



**Fourth Workshop of the Africa Deep Seabed Resources (ADSR)
Project Abuja, Nigeria**

5 October 2022

STATEMENT

by

Mr. Michael W. Lodge

Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority

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Rear Admiral SS Garba, Representative of H.E. Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,
Hon. Prince Ademola Adewolo Adegorye, Minister of State in the Ministry of Transportation, representing Hon. Minister Mrs Anita Krokan, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Norway
H.E. Dr. Maureen Taumuno, Permanent Representative of Nigeria to ISA and High Commissioner to Jamaica
Mr. Adamu A Adaji, Director-General, National Boundary Commission

All protocols observed

It is my absolute pleasure to declare that ISA is back in person in Africa.

It is an even greater pleasure to say that we are back in Abuja, Nigeria, for the first time since 2009. 13 years later, it is long overdue.

When we met last time, in this very hotel, it was as a national workshop, organized as an ad hoc event.

This time we meet under the framework of the Africa Deep Sea Resources – or ADSR – Project, designed to promote international and regional cooperation for the sustainable development of Africa’s deep seabed resources in support of Africa’s Blue Economy.

This flagship initiative of the Authority is implemented in partnership with the African Union and the Government of Norway, through the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD).

I am delighted today to welcome to our opening ceremony, Mrs. Anita Krokan, deputy head of mission of the Embassy of Norway, who I hope in a moment will say a few words about Norway’s commitment to this project.

The main objectives of the ADSR Project are threefold:

- First, to better inform the decision-making processes of African States in relation to deep-sea exploration and the sustainable use of deep-sea mineral resources.
- Second, to strengthen the technical capacity of national experts, including women.
- Third, to stimulate reflection and discussion that could result in recommendations to increase and improve the capacity of African nationals in deep sea exploration, marine scientific research, and marine technology.

Ladies and gentlemen, Increasingly, the fundamental role of critical minerals in society is being recognized. Moreover, bodies such as the International Energy Agency have drawn attention to the looming mismatch between the world's ambitions for energy transition and the availability of these critical minerals.

This is also why there is increased focus today on the potential for deep seabed mineral resources, both on the continental shelf and in the international seabed, to fill this gap.

The potential significance of these resources to the development of Africa's Blue Economy is recognized in key policy frameworks, including the 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy and Agenda 2063, and the Africa Blue Economy Strategy of the African Union.

But we need to proceed with caution.

At the core of the mandate of the ISA is the dual responsibility to allow the sustainable development of the mineral resources of the deep seabed for the benefit of all humanity while at the same time ensuring protection and preservation of the marine environment.

We recognize that scientific knowledge, of resource potential, environmental conditions, and technology, is fundamental to decision-making.

We also recognize, and it is an equally important part of our mandate under the Law of the Sea Convention, that scientific knowledge and technology must be made widely available and shared between all States.

Deep sea minerals cannot be left for the exclusive use of the rich and technologically advanced States.

This was and remains the vision behind the UNCLOS and remains the reason why African countries should strengthen their engagement in the activities undertaken in the international seabed Area.

Ladies and gentlemen, African States make up 47 of the 168 Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. This includes 38 coastal States whose maritime areas cover approximately 13 million square kilometres.

There has always been a close relationship between the International Seabed Authority and Africa.

The Chair of the First Committee of UNCLOS III, which was responsible for Part XI of the Convention, was Paul Bamela Engo of Cameroon.

Both the Presidents of the Preparatory Commission – Joseph Warioba of Tanzania and Jose Luis Jesus of Sao Tome and Principe – came from Africa.

Nine African States are members of the Council of the Authority.

Moreover, 12 African experts are members of the Finance Committee or the Legal and Technical Commission.

My immediate predecessor as Secretary-General, Nii Allotey Odunton, came from Ghana.

Sadly, Nii passed away in February this year. Let me pause for a moment to recognize his enormous contribution to the work of the Authority, the development of the law of the sea and to his continent.

Despite this long-standing commitment of Africa to the work of the Authority, Africa remains the only regional group that has not yet taken full advantage of the provisions of the Convention to take part in deep sea mineral exploration.

This needs to change.

This is one reason why, since taking office in 2017, I have made it a priority for the Authority to seek to establish strategic partnerships with relevant international and regional organizations, such as the African Union, UNECA, the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), and others in order to better identify and respond to the specific needs of African States.

That is also why I am so pleased that the ADSR is focused firmly on capacity development and the application of marine science and technology to sound national and regional decision making.

In that context, let me also welcome to this workshop representatives of 8 other African States.

I hope that the discussions over the next few days will lay the foundations of a strategy for African States to make the best possible use of the opportunities available to them, and that were designed for their benefit, through the Part XI regime.

I wish to thank and acknowledge the efforts made by:

- Ministry of Transportation
- National Boundary Commission
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- H.E. Maureen Taumuno

I wish you a successful and productive workshop and I very much look forward to the outcomes of your discussions.

Thank you.
