



ISA launch event for the series of publications on “The Law of the Sea: An Ocean of Opportunity for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS”

Kingston, Jamaica

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STATEMENT

by

Mr. Michael W. Lodge

Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority

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Greetings from Jamaica and let me welcome all participants to this high-level event to celebrate the public launch of a new series of studies developed by the Secretariat of the Authority on the opportunities offered by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) to the least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and small island developing States (SIDS).

Let me extend a special welcome to our distinguished partners this morning:

- Miguel de Serpa Soares, United Nations Legal Counsel
- Ambassador Perks Ligoya, Permanent Representative of Malawi to the United Nations and Chair of the Group of LDCs
- Ambassador Magzhan Ilyassov, Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the UN and Chair of the Group of LLDCs
- Ambassador Vanessa Frazier, Permanent Representative of Malta to ISA and to the UN,

We are honoured that you could join us today.

The purpose of our event today is to launch this tetralogy of publications, the covers of which you see in the background of my video.

I must say that I am extremely proud of these publications, and I commend them to all of you. I wish to express my appreciation to the members of the secretariat who worked on the publications and who have created such a handsome set of books, particularly Dr Marie Bourrel-McKinnon who led this project from

the beginning. I also wish to express my sincere appreciation to His Excellency Ambassador Helmut Tuerk of Austria, former judge of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, who provided significant inputs to the text of these publications. Ambassador Tuerk has worked on law of the sea issues for more than 40 years and we benefited greatly from his knowledge and expertise.

Colleagues,

The interests of all humanity in the ocean and the conservation and sustainable use of its resources make it imperative that the global governance regime reflects the maritime interests of all States, whether coastal or landlocked, and with due consideration for the specific needs of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

Since taking office in 2017, I have attached the utmost importance to empowering LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS to take advantage of the opportunities open to them under UNCLOS.

The deep sea may seem remote from the immediate and urgent challenges of today. The reality, however, is that investing today in science and technology, including the empowerment of women, is fundamental to addressing these challenges tomorrow.

The regime for the deep seabed under UNCLOS is one of the few international governance regimes that has been designed in such a way that the interests and needs of developing States are fully integrated into the regime.

To all developing States I say the same: this organization is yours, as well as the opportunities it opens to all. I therefore urge all LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS to continue to take full advantage of the regime and realize the benefits that are available. The benefits are outlined in a way that is transparent and accessible in this tetralogy of publications.

How can the International Seabed Authority support the aspirations of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS?

Fundamentally, the mission of the International Seabed Authority is to strengthen capacity in order to promote the effective participation of all developing States in deep sea exploration and to ensure that the benefits of marine science and technology are distributed equitably. In this sense, the Authority serves as a platform for international cooperation in which the specific interests and needs of developing States, including LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, are explicitly recognized in the governance structure.

The Strategic Plan and High-Level Action Plan of the Authority for 2019-2023 provide for specific actions to improve the participation of developing States in the implementation of the regime of the Area. This means identifying the needs of those States in the implementation of such regime but also the potential barriers to their participation in activities in the Area.

The need for improved capacities and access to marine scientific research programmes in the international seabed Area has also been explicitly recognized as a priority by the members of the Authority when they have adopted the Action Plan for Marine Scientific Research in support of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, adopted by the ISA Assembly in December 2020 (ISBA/26/A/17)

That is why our collective efforts have focused on developing capacity development programmes and initiatives to address the needs they have identified themselves through the survey circulated by the secretariat in 2020. I am pleased therefore that amongst the 41 National Focal point for capacity development matters established with ISA, 14 have been nominated by LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

Our strong commitment to these objectives is also reflected in concrete actions already included in the Road map for Accelerated Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for LDCs.

These actions include:

Assistance and support to increase awareness of potential benefits for LLDCs to ratify and implement UNCLOS and participate in activities in the Area.

Increasing awareness of the benefits of the blue economy for LLDCs including through the establishment of a benefit-sharing mechanism for economic and non-financial benefits derived from activities in the Area. Identifying measures to increase the participation of LLDCs in the work of ISA and promoting capacity development in marine scientific research and technology transfer in line with Part XI of UNCLOS.

We are equally committed to ensure that tangible and meaningful actions will be included in the upcoming review of the Samoa Pathway for SIDS and in the new programme of action for the Least Developed Countries to be adopted at the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries to be held in Qatar in January 2022.

I would like to take this opportunity today to state that I am committed to redouble the efforts of the Authority to support LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS to participate effectively in all aspects of the work of the

Authority and for that, to mobilize political will and resources to build and develop the capacity of the most vulnerable.

The objective is to ensure ownership through informed decision-making processes that can support the development of new opportunities for socio-economic development.

As the ‘constitution for the oceans’, UNCLOS is a striking illustration of the collective contribution of the international community to the vision of a more fair and equal society. It also represents a common denominator for the different maritime interests of all States. I would like to especially encourage therefore those remaining States which have not so far ratified UNCLOS, to do so as soon as possible. This list is now quite short but includes 15 LLDCs and 9 LDCs.

I look forward to the discussions and am confident that with your continued support we will deliver innovative and ground-breaking activities that can effectively deliver transformative actions benefiting all developing States members of the Authority and in particular the most vulnerable of them.
