

INTERVENTION BY SINGAPORE ON THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (ASSEMBLY AGENDA ITEM 8 – TUESDAY, 15 AUGUST 2017)

Thank you Mr President,

1 Please allow me to begin by warmly congratulating you on your election as the President of the Assembly of the 23rd Session of the International Seabed Authority. Singapore would like to thank Rear Admiral Alam for his able stewardship of the Assembly in the last session.

2 We thank the Secretary-General for the comprehensive report on the work of the Authority from July 2016 to May 2017. It is clear from the report that the Authority has continued to make good progress during this period. On this note, we would like to express our heartfelt appreciation to former Secretary-General Nii Odunton for his significant contributions over the preceding eight years.

3 We join other delegations in congratulating Secretary-General Michael Lodge on his election and commend him for building upon the strong foundations that have been laid by the previous Secretaries-General and getting right to work. We thank the Secretary-General for keeping Member States apprised at an early stage of the restructuring of the organisational structure of the Secretariat, which will contribute to enhancing its efficiency and effectiveness. We welcome the increased outreach by the Secretariat including through social media and the convening of the first public forum in Kingston. We recognise the Secretariat's active participation at the recent Oceans Conference in New York in June 2017, including the seven voluntary commitments made. Singapore will continue to work closely with the Secretary-General and his team.

Mr President,

4 My delegation would also like to commend the Secretary-General for keeping up the pace of work of the Authority in the development of the regulations for the exploitation of mineral resources in the Area, and making progress with regard to the priority deliverables. In this connection, we are pleased to note that a workshop relating to the

environmental management of deep seabed mining was held in Berlin in March 2017, as well as a workshop in Singapore on developing a payment mechanism in April 2017. Such inter-sessional activities are important contributions to the development of an exploitation code that enables the mining of seabed resources in a commercially feasible, yet environmentally sound manner.

5 We further note that interest in deep seabed exploration activities has continued to grow over the reporting period and three new contracts for exploration were signed. As the Authority works tirelessly towards the advancement of its agenda, we urge all members of the Authority to pay their assessed contributions in full and on time. This would provide the Authority with the necessary financial resources to undertake the complex and wide-ranging tasks at hand, especially in preparing its transition to the exploitation phase.

6 We are pleased to note that concrete efforts have been made to improve the Authority's data management, as well as communications and information technology systems. A fit-for-purpose data management strategy that is transparent, yet robustly protects the integrity of collected data, is key to keeping the Authority and relevant stakeholders engaged and informed amidst technical and multi-disciplinary discussions on several fronts. A well-designed communications and information architecture is also vital to the active engagement of stakeholders, the timely dissemination of information, and to sustain continued interest in the work of the Authority.

Mr President,

7 My delegation is mindful that the work of the Authority cannot occur in a vacuum. We welcome the Authority's enduring commitment to engage a wide range of stakeholders, including government officials, academia, students, technical experts and members of civil society through consultations, surveys, workshops and other inter-sessional activities. We are also heartened that numerous stakeholders from different sectors, including NGOs, government agencies, and contractors are continuing the practice of conducting side events at the 23rd Session on a myriad of interesting and relevant topics. This demonstrates that the impetus for the active participation of stakeholders in the Authority's work is not solely driven by the Authority, but is instead a conscious effort on the part of all relevant parties.

8 In addition, we commend the Authority's strengthened cooperation and coordination with other international organisations, especially the close working relationship between the Authority and the various bodies of the United Nations, including through the UN-Oceans mechanism. We also appreciate the Authority's work with several organisations like IOC-UNESCO and IAEA in marine scientific research, which is in line with the Authority's mandate to promote marine scientific research in the Area and disseminate the knowledge gleaned for the benefit of all. It is important to continue the frequent exchange of dialogue and sustained collaboration between the Authority and relevant international organisations, such that we can harmonise our work and ensure that we work towards the achievement of common goals that serve to benefit of humankind as a whole.

9 We are happy to note that the Authority and contractors are devoting resources to bring about a substantial increase in the number of training programmes over the next five years, and approximately 200 training places are expected to be made available. This is a testament to the Authority's dedication to capacity building and we urge all members to support the work of the Authority in this regard.

Mr President,

10 As we acknowledge the accomplishments of the Authority, we must also be pragmatic in recognising that there is still much more that remains to be done as we approach the next phase of the Authority's work. Singapore stands ready to work hand-in-hand with the Authority as we seek progress towards our shared goal of entering the era of exploitation for the common heritage of mankind.

11 I thank you, Mr President.

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