

STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
23RD SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY
15 AUGUST 2017
KINGSTON, JAMAICA

Thank you Mr. President

The Philippines joins other delegations in congratulating you on your election as President of the 23rd Assembly. You can be assured of my delegation's full support and we are confident that under your able leadership and guidance, this meeting will come to a fruitful conclusion.

My delegation also wishes to congratulate the Secretary General for his election and thank him for his comprehensive report which serve to enrich our discussions.

Mr. President,

The importance of the work of the Authority cannot be overemphasized. It has a pivotal role in maintaining stability and order in the world's oceans, particularly the sustainable management of the Area. Its function to organize and control activities in the Area, particularly to administer the Area's resources, taking into account the needs and interests of all stakeholders, specially of developing countries, can only be fully realized, however, with the cooperation and support of all member states.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) provides member states with the necessary legal framework to cooperate with the Authority and the Philippines has for its part, complied with the relevant provision of UNCLOS, in particular Article 84 paragraph 2, which obliges coastal states to give due publicity to charts or lists of geographical coordinates of points and in case of those indicating the outer limit lines of the continental shelf, to deposit a copy of such charts or lists with the Secretary General of the Authority. To date, the Philippines is one of the only 7 coastal states to have done so and in this regard, echoes the call of the Secretary General for other member states to do the same.

Mr. President

The considerable increase in workload of the Authority in recent years has not gone unnoticed by my delegation. It may be recalled that at last year's General Assembly session, we welcomed the discussions on the enlarged pool of experts in the Legal and Technical Commission (LTC) to advise and assist the Council and the Authority in carrying out their tasks.

This year's session had seen the LTC convening twice - in February to March, and in the 2 weeks preceding this meeting of the Assembly. We commend the LTC for its hard work and we hope that any future discussions and decision on the enlargement of the LTC will continue to be guided by the right balance of considerations relating to

economy, efficiency and effectiveness in keeping with the letter and spirit of the Convention. We further hope that with the greater output expected of the Authority in the exploitation phase, the working procedures of the LTC will be streamlined, making more efficient use of technological advances.

Mr. President:

The Philippines strongly supports the Authority's efforts to help protect and conserve marine biological diversity associated with activities in the area. The Authority has a crucial role in setting into place rules and regulations that would ensure the protection and conservation of marine biological diversity with the ongoing exploration activities and eventual exploitation of the seabed. The adoption and publication of the draft Regulations for Exploitation of Mineral Resources in the Area, and the related Recommendations for the Assessment of Environmental Impacts in the exploitation areas at the soonest possible time are important but it is essential that the necessary environmental considerations must be ensured and consultations with relevant stakeholders conducted. In this connection, we welcome initiatives such as the workshop held in March of this year which was aimed at assisting the Authority in designing a strategy for environmental management of the deep seabed mining.

We also commend the efforts of the Secretariat in pursuing the implementation of the Database Management Strategy. As a steward of the Common Heritage of Mankind, it is incumbent upon the Authority to maintain a secure data base of all information generated by contractors and by all other entities engaged in exploration activities in the Area. The importance of transparency in data sharing mechanism between the Authority, contractors, prospectors and marine scientific organizations, however, must be underscored.

Mr. President

Consistent with Articles 143 and 144 of UNCLOS, the Philippines strongly supports the Authority's work on capacity building and marine scientific research. The transfer of technology, especially marine technology and capacity building, are overriding if we are to address the challenges and needs of developing countries. In this regard, we encourage the contractors to further promote more active participation by developing countries in the sharing of deep seabed mineral resources, by offering more training fellowships than what their contractual obligations provide.

Finally, Mr. President, we commend the Authority for its efforts to reach out to the Member states and the general public through its outreach programmes, its numerous publications and the resources of the Satya Nandan Library. We note the Authority's strong online presence through its website and social media, as well as consultations, seminars and side events convened by the Secretariat to generate greater public awareness of its work. We hope for the continued engagement of the Authority in reaching out to other member states, particularly with developing countries, to encourage a broader participation of member states in the activities of the ISA as it is

only through a broader and universal participation of member states in the activities of the ISA that a just and equitable rules based governance of the world's oceans for the benefit of all can be achieved.

Thank you.