



**Fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the  
Convention on Biological Diversity (Part Two)**

**Montreal, Canada**

**7 - 19 December 2022**

STATEMENT

by

H.E. Mr. Michael W. Lodge

Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority

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For nearly 30 years, the International Seabed Authority (ISA) plays an important role in ensuring the protection of the marine environment and biodiversity in the deep-sea for the benefit of all.

The processes put in place under the auspices of ISA have benefited considerably over the years from the scientific and technical advice provided through the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and we value our cooperation very highly.

We are also very much committed to supporting relevant CBD processes where possible and within the context of our own very specific mandate.

ISA's unique experience in implementing the legal regime contained in UNCLOS – which makes us the only international organization mandated to ensure protection and sustainable use of a global commons for the benefit of humanity as a whole – has great potential to support the delivery of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and other international processes.

Last week in New York, the General Assembly of the United Nations reaffirmed once again that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) provides the legal framework within which all activities in the seas and oceans are carried out.

It is under UNCLOS, of course, that ISA was created as the international machinery to regulate and manage deep sea mineral exploration and future exploitation, prevent unilateral and unregulated access to the deep sea, promote scientific research and transfer of technology and ensure that all the benefits of the resources of the deep ocean – monetary and non-monetary – are shared for the benefit of all.

ISA offers the best example of how the international community can collaborate for environmental protection whilst at the same time allowing for sustainable use of a critical shared resource.

This is possible because of strong international cooperation amongst nations. Multilateralism is fundamental in addressing the daunting global dilemmas that humanity is facing, including biodiversity loss, climate change, increased urbanization, and poverty reduction.

In the case of the management of the deep-sea, we now have the benefit of more than 40 years of scientific research, with the last 28 years of that work under the multilateral framework of UNCLOS and ISA.

We could say, in fact, that ISA has been leading a new age of deep-sea science and exploration which prioritizes the collection of environmental data to specifications designed by ISA. Over the past 20 years, contractors have invested more than \$260 million on ISA-mandated environmental studies.

The results from this research not only provide the foundation for science-based measures to protect the marine environment, but also help us to develop a global regulatory framework for future mineral exploitation based on the best available scientific evidence.

This represents the first time a complete regulatory framework has been developed before an activity takes place and a unique opportunity to get it right.

Our task now is to scale up these actions even more.

Of course, none of this is possible without collaboration and cooperation. The increasing number of strategic partnerships concluded by ISA in the last few years to support its unique and universal mandate is testament of the confidence of States Parties to UNCLOS towards this ideal of solidarity and equity for all humanity.

I remain confident that with the continued engagement of all, we will be able to ensure the protection of the marine environment whilst at the same time allowing for sustainable use of a critical shared resource for the benefit of all humanity.

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