

as delivered \*

**Statement by Mr. Ye Minn Thein, Minister Counsellor**

**Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the United Nations in  
New York**

**Myanmar Delegation to the 23<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Assembly of  
the International Seabed Authority**

**( Kingston, 16<sup>th</sup> August 2017 )**

**Mr. President,**

As I take the floor for the first time, allow me to congratulate you on your well deserved election to the Presidency of the 23<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Assembly of the International Seabed Authority. Myanmar appreciates, Rear Admiral MD. Khurshed Alam of Bangladesh for his excellent stewardship of the previous Session of the Assembly. Our congratulations also go to other members of the Bureau as well as Ambassador, Mr. Ariel Fernández of Argentina for his eloquent and able leadership in steering the Council to its successful conclusion.

Myanmar would like to congratulate the Government and the People of Jamaica at its 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Independence last week. Though diplomatic relationship between Myanmar and Jamaica was established since December, 1999, only in this year 2017, under the new Democratic Government, the appointment of Myanmar Ambassador based in New York to Jamaica has become a reality and thus represents a new level in our bilateral relationship. I am happy to learn that Senator the Hon'ble Kamina Johnson Smith of Jamaica is joining us at this session.

Being a coastal state in Southeast Asia, and State Party to the 1982 United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea and 1994 Agreement, as well as a member of Finance Committee, Myanmar attaches great importance to the work of the International Seabed Authority. We will strengthen our cooperation with the Authority as Myanmar has made its submission to the CLCS in accordance with Article 76 of the Convention for the extension of continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles, which is still work in progress.

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**Myanmar is honoured to have the opportunity to serve on the Financial Committee continuously. As a responsible member of the ISA, Myanmar is regularly contributing its own share of financial contribution in full and in time. Our modest yet, regular contribution to the work of the Authority demonstrates Myanmar's firm commitment to the objectives of the Authority in its work for conservation and sustainable use of the marine resources, a heritage of mankind and its future generation.**

**My delegation fully supports the endeavor of the Secretary General in keeping impetus of the work of the Authority. In this regard, we commend the Secretary General and the Legal and Technical Commission for the launch of the Draft Regulations on Exploitation of Mineral Resources in the Area dated 8 August, 2017. It remains a subject to further improvement with the contributions of the member States in various aspects of the draft, in a given time as appropriate.**

**My delegation commends the Legal and Technical Commission for their dedication and hard work and Finance Committee for the effort and time invested by the members of the Committee during the Session, making sure that the financial regime is transparent, efficient and that the activities of the Authority is cost effective.**

**Mr. President,**

**My delegation wishes to thank the Secretary General for his comprehensive report on the wide-ranging activities of the Authority during the period from July 2016 to May 2017 as contained in document ISBA/23/A/2.**

**On the matter of periodic review of the Authority under the article 154 of the Convention, we agree in general with the comments made by the Secretary General in this regard, as mentioned in document ISBA/23/A/5.**

**Myanmar welcomes Ghana as a new party to the 1994 Agreement on 23 September 2016. We would like to encourage those States that are not yet a party to this Agreement to become part of the family. Myanmar also looks forward to acceding to the Protocol on the Privileges and Immunities of the International Seabed Authority once domestic procedures are completed.**

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**The Secretariat, under the able leadership of Secretary General Mr. Michael Lodge, has taken important measures to improve the administrative works, including the establishment of a senior management group and a new contract management unit within the secretariat.**

**My delegation would like to commend the Secretariat, for its continued efforts to find cost savings in its regular budget. Introduction of a remote simultaneous interpretation service for the meetings of the LTC and FC in 2018 as a cost saving measure deserves serious consideration bearing in mind the aspects of maintaining confidentiality and quality of the interpretation services.**

**Assessed contribution of the member States, which is the financial backbone of the Authority's regular budget, is crucial for the effective operation of the organization. Therefore, my delegation would like to add our support to the Secretary-General in urging all member states to fulfill their financial obligation and pay the assessed contribution in full and on time.**

**We note with concern that the current status of the Voluntary Trust Fund compromises its operation beyond 2018. To secure possibility of continued participation of the members of the Legal and Technical Commission and the Finance Committee from developing countries, it would be essential to receive more contributions to the VTF. The Endowment Fund for the Marine Scientific Research in the Area has contributed effectively to support the participation of qualified scientists and technical personnel from developing countries in the marine scientific research programmes. We would like to encourage more voluntary contributions from member states as well as other organizations and individual as well.**

**Myanmar is regularly contributing its own share of financial contribution in full and in time. Our modest yet, regular contribution to the work of the Authority demonstrates Myanmar's firm commitment to the objectives of the Authority in its work for conservation and sustainable use of the marine resources, a heritage of mankind and its future generation.**

**Mr. President,**

**My delegation is glad to note that the Satya Nandan Library continues to be an important learning centre serving the member states and interested entities and individuals with its rich treasure of knowledge on the law of the sea, ocean affairs, deep seabed mining and seabed resources. We are encouraged that the Authority has a plan to develop specialized research capability of the existing collection using digital technology, including new library management system, web digital cloud system, which would enable search and explore library materials using online public access, as well as research assistance providing to Universities and institutions in need, around the world. We support the efforts of the Authority on improving the quality of communications and information technology services. This important action will contribute to effective outreach and information dissemination of the Authority.**

**My delegation appreciates the continuing close and productive working relationship between the Authority and the relevant United Nations bodies particularly UN-Oceans, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea and the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf. In this regard, we would like to encourage further strengthening the cooperation and coordination between the Authority and the United Nations to support the implementation of SDG goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use of the oceans and seas and marine resources. As we learn that there is increasing interest for contracts for exploration, it gives more the reason to ensure that an appropriate regulatory regime is drafted in accordance with the Convention and the 1994 Agreement.**

**We congratulate the Secretary General for the voluntary commitments made during the UN Ocean Conference in New York on behalf of the Authority, for which I felt proud, to be a part of the Authority.**

**Mr. President,**

**The SDG 14 encourages protection of the health of the sea and oceans and life in it. Having heard the statements made by the Organizations yesterday, it reaffirms that conservation of environment and marine life are essential. Our effort to protect the**

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**environment and marine life is for the sake of all human kind and its future generations. We owe it to them.**

**Although Myanmar has not yet drafted national laws and regulations relating to deep seabed mining, we have recently established plans on marine protected areas including locally managed marine areas within the national jurisdiction. Due to blast fishing, near shore trawling and over fishing, mass coral bleaching, we have seen deterioration of the corals down to 56 percent over a decade. We have also noticed pelagic species slowly disappearing in the marine environment. Therefore, it is a wakeup call for Myanmar to bring back health to our sea and our marine environment with urgency.**

**We believe that Technical Workshops are vital for the standardization of the data and information required for the assessment of the environmental impact of activities in the Area and environmental management of the large provinces of mineral wealth. Sensitization seminars bring together regional government officials, scientists researchers and academics to discuss scientific research on marine minerals and propose mechanisms for improving regional cooperation. We hope that these seminars will continue to benefits the member states, especially for the developing ones.**

**Myanmar is confident that the Authority will be able to overcome all challenges ahead through the active participation, determination and cooperation of all its members, in our collective efforts to achieve our shared goals, to benefit from and to protect our common heritage.**

**I assure you of Myanmar's continued support and active contribution to the work of the Authority as we progress in the coming years.**

**I thank you, for your kind indulgent.**

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