

## Joint Statement of the Asia-Pacific Group at the Commemoration of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the International Seabed Authority, Kingston, Jamaica, 25 July 2019

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Madam President,  
Secretary General,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to deliver this statement on behalf of the Asia Pacific Group (APG). I wish to begin by expressing our deepest appreciation for this special session, which gives us the opportunity to take stock of the remarkable achievements we have made to commemorate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Authority and to reaffirm our commitment to carry out the Authority's responsibility to act on behalf of the whole humankind.

The Asia Pacific Group would like to express its warmest appreciation to today's honourable guests; the Prime Minister of Jamaica Andrew Michael Holness, the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs Miguel de Serpa Soares, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Liu Zhenmin, and the President of the ITLOS Judge Jin-Hyun Paik. Our thanks also goes to the Government of Jamaica for their support and hospitality as host country of the ISA. We also take this opportunity to thank Secretary-General Michael Lodge for your leadership, expertise, and continued support to the work of the ISA.

Madam President,

We must remember on this date that the mandate of the Authority is intimately linked to the origin of the Convention. The opening for signature of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) was an important milestone providing a comprehensive legal regime for the oceans and the seas. In 1994, the Implementing Agreement was adopted after taking us more than 10 years to conclude, paving the way for the entry into force of the Convention and the establishment of the Authority. We remember this process which led to the establishment of the Authority was a challenging one. Some may have even questioned if the Authority would be

operationalised. Twenty-five years later, the UNCLOS has cemented its status as “the Constitution of Oceans”, which provides a comprehensive framework for oceans and seas governance to ensure sustainable and peaceful use of oceans and seas and marine resources. In the same vein, the Authority has solidified its role in the governance of the Area and its resources.

At this commemorative event, we pay tribute to the people who have contributed to the development of this institution. The APG extends its sincere gratitude to the Authority’s first Secretary-General H.E. Satya Nandan and to former Secretary-General H.E. Nii Odunton for their commitment and contributions towards the growth and development of this organization.

Madam President,

This 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary gives us an opportunity to reflect on the major accomplishments of ISA over the last 25 years. We all have witnessed the development and consolidation of the exploration regulations for polymetallic nodules, polymetallic sulphides, and cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts. This year is particularly important as the development of the regulations on exploitation is at a crucial juncture. The ISA and its Council not only worked tirelessly towards the creation of regulatory framework for the exploration and exploitation of mineral resources to be carried out for the benefit of mankind as a whole, but also towards the advancement of scientific, environmental, and technological knowledge by organizing various workshops and promoting research on various aspects of seabed exploration and deep ocean environments. We also would like to congratulate the launching of DeepData that will further open opportunities to enhance scientific knowledge and to increase ocean literacy in the Area.

Madam President,

The Authority has a unique role of administering resources in the Area, which are the common heritage of mankind. Through its role in organising and controlling activities in the Area, the Authority plays a critical role in promoting and upholding the rule of law at the international level, as well as ensuring that a right balance is struck between conservation and the sustainable use of the Area and its resources.

To achieve this balance, the ISA has put forward the development and implementation of Regional Environmental Management Plans in the Area in cooperation with contractors, international organizations, and scientific and legal experts. Moreover, the draft regulation adopts the precautionary approach in carrying out the activities in the Area to realize the goal to benefit mankind as a whole as set out in the Convention. We look forward to the contribution of the ISA based on the experience and lessons learned over the last 25 years to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Madam President,

At 25 years of age, the Authority is still a relatively young organisation. As it continues to evolve over the years to come, it is our desire and expectation that together, we would view every challenge and obstacle as an opportunity for growth and development. Congratulations once again to the ISA for the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and We, as Asia-Pacific Group will continue to fully support the ISA's highly productive work through extensive cooperation and contribution.

Thank you.