

## **Statement by Indian delegation on report of Secretary General**

Mr . President, Thanks for giving me the floor.

Our delegation takes this opportunity to congratulate you Mr. President on your election as the President of the 28<sup>th</sup> session of the Assembly. Our delegation assures you of our full support for the effective and smooth conduct of the proceedings of this Assembly.

2.Our delegation also take this opportunity to thank the Secretary General, Secretariat, interpreters, conference officers and support staff of International Sea Bed authority for their hard work and diligent preparations for smooth conduct of the 28<sup>th</sup> session of the Council and Assembly. Also our sincere appreciation to the Jamaican Government and the people of Jamaica for their hospitality and support in making this session a success.

3.Our delegation compliments and thanks the Secretary General for a comprehensive Annual Report, which brings out the successful journey of the ISA since its inception and provides a comprehensive overview of the extensive work done and result achieved in 1 year . It is not mere compilation of facts and figures, but chronicle of the journey of the authority from implementing agency to enabling agency. It explains how ISA is aligning itself with sustainable development goals, especially SDG 14, under the mandate of the UN

4.India lauds the initiatives of the ISA in capacity building, filling the knowledge gaps and encouraging developing nations in the field of ocean sciences. We also commend ISA and ISA SG for leadership role in advancing women empowerment and leadership in ocean affairs and take this opportunity to Congratulate Ms. Rima Browne from the Cook Islands for receiving the Award for Excellence in Deep-Sea Research during the 28th session of the ISA Assembly

5.Outreach programs of the ISA, especially the networking among the member states is very significant. We are happy to recall the visit of the SG Mr. Micheal Lodge to India during January-February 2023. He, not only visited the headquarters of the Ministry of Earth Sciences and met Hon. Minister of Earth Sciences Mr. Jithendra Singh, but also visited various national and international institutions and organizations in the country, where multi-disciplinary work of Ocean sciences and technology developments are in progress.

6. India appreciates the efforts of the Secretariat and Secretary General in particular for signing letter of cooperation with many Important entities in India for establishing strategic partnerships, to deliver on the mandate of ISA, assigned to it by the UNCLOS and the 1994 Agreement. During the Secretary Generals recent visit to India, letter of cooperation have been signed with three Indian entities including National Maritime Foundation, The Research and Information System for Developing Countries, and the Gujarat Law University. These new strategic partnerships, shall ensure strengthening of maritime and deep-sea related endeavours and also increase partnerships with scientific organisations and research organisations from developing States.

7.As has been mentioned in the Annual Report, India hosted the first workshop on the Regional Environmental Management Plans (REMP) for the Indian Ocean region at Chennai during 1-5 May, 2023. The workshop's main objective was to initiate the development of a REMP for the Indian Ocean, with a specific emphasis on the Central Indian Ocean Basin and Mid-Ocean Ridges. This is a long overdue effort accomplished. We understand that this is only a first step towards the adoption of REMP for the Indian Ocean region, and is in the right direction. We have also noted that authority is in preparation for more REMP workshops in the forthcoming season.

8.The capacity building initiative of the authority is praiseworthy and we are happy to note that Dr. Ranju Radhakrishnan, from India was recipient of the postdoc fellowship of ISA/IFREMER-France in 2022.

9. Our delegation also note the significant progress made and the achievements in implementation of the strategic plan and high-level action plan for 2019-23 and appreciates the various strategic alliance and partnership of ISA with various global, regional and sub-regional organizations.

10.The efforts of ISA in contributing data to advance the general knowledge and understanding of the world's oceans and to improve the high-resolution mapping of the world's ocean basin is noteworthy. In this regard, a joint program called **AREA 2030**, in partnership with International Hydrographic Organization is launched, which also contribute to the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and the Seabed 2030 project.

11. India recognizes the support of ISA and SG in particular to the entire BBNJ process and recognize that the specific and unique mandate of ISA as Steward of the Area and its resources is formally recognized in the BBNJ Agreement which will reinforce further the mandate of ISA.

12. We recognize the unique role of ISA in ensuring protection of the marine environment in ABNJ – as of today, ISA is the only intergovernmental organization with a global mandate that allows the international community to do so – and it does it successfully giving life to the precautionary approach along which all the work of ISA is based on. This is particularly reflected in the development of REMPS.

13.India, as a pioneer investor, sponsoring state and exploration contractor for polymetallic nodules and polymetallic sulphides in the Indian ocean region, and is aware of its responsibilities. Good amount of work is being carried out by India on survey, environmental study, mining and extraction technology development etc. towards achieving an effective and sustainable mining of the deep-sea.

14.We also take note the efforts made by Finance Committee on the basis of summary report of the Secretary General, to develop options for equitable sharing of financial and other economic benefits derived from activities in the areas under UNCLOS, Article 82(4) and

fully support the ongoing discussions on the establishment of Seabed Sustainability Fund (now called the Common Heritage Fund)

15. Our delegation also recognizes the progress made in development of draft exploitation regulation and associated standards and guidelines, which are being done in a much transparent and inclusive manner. ISA is today standing on the threshold of a monumental era of developing exploitation code. India, as a responsible member of the ISA, reassures its commitment to ISA in all its endeavours.

Once again our delegation would like to place it on records our sincere appreciation to the secretariat and specially to the Secretary General for the remarkable progress made during the year and also in bringing out a broad and **comprehensive report**.

Thank you president for giving me the floor.