



**STATEMENT BY MICHAEL W. LODGE
SECRETARY-GENERAL
INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY**

Visit to IFREMER

27 November 2017

Issy-Les-Moulineaux

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Dear Director-General François Jacq,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am truly delighted to be with you here at IFREMER's headquarters, to sign the five-year extension of the agreement between the Authority and IFREMER on exploration for polymetallic nodules.

Over the last fifteen years, I have personally witnessed the enormous contribution made by the French Government in mineral resources exploration, in scientific research baseline studies and environmental monitoring.

Not least, you have played a key role supporting training and professional development of scientists from developing countries, which is a priority for me as Secretary-General. I do not hesitate to say that France, through IFREMER, indeed plays a model role in international cooperation for deep sea exploration.

If 15 years is a short time, then five years – the timespan of our extension agreement – is even shorter, especially in light of the expectation of the Council that exploration will be completed during this time frame.

So, notwithstanding the very significant progress made so far, we cannot rest on our laurels, and must continue to push forward on all fronts.

Today, the priority is to adopt exploitation regulations that will be commercially viable and attractive to investors, whilst, at the same time, set the highest standards for protecting the marine environment from the harmful impacts of deep sea mining.

Another priority is to develop regional environmental management plans, which must include the designation of areas of particular environment interest.

Both the Council of the Authority and the General Assembly of the United Nations have indeed recognized the urgent need to develop these plans in all mineral provinces where

exploration activities are taking place. Furthermore, Member States of the Authority have repeatedly called for site-specific management that is designed to reflect the specificities of each sub-region of the Area. Key areas for regional planning activities have been identified, and they include the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Ridge, the Indian Ocean triple junction and abyssal plain, as well as the Northwest Pacific and South Atlantic Oceans for seamounts.

France is actively engaged in exploration on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge and I look forward to your cooperation in this important work.

Building a new generation of partnerships for marine scientific research is also essential. And the leadership and experience of IFREMER to understand better deep-sea ecosystems will be extremely valuable. I really would like us to work together to rally other research institutions and to progress this initiative forward on the strength of a broadly-based partnership, including in the context of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science, to be formally announced next week in New York, starting from 2021.

Ladies and gentlemen, please allow me, as Secretary-General of the Authority, to express my highest appreciation to the French Government and IFREMER, for the remarkable support and cooperation provided to enable the Authority to fulfill its mandate and responsibilities. The recent contribution of IFREMER to the Endowment Fund of the Authority which aims to promote collaborative marine scientific research in the Area for the benefit of mankind, is a most striking illustration.

In closing, may I note with much pleasure the announcement at Le Havre a few days ago by Prime Minister Edouard Philippe, that the engagement of France for the exploration of the deep seabed and marine scientific research programmes is set to expand. I can only reiterate my sincere delight that the Authority counts France and IFREMER as such a dynamic and committed partner, and very much look forward to our partnership growing from success to success.
