



Tenth Inter-Agency Consultative Group Meeting on the Follow-up and Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs

Agenda item: Consultations on the UN Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action in its remaining five years, including UN system support to LLDCs on COVID-19 impacts

23 June 2020

INTERVENTION

by

Mr. Michael W. Lodge,
Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority

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Thank you for this opportunity to intervene on behalf of the International Seabed Authority. The ISA is the organization tasked under UNCLOS 1982 to manage deep sea mineral exploration and exploitation, protect the deep sea marine environment and its biodiversity and promote marine scientific research for the benefit of all humanity.

As such, you might wonder what is the relevance of ISA to LLDCs and the Vienna Programme of Action.

In fact, the group of landlocked States fought hard to protect their interests during the negotiation of UNCLOS and that is why UNCLOS recognizes the special requirements of developing landlocked States in a number of ways.

This includes the right to participate in exploitation of living resources in the EEZ, to flag vessels and conduct innocent passage, and the right of access to and from the sea and freedom of transit. These rights are fundamental to achieving the outcomes of the Vienna Programme of Action.

As far as the ISA and the deep sea is concerned, the rights of developing landlocked States are even more explicit. They have the right to participate in deep sea mineral exploration and marine scientific research as well as to share in the financial and economic benefits from deep sea minerals.

ISA is under a positive obligation to promote the effective participation of developing States and recognize the special need of developing landlocked States to overcome the obstacles caused by geography.

This is why, for example, a seat in Group D of the ISA Council is reserved for ‘special interests’ including landlocked developing States (in the past this seat has been held by Lesotho and Uganda). This is also why UNCLOS gives landlocked developing States the right to apply for reserved exploration sites on an equal basis with coastal States.

And this is why I have taken a particularly active interest in the work of UN-OHRLLS in this respect and continue to urge landlocked developing States, who make up 10% of the membership of ISA, to take full advantage of the opportunities available to them. I also urge the remaining 12 landlocked developing States who are not yet party to UNCLOS to become parties as soon as possible.

I would like to end this brief intervention by saying that the ISA is fully committed to supporting the Vienna Programme of Action and the draft road map for accelerated intervention. We would be pleased to see ISA’s role reflected in the proposed action areas. In particular we would like to offer our support to landlocked developing States in terms of capacity development in marine science, especially for women, access to marine scientific research and ensuring full participation in deep sea exploration. All of these have the potential to provide new opportunities for economic development and we must ensure that these opportunities are also available to landlocked developing countries.
