

Protocols,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you, distinguished ladies and gentlemen to Nigeria and to the Fourth Africa Deep Seabed Resources (ADSR) workshop organised by the International Seabed Authority (ISA) in collaboration with the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) and the African Union.

The UN Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) provides for all nations to explore and exploit mineral resources on the seabed beyond national jurisdiction for the common benefit of humankind in accordance with regulatory framework provided by ISA. Notably, various nations have drawn benefits from exploration and exploitation of minerals such as polymetallic nodules, polymetallic sulphides and cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts in the Area. Countries such as Germany, India, Korea, China, Japan, UK, Jamaica and many more have signed various contracts for the exploration of these minerals with the ISA. Unfortunately ~~however~~, no African country has either as a State or through its private contractors made any move in this direction. This is what gave impetus to the idea of the Africa Deep Seabed Resources Workshop in order to enlighten African countries on mineral exploration opportunities that abound not

only on their continental shelves, but even beyond those boundaries. In this regard, there is a need for Nigeria and in deep Africa's industry stakeholders, relevant organizations, and private entities and NGOs to synergize efforts toward strengthening the engagement of African States in the activities undertaken in the international seabed area. This will significantly improve data acquisition and sharing, advance technical capacity, and ultimately enhance the decision-making in Nigeria's and Africa's maritime domain.

engender thought provoking discussions and

It is my firm belief that this workshop will provide implementable ways and guidelines, as well as awaken the consciousness of African States towards evolving strategies for the sustainable development of Africa's Blue Economy through the exploitation of deep seabed minerals.

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Once again, I welcome you all to Nigeria and implore you to explore the numerous tourism potentials and hospitable culture offered by the country. On this note I hereby declare the Fourth Africa Deep Seabed Resources Workshop in Nigeria open. I wish you all a fruitful deliberation.

Thank you.