



## Assembly

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## Restructuring of the secretariat of the International Seabed Authority

### Note by the Secretary-General

1. The secretariat is one of the principal organs of the Authority. In accordance with article 166 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the secretariat shall comprise a Secretary-General and such staff as the Authority may require. In accordance with article 167 of the Convention, the staff of the secretariat shall consist of such qualified scientific and technical and other personnel as may be required to fulfil the administrative functions of the Authority.
2. On 30 September 1995, the former Kingston Office for the Law of the Sea, a field office of the United Nations Secretariat, was designated as the interim secretariat of the International Seabed Authority. Following the assumption of office by the first Secretary-General of the Authority, in June 1996, the initial organizational structure of the Secretariat was established in March 1997. This was reported to the Assembly in July 1997 ([ISBA/3/A/4](#)). There has been very little change in the organizational structure of the secretariat since 1997, except for a modest increase in the number of established posts from 37 to 41 ([ISBA/22/A/7/Rev.1-ISBA/22/C/19/Rev.1](#), annex III).
3. If the Authority is to perform optimally, it must receive the best quality of assistance possible from its secretariat, which should place a premium on integrity, impartiality, efficiency and creativity. In this regard, the need for periodic restructuring of the secretariat is evident. This is particularly so at a time of rapid change and evolution in the workload of the secretariat. In particular, the secretariat is required to manage a substantially increased workload with respect to contracts for exploration, while at the same time progressing work on the development of a mineral exploitation code. Some of the concerns around the resources, structure and coordination of the secretariat are also reflected in the final report on the periodic review of the International Seabed Authority pursuant to article 154 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (article 154 review) ([ISBA/23/A/3](#); see, in particular, recommendations 5, 11 and 13).
4. Mindful of this, the Secretary-General announced on 16 January 2017 certain changes to the organizational structure of the secretariat ([ISBA/ST/SGB/2017/01](#)). These changes are intended to consolidate and streamline the activities of the



secretariat into well-defined functional categories aimed at ensuring effective implementation of the objectives of the Convention and of the mandates entrusted to the secretariat by the Assembly and Council. The main aspects of this restructuring are described below.

#### **Senior Management Group**

5. The Senior Management Group has been established as a formal entity, with specific terms of reference, to assist the Secretary-General in taking decisions on all matters affecting the work programme and to facilitate improved communications and coordination within the secretariat.

#### **Executive Office of the Secretary-General**

6. The position of Associate Protocol Officer (P-2) has been abolished and the protocol functions of that position absorbed by the Office Manager in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General (post reclassified at National Professional Officer level; see annex I). The administrative functions of the position have been integrated into the Office for Administrative Services.

#### **Office for Administrative Services**

7. The Office for Administration and Management has been renamed the Office for Administrative Services. The Communications and Information Technology Service has been placed under the responsibility of the Office for Administrative Services to better reflect the fact that communications and information technology is a core service function relevant to all units of the secretariat.

#### **Office of Environmental Management and Mineral Resources**

8. The Office for Resources and Environmental Monitoring has been renamed the Office of Environmental Management and Mineral Resources in order to better reflect its functions and priorities. The Office has been assigned the responsibility of implementing the Authority's data management strategy, with the allocation of a new post of Database Manager (P-3). Existing posts within the Office of Environmental Management and Mineral Resources will be subjected to ongoing review with a view to further streamlining, focus on priorities and improved delivery of services.

#### **Office of Legal Affairs**

9. In line with the request by the Finance Committee in 2016 ([ISBA/22/A/7/Rev.1-ISBA/22/C/19/Rev.1](#), para. 30 (c)) to replace New York based support staff with national personnel, the position of Administrative Assistant in the Office of Legal Affairs has been re-designated as Documentation and Conference Management Officer, classified at the National Professional Officer level. The Secretary-General expects that this officer will be able to assume many of the managerial and supervisory duties previously performed by New York based staff during the annual sessions of the Authority.

10. The position of Webmaster/Publications Officer (previously located in the Office of the Secretary-General) has been transferred to the Office of Legal Affairs and re-designated as Website and Communications Officer, with a revised job description. This will enable the incumbent to work more closely with the Librarian and associated support staff to improve the outreach, communications and publications capacity of the secretariat pending a future decision to create a post for a Communications Officer, for which a proposal is to be made in the context of the 2019-2020 budget.

**Contract Management Unit**

11. The Secretary-General has established a Contract Management Unit to better serve contractors working with the Authority, streamline the workload relating to contractor training and promote better communication between relevant work units in the secretariat in matters relating to processing of applications for approval of plans of work, annual reports and the provision of contract-related information to the Legal and Technical Commission. One position has been transferred from the Office of Environmental Management and Mineral Resources to serve as Chief of the Unit. The Unit will be assisted by a Training Coordinator (P-2), which is one of the new posts approved in the 2017-2018 budget (currently under recruitment). As an interim measure, the Contract Management Unit will report to the Secretary-General and will be located in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General.

