discussion in the seminar centred on the general framework for activities by the International Seabed Authority and other international organizations, experiences and projects of various countries in this area and, lastly, the Spanish experience, including presentations by representatives of the various Spanish public and private entities that carry out seabed activities.

The main topics discussed included the international framework for, and regulation of, the deep seabed; the role of the International Seabed Authority and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea; mineral resources in the open waters; the experiences of the United States of America, Germany, the United Kingdom, Brazil, Canada and the Russian Federation; protection and preservation of the marine environment in conducting activities in the open ocean; neo-scientific infrastructures and marine mineral-related research in Spain; the experience of the Instituto Geológico y Minero de España; marine scientific research in Spain; and the participation of the Spanish private sector in deep seabed activities.

The seminar was divided into three sessions. “The deep seabed: international framework and regulation” was the theme of the first session. During this session, the Secretary-General, Nii Allotey Odunton, gave a presentation on the role, functions

and organs of the International Seabed Authority. He discussed the importance of the Authority and the need to regulate the seabed in order to avoid the possibility of future conflict. He stressed, in particular, the regulations on prospecting and exploration for polymetallic sulphides in the Area and the draft regulations on prospecting and exploration for cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts in the Area.

Also presenting during this session was Michael Lodge, who gave a detailed explanation of the legal framework for activities in the Area: prospecting and exploration for polymetallic nodules and other mineral resources. He stressed that security was an essential element in facilitating the coordination of all actors participating in prospecting and exploration and promoting, in particular, the involvement of the private sector. Judge José Luis Jesús, President of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, also participated in this first session.

The second session focused on international deep seabed activities. Experts from the United States and the Russian Federation spoke on “Prospects for the development of polymetallic sulphide deposits in the Area” and “Prospecting and exploration for cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts in the Area”. Also presenting were experts from Germany and Brazil, who explained the deep seabed activities being carried out by their countries. The importance of respecting the environment and the role of the International Seabed Authority in that regard were also discussed during this session.

“Participation of Spain in deep seabed activities” was examined in the third and final session. Experts from the public sector, in particular, the main institutions, such as the Instituto Geológico y Minero de España and the Instituto Español de Oceanografía, participated. Several representatives of major companies in the sector also attended the session, and a round table was held.

The Spanish media, which gave the seminar extensive coverage, emphasized that the area of the seabed beyond the limits of the jurisdiction of coastal States, known as “the Area”, spans 260 million km², a figure that is three times higher than the sum total of the marine jurisdictions of all the countries in the world, and that it has barely been explored. However, there is also a consensus among the scientific community that exploration of these resources, regarded as “the common heritage of mankind” and regulated by the International Seabed Authority, can open up new horizons in financial investment.

For Spain, it was an opportunity to sensitize its scientific community and public opinion in general to the need to promote their activities in a sector that constitutes a “new frontier” for scientific knowledge and for the future strategic interests of the world economy. Spain, traditionally a maritime power, has a special responsibility to promote scientific research in marine geology and in the exploration of the deep seabed in coordination with other countries by developing its infrastructure through joint projects.

To some extent, the success of the International Seabed Authority also depends on how well it transfers its accomplishments to society. Events such as the seminar held recently in Madrid, with the Secretary-General in attendance, are a valuable and useful tool to this end.

In the coming months, the Fundación Ramón Areces plans to issue a scientific publication on the seminar for distribution to all delegates and other members of the international scientific community at a session of the International Seabed Authority.

Annex**List of participating experts**

Nii Allotey Odunton
Secretary-General, International Seabed Authority (Kingston, Jamaica)

José Luis Jesús
President of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (Hamburg, Germany)

Charles Morgan
Planning Solutions Inc. (Honolulu, United States of America)

Michael Lodge
Legal Counsel, International Seabed Authority (Kingston, Jamaica)

James Hein
U.S. Geological Survey (Santa Cruz, United States of America)

S. Kim Juniper
BC Leadership Chair in Ocean Ecosystems and Global Change
School of Earth and Ocean Sciences, University of Victoria (British Columbia,
Canada)

Lindsay Parson
Southampton Oceanographic Centre — University of Southampton (Southampton,
United Kingdom)

Kaiser Gonçalves de Souza
Chief, Division of Marine Geology, Geological Survey of Brazil, Ministry of Mines
and Energy (Brasilia, Brazil)

Ryszard Kotlinski
Director-General, Interoceanmetal Joint Organization (Szczecin, Poland)

Peter Herzig
Director, Leibniz — Institute für Meereswissenschaften (Kiel, Germany)

Gregory Cherkashov
VNII Okeangeologia (Institute for Geology and Mineral Resources of the Ocean)
(St. Petersburg, Russian Federation)

Luis Somoza
Geological and Mining Institute of Spain

Juan José Dañobeitia
High Council of Scientific Research, Spain

Juan Acosta
Spanish Oceanographic Institute

José Luis Sanz
Spanish Oceanographic Institute

Eduardo González
Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Trade, Spain

José Pedro Calvo
Director General of Geological and Mining Institute of Spain

Rafael Conde
Director General for International Economic Relations
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Spain

Raimundo Pérez-Hernández
Director General Fundación Ramón Areces (Madrid, Spain)

Jesús Silva
Permanent Representative of Spain to the International Seabed Authority (Kingston,
Jamaica)
