



**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR GRAHAM LEUNG TO THE ASSEMBLY OF
THE ISA ON TUESDAY 23RD JULY 2019**

**International Seabed Authority: 25th session of the Assembly
Tuesday 23 July 2019
Agenda item 9: Report of the Secretary-General**

Madam President

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, observers,

Allow me to join the previous speakers in congratulating you on your well deserved election as President of the Assembly. It is fitting that on this landmark occasion of the 25th anniversary of the International Seabed Authority, an eminent representative of Jamaica should occupy the seat of the Presidency. My delegation stands ready to support you during your term in office.

Nauru acknowledges with appreciation and thanks the Government of Jamaica as host country of the ISA as it celebrates its silver anniversary. From the outset, Jamaica has been generous and unwavering in its support of the Authority. None of its achievements would have been possible without the generosity and understanding of the Government of Jamaica.

I would like to thank the Secretary General for his full report to the Authority delivered pursuant to article 166 of the Convention. We recognize his leadership and that of his hardworking staff for their work during the reporting period.

It is noted that 18 members of the Authority that are parties to UNCLOS are yet to become parties to the 1994 Agreement. We encourage them to do so as early as possible.

We note the growing number of permanent missions to the authority. As the Secretary General has already noted I presented my credentials to him as Nauru's first Permanent Representative to the Authority on 9th July 2019.

Although a small island developing sponsoring state, Nauru has taken this step to underscore its support for the Authority at this critical time in its development, especially as we continue our work in finalizing the draft exploitation regulations.

The common heritage principle embedded in the Montego Bay Convention necessitates that exploitation of the Area will take place under the Authority's supervision in accordance with a system of cooperative management for the benefit of all humankind. There has to be a sharing of scientific, technological and financial benefits ensuring that no country, especially developing countries, are left behind.

On administrative matters, Nauru joins Brazil and Costa Rica in congratulating the Secretariat in implementation of gender balance in its staffing. We are unclear as to the nationalities of the staff and would find this information useful. We request due consideration be given to recruitment of meritorious candidates from developing countries. We are fully supportive of the UN Volunteer and Junior Professional Officer programmes. We believe this is a good and practical method of capacity building and exposing young professionals to the work of the Authority. We encourage potential donors to support this programme.

Nauru notes with concern that only 29% of the membership has fully paid their 2019 contributions. We cannot expect the Secretariat to do its work and carry out its mandate if we do not support it with the financial resources. We note that 54 member states are in arrears for 2 years or more. We urge them to fulfil their financial obligations to the Authority.

We call upon potential donors, especially the more affluent developed countries as well as contractors and other stakeholders to consider making contributions to the Voluntary Trust Fund to support the participation of members of the Council from developing states. The contributions of those entities that have already contributed to the fund is noted with appreciation. The balance of the fund however is quite modest as is evident from the report of the Secretary General and needs a substantial injection of finance.

Nauru looks forward to seeing the results of the comparative study on existing national legislation and commends the secretariat for having undertaken this exercise. This will be a useful tool and comparative perspectives may assist with a gaps analysis at the national level.

We welcome the various planned workshops for REMPs in the different regions. Where possible within the constraints of time, we suggest that the secretariat undertake their planning with greater transparency. This will add to greater legitimacy and credibility of the outcome of the workshops.

Nauru is impressed with and supports the Internship program run by the Secretariat. We note that candidates from both developing and developed countries have participated in the program. We call upon potential donors to support this worthwhile initiative.

My delegation wishes to congratulate the ISA for its collaborative partnerships with sister including UN organizations. In this regard, work with UNDESA on advancing SDG 14 and supporting the quest for a Blue Economy through the promotion of socio-economic benefits for developing countries, including small island developing states is welcomed.

Nauru looks forward to welcoming the Secretary General to the Pacific next month when he will attend the Abyssal Initiative Workshop in Nauru to be followed by a similar event in Kiribati. It is noteworthy that there are 4 Sponsoring States in the Pacific so greater engagement with our region is fully supported.

These regional workshops make capacity building more meaningful, but they must be sustainable with clear objectives and deliverables.

While we are small countries, we believe that lessons learnt from our region and experience can inform the perspectives of the Authority in other fora to our mutual benefit. We are willing to share our knowledge with other regions and partners. Capacity building to be truly meaningful has to be consultative and participatory. A “top down” approach is less likely to have limited success.

Finally, Nauru was pleased that the Secretary General attended the 49th annual meeting of the leaders of the Pacific Island Forum in September last year. His attendance was appreciated by the leaders of the Forum, and has helped raise the profile of the ISA and the important work that it is undertaking.

Thank you Madam President.