



**STATEMENT BY
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**SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE
INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY**

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Mr. President,

This being the first time that the International Seabed Authority is making an intervention in the 69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, may I express to you our warmest congratulations on your election to the Presidency. You are assured of the Authority's support and cooperation.

Mr. President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I wish to refer to the two resolutions before the General Assembly and express my appreciation to member States for their positive references to the work of the International Seabed Authority. I also wish to convey our appreciation for the very comprehensive reports of the Secretary-General which, as always, provide detailed background material for our consideration, and to the Director and Staff at DOALOS for their good work.

Mr. President

As is acknowledged in paragraph 59 of the draft resolution A/69/L.29, this year, 2014, marked the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention and the establishment of the Authority. A special commemorative one-day session was held in Kingston, Jamaica, during the twentieth session of the Authority to mark this significant milestone. The occasion offered an opportunity to reflect on the innovative regime set up by the Convention and the 1994 Agreement, the forward-looking work of the Authority and the quest for sustainable development.

The concept of the "common heritage of mankind" represented by the legal regime for the seabed beyond the limits of national jurisdiction remains one of the major innovations in modern international law. It replaced uncertainties concerning the future of the seabed with a regime of shared benefits and responsibilities for all States, including the land-locked and geographically disadvantaged States. The far-reaching implications as well as the benefits of this regime will for the next twenty years be understood and appreciated even more, now that we are standing at a juncture where ocean-based economic development is at the top of the agenda for many Governments.

Mr. President,

In paragraph 48 of Document A/69/L.29, the Assembly has noted the increase in the number of contracts for exploration for seabed minerals that have been entered into between the Authority and its contractors and has also taken due note of the priority that has been given by the Council of the Authority to the drafting of the mining code.

As of today, the Authority has signed a total of 18 contracts for exploration for mineral resources in the Area. Twelve of these contracts are for exploration for polymetallic nodules, four for exploration for polymetallic sulphides and two are for exploration for cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts. During 2014, the Authority has signed contracts with Japan Oil, Gas and Metal National Corporation (JOGMEC), China Ocean and Mineral Resources Development Association (COMRA), the Government of the Republic of Korea and the Institut française de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer (Ifremer) of France. The signing of these contracts has reinforced the strong commitment of these countries to the concept of the common heritage of mankind, and has further strengthened their long-lasting cooperative relationship with the Authority. I wish to express here, towards them, our thanks and appreciation.

Mr. President,

At the same time, a number of the original contracts signed by the Authority in 2001, for exploration for polymetallic nodules in the Area are due to expire in 2016. In its decision at the 20th Session of the

Authority, the Council requested the Legal and Technical Commission, as a matter of urgency, and as its first priority, to formulate draft procedures and criteria for applications for extensions of contracts for exploration. In this regard, it was pointed out that, inter alia, the Commission should have sufficient information supplied by contractors as set out in the Standard Clauses for exploration contracts, that there was no automatic extension of a contract and that efforts by the Contractors over the past decade should be recognized. It was further pointed out that the extension of contracts did not imply that contractors must have completed their preparatory work to proceed to the exploitation phase. The Council added that the draft procedures and criteria for applications for extensions of contracts for exploration for polymetallic nodules should be made available in advance of the 2015 session. This matter will be taken up by the Commission at its first meeting in 2015.

Also at the 20th Session, the Council requested the Commission, as a matter of priority, to continue the work that it started in 2014 on the regulations governing exploitation and to make available to all members of the Authority and all stakeholders a draft framework exploitation code as soon as possible after its February 2015 meeting. I am pleased to report that work on the exploitation code is progressing and the expectations of the Council will be met.

Mr. President,

The draft resolution before the Assembly today again reiterates the importance of the ongoing work by the Authority to develop a standardized taxonomy and nomenclature for the fauna associated with polymetallic nodules, pursuant to article 145 of the Convention, to ensure the effective protection of the marine environment and for the prevention of damage to the flora and fauna of the marine environment from harmful effects that may arise from activities in the Area. As part of our continuing efforts towards this end, I am pleased to convey that the second workshop dealing with standardization of the taxonomy of macrofauna associated with polymetallic nodules has just been completed. The workshop was attended by representatives of all contractors for polymetallic nodules as well as expert taxonomists from the International Network for Scientific Investigations of Deep-Sea Ecosystems. Contractor representatives were requested to bring samples/images of the fauna they had collected in their exploration areas. During the workshop, much was accomplished with regard to taxonomic identifications. Additionally, further efforts required by contractors to complete their work in this regard were noted. I wish to convey a special note of thanks and gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Korea, in particular to the Korean Institute of Ocean Science and Technology (KIOST) for hosting this workshop at the East Sea Research Institute, Uljin-gun, South Korea.

