

International Seabed Authority Assembly,

2 August 2022

Item 9 – Annual report of the Secretary-General

Thank you, Mr. President,

Italy thanks the Secretary General for his report, as usually extremely informative and effective. In particular, we have appreciated the “Annual Report 2022 – Ensuring the sustainable management and stewardship of the Deep Seabed and its resources for the benefit of humankind”.

We found such report very clear and detailed and we think it will represent a useful tool for the Authority’s outreach to civil society. As we proceed towards the adoption of a Regulation for the Exploitation of the mineral resources of the Area, which is increasingly subject to a sparkling debate in the global public opinion, the Authority is called to a growing effort of transparency and involvement of civil society, promoting the dissemination and the exchange and sharing of scientific data and the outputs from deep-sea research activities.

Italy supports in particular the contribution this Organisation is providing to the 2030 Agenda and to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. In this respect, we appreciated the results acknowledged in the report of a group

of independent experts, which concluded that the Authority currently contributes to 12 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

In this framework, keeping the attention focused on the sustainable use of marine natural resources and the preservation of the ecosystems' integrity, we strongly believe that we should aim to the creation of an institutional and regulatory system based on sound scientific knowledge, on the precautionary principle and on the "ecosystem-based approach". Again, we underline that deep-sea mining should not commence until an adequate regulatory framework ensures the minimization of impacts of the exploitation prior to the authorization of exploitation contracts.

In this context, Italy supports the need to foster interdisciplinary cooperation not only within ISA, but also with other UN bodies and International Organizations and consistently with the ongoing negotiations for a binding agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.

In the work of the International Seabed Authority, as well as in the cooperation with developing States and other UN bodies and International Organizations, we underline the importance of the Authority's efforts to enhance the empowerment of women in Marine Scientific Research. I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate Kirsty McQuaid on her well-deserved award and her contribution in the deep seabed research.

As we prepare to achieve the sustainable transition from exploration to exploitation of mineral resources in the Area, we are also called to facilitate technological innovation and activities. We therefore support the initiatives of the Secretariat aimed at strengthening research capabilities and training of developing and technologically less developed States in the techniques and applications of research in the Area.

Mr. President,

We are facing a period of intense work in the incoming sessions of the Authority and we believe that the conclusion of these negotiations should not hinder the quality of the regulations, particularly with respect to the need to ensure the highest level of protection of the marine environment. We support the principle that the quality of the regulations should not be weakened because of imposed deadlines.

The Authority has a great responsibility, today and in the years to come, to ensure that the wealth of the deep-sea mineral resources is used to the benefit of present and future generations. In this respect, as member of the Council, and candidate for the next term, Italy encourages the Council to keep working with an effective result-oriented mind and we commend the work performed so far by the facilitators of the Informal Working Groups on the different aspects of the Regulations.

Thank you.