

Republic of South Africa

**Statement of the South African Delegation delivered by
Ms. Tshifhiwa Mabidi**

**2023 Secretary-General Annual Report
ISA Assembly
26th July 2023**

Thank you, Mr. President,

State Presidents (Nauru) and Ministers, distinguished excellencies and delegates, dear colleagues.

- 1.** South Africa conveys its warm congratulations to you, Amb. Funday Turay and other members on your election to the Bureau of the 28th session. We are confident of your leadership and look forward to progressing and reaching positive outcomes under your guidance. We align with the Statement of the African Group delivered by the representative of Ghana.
- 2.** We express our profound appreciation to the host State, Jamaica, for the warm welcome and courtesies extended to our various delegations.
- 3.** We welcome the Republic of Rwanda on becoming the newest party to the Convention and the 1994 implementing Agreement.
- 4.** Furthermore, we congratulate Ms. Rima Browne for receiving the 2023 Secretary-General Award for Excellence in Deep-Sea Research.

Mr. President,

5. South Africa thanks the Secretary-General, Mr. Michael Lodge, for his annual report and the illustrative hard copy version which provides a comprehensive overview of the activities undertaken to further the mandate of the Authority.

6. South Africa positively notes the extensive work carried out under all 9 strategic directions to deliver on the high-level actions and related outputs assigned for 2022 -2023.

Mr. President,

7. South Africa reasserts its strong support for a comprehensive set of rules, regulations and procedures for exploitation, including provisions for the effective protection of the marine environment from serious harm that may be caused by such activities. We also believe that the development of science must accompany these efforts to support evidence-based decision making in the exploitation of the Area.

8. We welcome the decision of the Council on establishing the position of the Interim Director General of the Enterprise which is an important step in the Operationalization of the Enterprise, which is a crucial entity in the work of the Authority. We also call for the timely operationalization of the Economic Planning Commission and urge the action of the Council in this regard.

9. South Africa thanks member states and other stakeholders who have contributed to the voluntary trust funds which assist members from developing countries to participate in the respective meetings of the Council, the LTC and the Finance Committee.

Mr. President,

10. South Africa continues to take deep interest in the specific efforts aimed at enhancing the capacity of developing states as clearly specified under the capacity development strategy. The initiative of working through National Focal Points is a useful approach to ensuring effective coordination with member states and enhancing the level of participation.

11. We commend the Secretary-General's personal commitment to advancing the employment and leadership of women in ocean affairs and marine scientific research.

12. In closing, allow me to reiterate once again, we align with the commitment of the *African Group* to the mandate of the ISA and our intention to remain active and constructive in our engagements in all the organs of the Authority.

I thank you, Mr President