In October this year, a workshop on resource classification was jointly organized by the Authority and the Ministry of Earth Sciences of the Government of India, in Goa, India. The workshop addressed the work currently being undertaken by contractors for polymetallic nodule exploration in fulfillment of the resource data that are to be provided to the Authority under Section 11 of the Standard Clauses of exploration contracts, and current practice in land-based mineral development, in particular, national reporting standards for exploration results and resource classification. Representatives of exploration contractors for polymetallic nodules made presentations on the work that they had accomplished to date. In this regard, experts on land-based mineral resource classification from the Committee for Mineral Reserves International Reporting Standards (CRIRSCO) that was granted observer status by the international Seabed Authority, and the United Nations International Framework Classification for Mineral Reserves and Resources (UNFC) also participated in the workshop. Participants in the workshop recognized the need for an international seabed mineral resource framework in view of the increasing commercial interest in the resources of the Area. Based on the classification system for land-based mineral resources, it was concluded that at present, no reserves of the metals of interest in polymetallic nodules had been identified, particularly in light of the fact that no tests of the collector device for mining the nodules had been conducted at the depths of the deposits. It was recommended that the Authority support collaboration among contractors to test their collector devices, conduct pilot mining tests and conduct environmental impact assessments. It was noted that this would help to reduce costs and risks to each contractor and help move polymetallic nodule resources from inferred resources to reserves of the metals of interest. The Authority will take the necessary steps to encourage such collaboration.

I also wish to extend our sincere thanks to the Government of India for its cooperation and support in the advancement of the work of the Authority on this important issue.

Mr. President,

Paragraphs 50 and 51 of the draft resolution emphasize the importance of the role entrusted to the Authority by articles 143 and 145 of the Convention and recall the invitation issued by the General Assembly to the Authority in 2013 for the Authority to consider developing environmental management plans for regions and areas where there are currently exploration contracts. In this regard, member States have shown a clear commitment to build upon the work done by the Authority in connection with the environmental management plan for the Clarion Clipperton Zone. I am pleased to inform the Assembly in this regard that discussions are already underway with regard to commencing work on a strategic environmental assessment for the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, taking into account data availability and standardization and in cooperation with other sponsoring governments and organizations.

At the twentieth session of the Authority, the Assembly adopted a budget of \$15,743,143 for the Authority's operations for the financial period 2015-2016. Support was voiced for the idea of establishing an International Seabed Authority Museum. The Secretary-General was requested to prepare a report for consideration by the Council outlining the objectives of establishing such a museum and how they would be achieved.

As at 31 May 2014, eight contractors had agreed to amend their existing contracts to include the new standard clauses on overhead charges. I continue to consult with the remainder to amend their existing contracts to incorporate the new standard clauses.

At the twentieth session, the Assembly elected 17 new members of this Council for a four-year period from 1 January 2015. The new members are:

Group A: Italy and the Russian Federation

Group B: France, Germany and the Republic of Korea

Group C: Australia and Chile

Group D: Fiji, Jamaica and Lesotho, and

Group E: Cameroon, Ghana, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, Singapore and Tonga

Mr. President,

I wish to lend my voice in support of paragraph 52 of the draft resolution by expressing the Authority's appreciation to those that have made contributions to the Authority's Endowment Fund and its Voluntary Trust Fund. As of 1 December 2014, a total of 66 scientists and government officials from more than 30 countries have benefitted from financial support from the ISA Endowment Fund. The recipients are from Argentina, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brazil, Cameroon, China, Colombia, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Egypt, Fiji, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Namibia, Micronesia, Nigeria, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Peru, the Philippines, the Russian Federation, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Thailand, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia and Viet Nam.

Mr. President,

May I conclude by reiterating a sentiment that I have echoed here previously; the decisions that will be made in the next few years are likely to be critical to the realization of the common heritage of mankind. As a consequence, it is more important than ever that all members of the Authority attend meetings and participate fully in all aspects of the work of the Authority. I therefore look forward to the widest possible participation by all members in the twenty-first session of the Authority in July 2015.

I thank you.