



PHILIPPINES

STATEMENT

Agenda Item 8a: Annual Report of the Secretary-General (ISBA/28/A/2)

Permanent Mission of the Philippines to the United Nations New York

28th Session of the International Seabed Authority (Assembly)

25 July 2023 Tuesday 10:00 AM (TBC)

Kingston, Jamaica

Thank you, Mr. President.

I wish to congratulate you on your election as the President of the Assembly of the 28th Session of the International Seabed Authority. The Philippines assures you of our full support. We thank the government of Jamaica for their excellent hospitality.

The Philippines thanks the Secretary General and his team for the hard work in convening the Council and the Assembly meetings this session and for the Annual Report. **As in the previous year, the format of the Report allows for a comprehensive but readable take on the work done in the reporting period. We thank the Secretariat for coming up with this substantive publication, which allows us, *inter alia*, to assess the status of the implementation of the strategic plan of the Authority.**

There is steady progress accomplished in the high-level actions and other indicators identified in the Strategic Action Plan and High-Level Action Action Plan.

We note the Authority's contribution to achieve the 2030 Agenda, including to 12 of the 17 SDGs, and we reiterate our call at the 33rd Meeting of States Parties to UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, for the ISA to continue working closely with states as they continue to carefully consider this in their national development plans.

As an archipelagic state, we recognize the critical role of the Authority under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea in protecting the environment and the rights of all States Parties. The completion of the regulatory regime is relevant, in this regard, but so is the 'clarity in the legal framework and the removal of regulatory uncertainty and risk.'

The Authority's mandate in developing the regulatory regime for the exploitation of deep seabed minerals becomes even more relevant if the benefits are to be shared by "humankind as a whole" in a sustainable manner.

In relation to realizing the role of the Authority in the global context, we recall the Authority's contributions to the recently adopted BBNJ Agreement, a milestone towards integrated ocean governance, and expect the Authority to anticipate the entry into force of the Agreement, **noting that the Agreement recognizes the unique mandate of the ISA in regard to the Area.**

We reaffirm the normative and operational importance of UNCLOS in the work of the Authority. In accordance with UNCLOS, we have deposited relevant charts and lists with the Secretary General to help establish the exact geographical limits of the Area. Compliance with UNCLOS, which comprehensively allocates maritime zones to states parties, is foundational.

The Philippines is among the states that maintain a permanent mission to the Authority. Yesterday, I presented my credentials to the Secretary General to reaffirm our support to the Authority and its critical role under the UNCLOS, as it fulfills its mandate.

We believe in ensuring the fully integrated participation by developing states in ISA's work by building capacities. This is key in the implementation of the strategic plan. We welcome more capacity building opportunities and international collaboration, including the Authority's enhanced support for national initiatives like consultations workshops **that allow developing states to pursue opportunities under UNCLOS. We note the Secretary General's steady efforts to capacitate and empower developing states, in this regard.**

We are pleased that of the six candidates from the Philippines selected for training programmes under plans of work for seabed exploration, all are women. We encourage the Authority's efforts in empowering female scientists. We urge continued efforts in enhancing deep sea literacy, noting the recent launch of the new learning platform.

In line with the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, we look forward to the implementation of the ISA's Action Plan to maximize its contribution to the UN Decade as well as the various initiatives and partnerships established to promote cooperation and coordinate marine scientific research efforts.

Mr. President,

There are important decisions that need to be made in this year's Assembly. The Philippines will continue to be guided by the need to balance interests in resource extraction and the overarching need for the preservation of the marine environment for our children and their children.

[Finally, the Philippines reaffirms its firm support to the Authority and its critical role under the UNCLOS, as it fulfills its mandate of organizing and controlling all mineral-resources-related activities in the Area for the benefit of mankind as a whole, while proceeding within the framework of sustainable development.]

Thank you. **END**

