



Assembly (AM)

SB/10/17
3 June 2004

**ASSEMBLY ELECTS 20 MEMBERS TO COUNCIL AND ADOPTS BUDGET
FOR ORGANIZATION'S 2005-2006 OPERATIONS**

The policy-making Assembly of the International Seabed Authority this morning took a number of decisions, including electing 20 members to its 36-member Council for four-year terms beginning in January 2005, and approving the US\$10,816,700 budget for the operations of the Authority for the 2005-2006 financial year.

Election of Council members

The Assembly next took up the election of members to fill vacancies on the Council. Article 161, paragraph 3, of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea provides that elections shall take place at regular sessions of the Assembly. The term of office of each member of the Council is four years, except that at the first election, the term of one-half of the members of each Group was for two years.

The Assembly filled 20 of the 36-member Council seats open for the period 1 January 2005 to 31 December 2008. They were nominated by their regional groups.

Those elected were:

- Group A: (4 States from among the largest consumers or net importers of minerals derived from seabed mining) Japan and China;
- Group B: (4 States from those with the largest investment in seabed mining) United Kingdom and India;
- Group C: (4 States that are major land-based net exporters of minerals found on the deep seabed): Portugal and South Africa. Canada will replace Australia for the remainder of its term (2005-2006).

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- Group D:(6 developing States representing special interests, including those with large populations, the land-locked or geographically disadvantaged, islands, major mineral importers or potential producers, and the least developed): Brazil, Malaysia and the Sudan;
 - Group E: (18 states reflecting the principle of geographical distribution, as well as a balance between developed and developing States): Gabon, Namibia, Senegal, Kenya, Poland, Netherlands, Spain, Czech Republic, Argentina, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago.

A note by the Secretariat said the arrangement for Groups A and B were without prejudice to future elections for the two Groups and any interim arrangements for substitutions in those Groups. One member from GRULAC (Latin American and Caribbean Group) will not have a vote for the year 2006 as part of rotation for burden-sharing by regional groups other than Eastern European Group).

In response to concerns by the Jamaican delegation that the Latin American and Caribbean States Group had not met to decide which member state would relinquish its seat in Council in 2005, the Secretary-General noted that the group had until the end of this year to decide.

Budget and scale of assessment

The Assembly agreed to give due consideration at its next session in 2005 to a draft resolution (ISBA/A/10) introduced by Japan, proposing modalities, terms and conditions for using the voluntary trust fund originally established to facilitate the participation of developing countries in the Legal and Technical Commission and the Finance Committee.

Elaborating on its draft resolution, Japan felt it would be improper for the Authority to use money from the Pioneer Investor Fund to defray expenses of the Legal and Technical Commission and the Finance Committee. According to the delegation, all monies from funds, including principal and interest, belonged to the international organizations concerned and financial rules prohibited their use for purposes not originally stipulated. Japan said the Secretary-General should provide, in writing, the legal grounds which authorized the Authority to use money from the Fund for other purposes. The Secretary-General was also requested to review the use and status of the Pioneer Investor Funds and report to the Assembly at its next session.

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Regarding the voluntary trust fund, the Japanese delegation said its misuse would discourage donors from making contributions. He said the Government of Japan was firmly determined to contribute constructively and in good faith to resolve the problem as soon as possible.

The Russian Federation raised concerns about the scale of assessment for member States' contributions to the budget to which the Authority's Secretary-General said the secretariat would circulate this afternoon a document which will indicate the ratio of contributions. He felt the Assembly should approve it as a separate item as was done in the past.

Responding, the Secretary-General pointed out that the rate at which the scale of assessment was calculated was included in the budget, but the actual figures are usually calculated in November. He promised to produce a document outlining the scales at the afternoon session.

The Assembly will meet again this afternoon to complete the items on its agenda, including the election of the Secretary-General.
