

Opening Remarks

By the President of the Assembly

23rd Session

Tuesday 8 August 2017

Excellencies,

Mr. Secretary-General

Distinguished Delegates and Observers

Ladies and gentlemen

Upon assuming my role as President of the Assembly of the International Seabed Authority for this 23rd Session, let me begin by offering my thanks and appreciation to the African States Group for their support and for endorsing my candidature for the Presidency of this august Assembly.

I also wish to acknowledge the government of Mozambique for the confidence in supporting this candidature and I express my sincere gratitude to you all, members of the Authority, for kindly electing me as President for the current Session.

Let me thank His Excellency, Rear Admiral MD. Khurshed Alam of Bangladesh, for his kind words in welcoming me to the podium. May I, on behalf of the Assembly, thank him and acknowledge his important role as the President of the Assembly during the 22nd Session.

Excellencies,

It is always a pleasure to visit Kingston, and to converse with friends and colleagues on matters of importance assigned to International Seabed Authority, and its respective organs by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. I have been a regular attendee at the Authority's Annual Sessions since 2003 as a Mozambican delegate, and through my position as Director of the Sea, at the National Institute for the Sea and Boundaries, I have for a number of years taken an active role in all matters pertaining to the Oceans and the Law of the Sea, and in the work of this Authority.

Consequently, I am deeply honoured for this opportunity to preside over the affairs of the Assembly during its 23rd Session, and to contribute to advancing the development of the common heritage for the benefit of mankind as a whole. I offer you my assurance that I will use my best endeavours to guide these proceedings, and facilitate the smooth and successful conduct of the matters before us

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to the government and people of Jamaica for their continued support in the work of the Authority, and warmth of their friendship and hospitality.

Excellencies and distinguished delegates,

I have noted that the former President mentioned the 14 Agenda Items that were adopted this morning; I seek the assistance of the Assembly, as it has accorded all my predecessors, to work cooperatively with me in order to dispose of all these items in a timely manner.

Excellencies,

My recent role as deputy head of the Mozambican delegation to the diplomatic process in New York, on the development of a Legally Binding Instrument on Marine Biodiversity in Areas beyond National Jurisdiction, and now President of this Assembly, causes me to reflect on the prominence afforded to our oceans in recent years. I am aware of the responsibility we have, and active role we must all play in our respective national and international processes in addressing a number of challenges, as well as opportunities, presented to us in the sustainable use of our oceans.

In recent weeks, Heads of States and Government, civil society and other stakeholders met in New York from 5 to 9 June 2017 at the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Conference recognized the vital role played by our oceans, and its contribution to sustainable development and sustainable ocean-based economies. The Conference, in its “Call to Action”, stressed the need for an integrated, interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral approach, and the critical importance of effective partnerships enabling implementation of Goal 14. I understand that, to date, some 1 372 voluntary commitments have been made to support the implementation of Goal 14, including a series of voluntary commitments made by the Authority, and I much look forward to hearing about these initiatives as part of the Report of the Secretary-General next Tuesday.

We recognize the importance of the role to be played by this Authority, its mandate under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and the role it should continue to play in cooperating with other intergovernmental organizations, civil society and other stakeholders, in an increasingly integrated approach toward ocean governance and management. I am mindful of the number of initiatives undertaken by this Authority, and its contribution to the United Nations Ocean Conference and the BBNJ process.

Excellencies,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Distinguished delegates

Being honoured to preside over the Assembly in 2017, I shall, pursuant to Rule 33, in the conduct of my functions and in exercising the powers conferred upon me by the Rules of Procedure of this Assembly and, or, elsewhere by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, remain firmly under the authority of the Assembly.

With those few remarks, I may now invite the Assembly to consider Agenda Item 4 – “Election of the Vice- Presidents”.