

STATEMENT BY NORWAY ON AGENDA ITEM 9 - THE REPORT OF THE ART. 154 REVIEW COMMITTEE

Mr. President,

Since this is the first time my delegation takes the floor, allow me to congratulate you on your election, as well as the election of the members of the Bureau. I would like to assure you of my delegation's fullest cooperation, and I am sure that under your able leadership, we will be able to complete our work in a timely and efficient manner. Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Michael Lodge on his election as Secretary General and commend him for the successful start of his tenure.

Mr. President,

My delegation welcomes the article 154 review report, and commends Ambassador Tuerk and the Review Committee for the good work that has been done. Since we had the interim report before us during the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session, a lot of effort has been made to refine the report and improve its recommendations. My delegation appreciates the fact that the recommendations contained in the final report have been consolidated, reduced in numbers and that the remaining recommendations have been made more specific and operational. My delegation would also like to commend the Secretary General for already having acted upon some of the recommendations addressed to him. In particular, we are pleased to note the progress made in the field of improving data management and data-sharing mechanisms, as reported by the Secretary General in his comments to the report. We welcome the pro-active steps taken by the Secretary General in relation to the recommendations addressed to him and consider them to be well within his mandate.

I would now like to offer a couple of observations on some of the recommendations.

In recommendation no. 14, the review committee recommends that the LTC should be encouraged to set up working groups dealing with particular areas of expertise. The LTC is facing a heavy workload, and my delegation believes it is indeed efficient and rational to establish ad hoc working groups to deal with different topical issues. Such working groups could, if possible, meet in Kingston prior to the ordinary sessions of the LTC to discuss the particular issues put before them. If such pre-session meetings could be held without interpretation, as the practice is for the sub-commissions of the CLCS, it would be done without further burdening the interpretation budget, which is already high.

In order to maintain the best possible interaction and dialogue between the various professional groups represented in the LTC, my delegation believes that such working groups should be ad hoc and not permanent.

The recommendation also suggests that a working group dealing with environmental issues should be considered. Although my delegation certainly recognises the many important tasks the LTC has in the environmental area, we tend to believe that environmental issues are best dealt with through an holistic and integrated approach, drawing on all the different expertise in the commission. Environmental issues should be taken into account in all the aspects of the commission's work, and not be seen separate from other issues. We therefore question the appropriateness of establishing a working group specifically for one of the areas of responsibility of the Commission. In this regard I also refer back to what I just said about ad hoc versus permanent working groups.

*23rd meeting of State Parties, 16 August 2017.  
Delivered by Director Kristian Jervell - Check against delivery.*

Mr. President,

Recommendations no. 15 and 16 are related to the meeting schedule of the various organs of the Authority and on the optimal form of work of the LTC respectively. They are interrelated in the sense that they both aim at improving the efficiency and optimising the functioning of the organs of the Authority in general, and the LTC in particular. These issues are also partly the subject of recommendations no. 5 and 10. I will offer a few brief comments.

The other organs of the Authority depend on a well-functioning LTC, and that the LTC is able to deliver its work in a timely manner. My delegation supports the idea that additional work time be allotted to the LTC. Currently, there is a problem that the Counsel and the Assembly do not get sufficient time for assessing in the July/August session the work done by LTC just the week before.

Mr. President,

My delegation is flexible with regard to the proposal contained in Recommendation no. 10 to increase the number of meetings of the council. However, we do understand the concerns voiced by a number of delegations, and also in the Council, about the financial implications of increasing to two meetings per year. In this regard, we support exploring further the idea of setting up a dedicated trust fund open for a variety of donors.

However, irrespective of the outcome of the discussion on the number of meetings, perhaps it might be a good idea to extend the winter session of the LTC, partly at the expense of the summer session. If the bulk of the work of the LTC was done at the winter session, it would allow States more time to review it before the Assembly and Council meetings in the summer. As an alternative option, my delegation is also interested in further exploring the possible advantages of switching the sequence of the meetings of the LTC and the Council, which has been suggested by some delegations.

Mr. President,

The review committee indicates, in Recommendation no. 16, a need for improving the balance of expertise in the Commission. In this regard, the Committee recommends that the Secretary General provide details on the required areas of specialties in his letter inviting invitations for nominations from member States. My delegation takes note of this part of the recommendation, and note that this part of the recommendation has already been subject of preliminary deliberations in the Council. We look forward to the continuation of these discussions.

My delegation attaches the greatest importance to the functioning of the LTC, its efficiency and quality of work. Although open meetings, as called for in recommendation no 16, may be appropriate on some occasions, my delegation is not convinced that more open meetings would actually promote the open and cross-discipline exchange of views within the LTC, which is paramount for the Commission in order to fulfill the tasks entrusted upon it in the convention. Perhaps the holding of open workshops on topics of wide and general interest, such as the development of the exploitation regulations is an option worth considering.

I thank you, Mr. President