



World Oceans Day 2023
“Celebrating women scientists advancing deep-sea research”

Kingston, Jamaica

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STATEMENT

by

H.E. Mr. Michael W. Lodge

Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority

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I extend a warm welcome to all participants joining us in the virtual celebrations of World Oceans Day.

World Oceans Day is a day to celebrate the ocean, and all it brings to us. We have much to celebrate this year.

We know more about the ocean than at any time in human history. Its diversity of marine life. The geology and morphology of the seafloor. Its evolution. Its resource potential. Its role in regulating the climate. The services it provides to humanity in terms of food, water and natural resources of all kinds.

We are managing our relationship with the ocean better than ever before. Years of hard work on the front lines of international diplomacy, supported by the best available scientific evidence, mean that every year more and concrete steps are taken to work together, collectively and in a spirit of multilateralism, to take the measures that are necessary to manage natural resources effectively, develop new resources and reduce pollution of all kinds.

Of course, there is more work to be done. But even there, the signs are positive. States have started working on an international treaty to reduce plastic pollution. We have concluded an international agreement to strengthen the conservation and sustainable management of the biological diversity of the ocean.

All this is done within the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea: a constitution for the ocean that has endured for more than 40 years.

So let us cast aside the messages of doom and despair.

Let us, instead, celebrate the ocean and our relationship with it in all its magnificence and diversity.

For this year's World Ocean Day, we at the International Seabed Authority (ISA) have decided to celebrate the contributions of women scientists in the realm of deep-sea research, recognizing their invaluable role and seeking ways to foster their engagement and progression into leadership positions.

As one of the three institutions established under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, ISA is assigned with the exclusive and unique mandate to organize, regulate and control all activities related to mineral resources in the international seabed area (the Area) for the benefit of humankind.

In fulfilling this mandate, ISA has the duty to ensure the effective protection of the marine environment from harmful effects that may arise from such activities.

Furthermore, ISA has the exclusive responsibility to promote and encourage marine scientific research in the Area and to coordinate the dissemination of the results.

Since 2020, ISA has taken the lead in shaping the global agenda for deep-sea research through the implementation of its Action Plan for Marine Scientific Research. The Plan and the actions carried out under its six strategic research priorities contribute, day after day, to the societal objectives of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

By establishing strategic partnerships to advance marine scientific research in the Area, ISA and its partners contribute to generating better knowledge and global understanding of the deep sea and its ecosystems.

The science undertaken and the data and information collected directly inform global decision-making processes and policy agendas for transformative actions.

But we need to do more and better, including by offering platforms and opportunities to recognize and increase the role of women scientists.

That is why we have decided today to showcase some of the key achievements of our Women in Deep-Sea Research project and to hear directly from some inspiring women deep-sea scientists.

The Women in Deep-Sea Research project was launched in 2021 by ISA and the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS). This initiative aims to address the specific challenges women scientists from developing States face, particularly those hailing from least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, in pursuing careers in deep-sea research.

Today is also a special day as it will mark the launch of the global mentoring programme in deep-sea research entitled "See Her Exceed" or S.H.E.

We will learn much more about this in the webinar starting shortly. But today, we will formally invite all women scientists operating in deep-sea research who wish to apply to the S.H.E. Mentoring Programme. I particularly call on women scientists from least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and

small island developing States. Those selected will certainly go through a life-changing experience that, with our collective commitment, supports you to realize your full potential.

We also have the results of our annual art competition, including a special category for children under 16 in Jamaica and many more activities taking place in Jamaica.

I invite all of you to join us and wish you all a very happy World Ocean Day 2023.
