

## **Tuvalu Statement ISA Assembly 2019**

Madam President, Secretary General, Excellency, Ladies & Gentlemen.

I thank you Madam President for giving the floor for Tuvalu; this is Tuvalu's first intervention at this Assembly. My delegation wish to congratulate you on your appointment as Chair of the Assembly.

Madam President, Tuvalu associate itself with members to applaud and congratulate the Authority on its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary held yesterday. On the same note, Madam President, Tuvalu thank the government and people of Jamaica for it continued support to the Authority, and hospitality to members attending this meeting.

Madam President, Tuvalu align itself to the statement by the current chair of the Pacific Forum members presented by Nauru on Tuesday. Tuvalu also support the statement delivered by Chair of Asia & Pacific group yesterday on the achievements of the Authority on its 25<sup>th</sup> year Anniversary.

Madam President, Tuvalu acknowledge the Pacific Community – SPC for their continued support for Tuvalu and other Pacific Small Islands Developing States on all aspects relating to seabed mineral development in our region. SPC's contribution in the past decade has enabled its member states to make informed decision and venture into this new economic development sector.

Madam President, the Tuvalu's Seabed Minerals Act was passed by the Parliament of Tuvalu in December 2014, and stands on our statute books both as a proud example of best-practice regulatory law, and as a signal of Tuvalu's readiness to explore opportunities and participate in seabed mineral activities.

Madam President, Tuvalu has legislated and carry out it obligations under UNCLOS by codifying, and mapping its outer limits of the continental shelf which was defined as EEZ on the seabed, and have submitted these coordinates and map to the Authority in June. Tuvalu is working closely with France and New Zealand in our joint submission of the continental shelf beyond our EEZ, extended continental shelf claim under Article 76.

Madam President, all Tuvaluans live side by side with the Pacific Ocean, and have a great connection with the oceans and seas. The ocean provides Tuvaluans with resources to rely on, and also presents great vulnerabilities and challenges that we have to live with including the impacts of climate change. We take climate change seriously as it is a matter of survival for our people living in our low lying islands with elevation of no greater than 2 metres above sea level.

Madam President, Tuvalu is recognised as one of the United Nations' 48 Least Developed Countries, or LDCs. As a small island developing State, Tuvalu's options for economic development are limited. But we must seek new avenues to improve the well-being of our people.

Madam President, this is the reason Tuvalu is looking for alternative economic development opportunities including our interest in seabed mineral activities. Tuvalu became a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in 1982, and ratified it and the 1994 Agreement in 2002.

Madam President, as a developing country, Tuvalu does not have the resources to conduct seabed mineral activities without any foreign commercial partner. We would therefore like to take advantage of the regime established for developing States in Part 11 of the Convention. We therefore seek support from potential development partners who share our interests and aspirations in deep sea minerals development.

Madam President, Tuvalu's Seabed Minerals Act was developed in consultation with the people of Tuvalu. It recognises the precautionary approach, best environmental practice, and contains a number of transparency and accountability provisions. Our legal framework provides the platform for Tuvalu to participate with our partners in any deep sea mineral activities including capacity building. Tuvalu stands ready to be a Sponsoring state in the Area and to benefit from initiatives emanating from such a partnership.

Madam President, Tuvalu would like to highlight the critical role of the Authority on capacity-building. The Authority is encouraged to provide a well- design strategic approach on capacity-building to ensure that members shall improve their knowledge on marine & environmental science, as well as the legal regime and fiscal framework for the benefit of its members.

In closing, Madam President, Climate change had been, and will be the Number One song that vulnerable low lying nations like Tuvalu will sing at the Pacific Islands Forum leaders meeting in Tuvalu next month for the sake of our children's future, and mankind. The Authority has a critical role and a duty of care to ensure that we develop best practice and standards at all stages for the sake of our future generation.

I thank you Madam President.