



**Ninth Intergovernmental Session of the IOC Regional Committee for the Central Indian Ocean**

**Dhaka, Bangladesh**

**28 March 2023**

**STATEMENT**

by

H.E. Mr. Michael W. Lodge

Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority

.....  
Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Although it was not possible for me to be here with you in person, I am sincerely delighted to address such distinguished audience for the opening of this new session of IOCINDIO.

Strong partnerships and joint efforts are critical to ensure the effective protection and sustainable use of the Ocean.

It is for this purpose that ISA was established 29 years ago by UNCLOS to enable the international community to co-manage the seabed beyond national jurisdictions for the benefit of all humanity.

Advancing marine scientific research and ensuring that developing States can take an effective part in it is one of our priorities as set out by our members through the adoption in December 2020, of the ISA MSR Action Plan in support of the UN Decade of Ocean Science.

The implementation of these scientific research priorities relies strongly on effective strategic partnerships. This is notably the case with our sister organization IOC. And ISA has bolstered the data holdings of OIC by becoming an Ocean Biodiversity Information System (OBIS) node.

We also are ready to help implement other global ocean agendas and support the provisions of the new BBNJ agreement that should reinforce our mandate and action.

This meeting comes at a critical time. In May, ISA will progress, in cooperation with the scientific community, to advance deep-sea research and knowledge of the Indian Ocean. Together with India, we are convening an international workshop on the development of a regional environmental management plan for the Area of the Indian Ocean, with a focus on the mid-ocean ridges and central Indian Ocean basin. Scientists from more than 14 countries will contribute to this endeavor.

We also recently entered into exciting partnerships with the Indian Ocean Rim Association with the specific focus to address the immediate capacity development priority needs of Indian ocean members of ISA.

I would welcome IOCINDIO to join us in these different initiatives which will contribute to deliver the scientific objectives of the UN Decade.

I thank you very much and I wish you well in your deliberations this week.

\*\*\*