

STATEMENT BY JAMAICA
REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Madam President
Mr Secretary General
Excellencies
Distinguished delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen

The importance of the occasion, this the 25th Anniversary of the International Seabed Authority, is demonstrated by the fact that the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Senator, the Honourable, Kamina Johnson-Smith is here with us for this week presiding over the Assembly. The Honourable Minister is well known for her tireless commitment to the full and faithful execution of her duties, and is as renowned for her use of Whatsapp to issue instructions 24/7 as other World Leaders are for their use of twitter.

Madam President, my delegation expresses its full confidence that under your able stewardship, the work of the Assembly will be effectively discharged. We also wish to express appreciation to the distinguished representative of Poland, Mariusz Orion Jedrysek, for his successful guidance through the 24th Session of the Assembly.

We extend a warm welcome to all who have travelled to Jamaica to participate in this 25th Anniversary Session. It is encouraging to see the number of persons in attendance. We invite everyone, particularly those of you who are visiting for the first time to experience the Jamaica that we all know and love.

Many thanks to all who attended this morning's Inaugural Biennial Lecture by the distinguished Professor Stephen Vasciannie on "the Role of the Montego Bay Convention and the International Seabed Authority in contributing to International Rule of Law." We hope that you found the presentation thought-provoking.

Secretary General's Report

Madam President,

My delegation expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report card on the work and achievements of the Authority over the past year. This would not have been possible without the commitment, dedication and hard work of the Secretariat staff.

We commend the Secretariat on its continued efforts to position the *Satya N. Nandan Library* as a high quality research centre through improved library technologies. Jamaica is pleased to have again donated to the library's collection and express our gratitude to those who have also contributed and invite others to make their contributions.

We take this opportunity to assure the Secretary General and all members of this Assembly of Jamaica's continued support to the Authority. The establishment of the host country committee earlier this year will facilitate even greater collaboration and cooperation.

We welcome the various initiatives that have raised the profile and increased the visibility of the Authority on the international stage. The establishment of the communications unit within the Secretariat is a welcome initiative, as also the various contributions made at regional and international conferences. We note, in particular, the Secretariat's participation in the intergovernmental conference on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, and the creation of a specific section on the Authority's website to showcase the Authority's participation and activities in what is commonly referred to as the 'BBNJ' process.

It is important for the International Seabed Authority, as the institution charged with organizing and controlling activities in the Area, particularly with a view to administering the resources of the Area under the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention (Article 157) to be fully engaged in the BBNJ process. This we believe will assist in ensuring a successful outcome of the conference, that is, one that is consistent with the Law of the Sea Convention and the mandates assigned therein to the Authority and other international organizations such as the International Maritime Organization and Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission.

The live video stream of Council and Assembly Meetings makes all deliberations open and accessible and allows all who are truly interested in the work of the Authority to become better informed. We believe that a commitment to continuing this practice may lessen the preoccupation with observer status as all persons with an interest, wherever they may be, may watch the proceedings. The written submissions of stakeholders whether or not observers have always been received and considered in our deliberations on virtually all substantive matters of our work programme. We may also wish to confirm our commitment to continuing this practice.

Madam President,

The Authority will be unable to successfully conduct its work programme without adequate resources. The Secretary-General in his report has drawn attention to the level of arrears and the impact this has had on the balance of the working capital fund which is now below the approved level. We hope that this will be resolved as soon as possible.

We express particular thanks to all donors to the various Trust funds that have supported the work of the Authority and facilitated the participation of developing countries in various bodies of the Authority. Broad and active participation in the work of the Authority gives legitimacy to the decisions we take on behalf of all humankind.

Special thanks are extended to Norway for the commitment made last week to contribute to the Voluntary Trust Fund for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Enterprise. We thank all who have contributed in the past and encourage all who are able to do so now. The Enterprise was conceived as the entity that would mine on behalf of all humankind. It is an important vehicle for enabling greater participation of developing countries in the activities in the Area.

We also extend our sincere appreciation to those who have made contributions to the Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area. All Marine Scientific Research in the Area must be carried out for the benefit of humankind as a whole. The work of the Authority as a partner in support of scientific research incorporates building the capacity of developing States in deep-sea research and technology through the contractor training programme, the

Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area and the internship programme.

Capacity-building lies at the core of developing States' abilities to benefit fully from the oceans and their resources and to comply with the range of obligations under the Law of the Sea Convention and its associated legal instruments. Qualified young scientists from developing countries need assistance in order to realize their potential in the field of marine scientific research, particularly in relation to the deep seabed.

The Secretariat's collaboration on the ecological functions of the deep sea oceans and enhancing deep sea marine biodiversity addresses the core of two voluntary commitments of the Authority with respect to the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. We commend the Authority for the work done to advance all the voluntary commitments made at the United Nations Ocean Conference.

The growing significance of environmental matters in the work of the Authority, particularly given the development of the draft regulations on exploitation, requires the strengthening of the Secretariat's resources. We welcome the continued emphasis and importance being placed on Regional Environmental Management Plans (REMPs) while noting that such plans are not legal instruments but rather instruments of environmental policy. The development of REMPs will require a collaborative and transparent approach and inclusive mechanisms under the auspices of the ISA, with the full engagement of all relevant organs. This is required to give legitimacy for the use of REMPs in defining contract areas and environmental measures binding on all States in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction. We note that several workshops have been planned for 2019 and 2020 to facilitate the development and review of regional environmental management plans and wonder whether measures may be taken to possibly facilitate the participation of members through web conferencing services.

Jamaica congratulates the Secretariat on the greatly anticipated launch of the Authority's database management system that will facilitate making available to the public the Authority's environmental data. This transparency measure

provides an important means for disseminating the results of research and analysis. Sharing information may also assist in building bridges with stakeholders that may not be fully aware of the significant work being undertaken by the Authority for the protection of marine biodiversity.

In this regard, we wish to assure the Authority of Jamaica's unwavering support to the conclusion of regulations that guide the responsible exploitation of minerals in the Area and ensure effective protection for the marine environment from harmful effects which may arise from such activities.

Despite our many challenges, steady progress is being made towards the realization of the principle of the common heritage of mankind. The Strategic Plan and the work on the High Level Action Plan and key performance indicators which comes up for consideration under item 10 of the agenda is encouraging.

We express our wish for fruitful and productive discussions, an appropriate roadmap to guide our future deliberations, and a successful conclusion of the Twenty-fifth Session.

Thank you Madam President.