

OPENING REMARKS OF THE AFRICAN GROUP DELIVERED BY MS. KHALILAH HACKMAN, REPRESENTATIVE OF GHANA AND COORDINATOR OF THE AFRICAN GROUP

**Meeting of the ISA Council in the Second Part of the 28th Session
10th July, 2023**

President,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the African Group and in taking the floor for the first time, we extend warm greetings to all delegations. We are pleased to return to Kingston and express our appreciation to the Government of Jamaica for the continued support to our respective delegations and the ISA.
2. As we converge in this second part of the 28th Session, the African Group reaffirms its commitment to continue engaging with other members of the Council in a cooperative and constructive manner as we have always done.
3. This session is of particular importance to the process of the development of the regulations for exploitation in the Area especially, as the timeline for the two-year rule has elapsed. Since 2020, the Council, has made substantial progress through the various informal working groups and we commend all facilitators for their leadership and guidance. We also extend appreciation to all facilitators of intersessional working groups for their commitment in sustaining the dialogue and working towards building consensus. We thank them for the various reports produced which bring clarity on the issues under consideration and help to identify areas for further work.
4. The work done so far, demonstrates the commitment of Member States to the mandate of the Council in developing a comprehensive exploitation regulation. We consider this process as an important contribution to the progressive development of international law

aimed at extending the reach of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to the exploitation of deep seabed resources.

5. While an extensive amount of work has been done, still more remains outstanding requiring Council members to work in a skillful and creative manner to strengthen areas of convergence while making the needed compromises and tradeoffs to bridge any differences in positions.
6. It is the expectation of the African Group that this session would take us closer to our common objective of developing comprehensive and robust regulations. The regulations must ensure the proper administration of seabed mining activities as well as ensure the effective protection and preservation of the marine environment. We also urge the support of Council members on the operationalization of the Enterprise building on efforts made during the previous session and on the basis of the report of the Finance Committee. We also remain open to continuing the dialogue on the two-year rule and the review of the roadmap as appropriate.
7. Lastly, we wish to reiterate our appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Michael Lodge and the Staff of the Secretariat for their dedicated support to the Council and all other bodies of the ISA over the past few weeks and in the weeks ahead.

I thank you.