



The Launch of AREA2030

Kingston, Jamaica

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STATEMENT

by
Mr. Michael W. Lodge
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A warm welcome to everyone to this webinar for the launch of ISA's new AREA2030 initiative.

Why AREA2030?

ISA is the organization through which States Parties to UNCLOS organize and control all mineral related activities in the seafloor beyond national jurisdiction – the Area.

ISA is also mandated to promote and encourage marine scientific research in the Area, which includes the collection of marine and seabed data including bathymetric measurements.

ISA is also committed as an organization to the aims and objectives of the sustainable development goals and Agenda 2030, as well as the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

The AREA2030 aims to fill an important gap in our collective knowledge and understanding of the ocean.

Our objective is to compile and analyse all bathymetric data shared voluntarily by ISA contractors and to submit them as a collective contribution to the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and towards the achievement of the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Why is this important?

Because the deep ocean is the least mapped area of the planet, and at the same time the part of the planet that is the most difficult and costly to map.

Since 1994, in accordance with UNCLOS and the rules, regulations and procedures of ISA, 31 contracts for deep sea mineral exploration have been issued. A fundamental part of the exploration work carried out by contractors is to perform high resolution bathymetric surveys of exploration areas. These data must be submitted to ISA in accordance with the terms of the exploration contracts.

The result is that we have collected huge amounts of high resolution bathymetric and sonar data which give us a very detailed understanding of the seafloor in these areas.

It is therefore a real pleasure to be able to contribute these data, through our partners at the International Hydrographic Organization, towards advancing the general knowledge and understanding of the world's oceans and to improving the mapping of the world's seabed by 2030.

I can announce today that data will be shared under a data submission agreement signed yesterday between ISA and IHO, which will mean that detailed seafloor mapping data will become publicly available in the IHO database and available for use in GEBCO.

Naturally, this initiative has taken an enormous amount of work by many different parties.

I first wish to thank and congratulate Dr Mathias Jonas, Secretary-General of IHO and his colleagues for their support of our initiative and for their understanding in helping us to navigate the data submission agreement.

I even more wish to thank our contractors, who have shown a truly collaborative and positive spirit towards working with ISA and IHO to make datasets available in a format that can be used.

The first tranche of data submission will cover around 7TB of multibeam echosounder data and ancillary data covering a backlog of around 15 years and collected from four contractors - the Interoceanmetal Joint Organization, Global Sea Mineral Resources (GSR) of Belgium, Japan's Deep Ocean Resources Development Co. Ltd. (DORD) and the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources of Germany.

Going forward, other contractors are also in the process of finalizing their voluntary contributions to the AREA2030 initiative.

I am truly excited by today's initiative, which represents the very best spirit of international cooperation for the benefit of all humanity. It makes a real contribution to the global effort to improve mapping of the ocean floor, but also contributes immensely to the global knowledge of the international seabed and helps further our understanding of seabed habitats, potential geohazards and a variety of potential resources.

In a very real sense, this initiative reflects the common heritage of mankind and a very positive spirit of cooperation between two specialized and important international organizations for the benefit of all their members.