12. In making these changes, the Secretary-General has been guided by the need to improve the level and quality of services provided by the secretariat. Adjustment will be required at the outset, but he is confident that the new arrangements will be beneficial to the Authority. In reorganizing the secretariat, the Secretary-General has sought to utilize the talents available within it in the best possible manner and to the maximum extent. It is noted that further reorganization may be required in the light of experience and in the light of the Assembly's consideration of the article 154 review. The move towards the establishment of a United Nations House in Kingston, which will incorporate the premises occupied by the Authority as its permanent headquarters, may also lead to further streamlining of the secretariat as a result of efficiency gains in the provision of common services, including security services, between the organizations of the United Nations system in Jamaica.

**Financial and budgetary implications**

13. The reorganization outlined by the Secretary-General in the present report has been accomplished within the approved budget for the financial period 2017-2018 and has no financial or budgetary implications. A revised staffing table is shown in annex II to the present document.

## Annex I

### **Criteria for employment of National Professional Officers**

1. In the context of the United Nations common system, National Professional Officers are nationals of the country where they are to serve, should be recruited locally and are not subject to geographic mobility. In employing National Professional Officers within the secretariat, the secretariat has been guided by the criteria and policies developed by the International Civil Service Commission. These are that the work performed by National Professional Officers should be at the Professional level, with analytical and conceptual content, albeit within a national context that requires national experience and knowledge of local culture, language and institutions. The work may also contribute to national development.
2. Staff in the Professional and higher categories, on the other hand, are internationally recruited and carry out analytical and conceptual work outside their country of origin. These posts are subject to equitable geographic distribution and an obligation to move geographically where required in accordance with applicable mobility policies.
3. In the context of the approved budget for 2017-2018, two new National Professional Officer positions were identified, namely the posts of Training Coordinator and Scientific Affairs Officer (Database Manager). However, as part of the reclassification exercise for General Service positions within the secretariat, it was noted that neither of these posts fit the criteria for National Professional Officers, in that the work performed has no national content, but should have been classified respectively at the P-2 level and P-3 level.
4. On the other hand, the posts of Documentation and Conference Management Officer and Office Manager in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General both have substantial national content (liaison with national authorities, awareness of local cultures and institutions) as well as analytical and conceptual content. These posts have therefore been classified as National Professional Officers posts.

## Annex II

## Staffing table

<i>Functional title</i>	<i>Professional</i>	<i>National Professional Officer</i>	<i>General Service</i>
<b>Executive Office of the Secretary-General</b>			
Secretary-General	1 (USG)		
Chief, Contract Management Unit	1 (P-5)		
Training Coordinator	1 (P-2)		
Office Manager		1	
Administrative Assistant			1
<b>Office of Legal Affairs</b>			
Legal Counsel/Deputy to the Secretary-General	1 (D-2)		
Senior Legal Officer	1 (P-5)		
Legal Officer	1 (P-4)		
Legal Officer	1 (P-4)		
Website and Communications Officer	1 (P-4)		
Librarian	1 (P-3)		
Documentation and Conference Management Officer		1	
Administrative Assistant			1
Administrative Assistant			1
<b>Office of Environmental Management and Mineral Resources</b>			
Director	1 (D-1)		
Senior Scientific Affairs Officer (Marine Geologist)	1 (P-5)		
Scientific Officer (Marine Biologist)	1 (P-4)		
Scientific Officer (Geographic Information System)	1 (P-3)		
Scientific Officer	1 (P-3)		
Scientific Officer (Vacant)	1 (P-3)		
Database Manager	1 (P-3)		
Data Entry Assistant (Vacant)			1
Administrative Assistant			1
<b>Office for Administrative Services</b>			
Director	1 (D-1)		
Administrative Assistant			1
Budget/Internal Oversight Officer	1 (P-4)		
Finance Officer	1 (P-4)		
Human Resources Officer	1 (P-4)		
Communications and Information Technology Manager	1 (P-4)		
Information Technology Assistant			1
Administrative Assistant (New York Office)			1
Procurement Assistant			1
Budget and Treasury Assistant			1
Finance Assistant			1
Senior Security Officer	1 (P-2)		
Security Officer			1

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<i>Functional title</i>	<i>Professional</i>	<i>National Professional Officer</i>	<i>General Service</i>
Security Officer			1
Driver			1
Driver			1
Driver			1
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>16</b>

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