



Side-Event by the International Seabed Authority on “Leveraging the Power of Science, technology and innovation in the deep-seabed to build prosperous and resilient LDC economies through the Doha Programme of Action”.

Segment 1: Improved regional and international cooperation

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Malta Statement delivered by Her Excellency Ambassador Vanessa Frazier
Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, New York

Excellencies

It is an honour for me to participate in this panel which is discussing how improved regional and international cooperation can enhance marine scientific research capacity to leverage fully the benefits offered by the blue economy for LDCs. Malta is proud to support this initiative towards the specific needs of Least Developed Countries, encouraging science, technology and innovation as well as the empowerment of women and girls.

Least Developed Countries face several vulnerabilities, such as limited production capabilities, an undiversified economy, and pressing climate change challenges amongst others. An increasing number of States are adopting the concept of the sustainable blue economy. Through the development of blue economic sectors and new ocean-based activities such as aquaculture and biotechnology, LDCs have the potential to overcome their structural vulnerabilities.



Improved regional and international cooperation can enhance marine scientific research capacity to leverage fully the benefits offered by the sustainable blue economy for LDCs, primarily through the sharing and transfer of knowledge and research capacity. Regional Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership (SBEP) such as the one financed by the EU, is one such example.

The limited economic factor of the LDCs should not be an obstacle in the achievement of a sustainable blue economy, either. As the experience in a few Caribbean Islands has shown, the development of blue biotechnology can also be conducted with readily available resources which do not require big investments. In this case, family-run, community initiatives arose to exploit the millions of Sargassum seaweed washing up on their shores to make soap and paper.

On the other hand, a sustainable blue economy needs to be supported by a commitment to protect and preserve the ocean. Marine research is key to ensure an effective management of world oceans and to safeguard marine resources while promoting economic growth.



Malta has been actively involved in international and regional projects related to marine and ocean research, such as the BlueMed initiative, Blue Bio Med, and JPI Oceans. Participation in these projects is leading to collaborative research relating to the management of the Mediterranean coastal and marine ecosystem, including support for better decision-making towards the sustainable growth of the EU Mediterranean maritime economy and to observe, model and predict oceans and seas' states and processes.

Throughout this process, we must ensure that no one is left behind. Women still account for a minority of the world's researchers. According to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics, women in ocean science continue to be underrepresented, particularly in the highly technical categories. According to the Global Ocean Science Report 2020 by IOC-UNESCO, female researchers account for 39% of global ocean scientists.

We believe in empowering women's participation in deep-sea research and empowering women to thrive in ocean-related careers. The ISA Secretary-General has stated that "the scientific and technological advances on which the Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets depend, rely on the full and effective participation of women in science and scientific industries." Malta is proud to be a project partner of the Women in Deep-Sea Research Project.



In 2015, Malta was part of the initiating players of the process which led to the UN establishing 11 February as the International Day of Women and Girls in Science, which has been commemorated for the 8th year in 2023. Malta has also been designated as the World Capital for Women and Girls in Science for the inaugural year 2023 – 2024, by RASIT (Royal Academy of Science International Trust) which is truly an honour. We will continue our efforts to ensure that women and girls are empowered and given the space to pursue careers in STEM, including when it comes to ocean science.

Malta is delivering concrete action towards fostering international and regional cooperation in support of the sustainable development of ocean-based economies for LDCs, through capacity development. Malta is committed to this objective through education, training, and leadership opportunities through the International Ocean Institute (IOI) and the IMO-International Maritime Law Institute (IMLI).

In conclusion, Malta strongly believes in the need to enhance marine education and in the importance of science and innovation. We must also continue to emphasise the crucial role women and girls play in science and technology whilst supporting actions to empower them to take up ocean careers. This is the way forward.

I thank you.