



## REPUBLIC OF VANUATU

**28<sup>th</sup> Session of the International Seabed Authority  
Assembly (24-28 July 2023)**

### NATIONAL STATEMENT

**Delivered by SIDDHARTH SHEKHAR YADAV**

*Advisor (Climate Change and Ocean Affairs) to the UN Ambassador/ Permanent  
Representative of the Republic of Vanuatu to the United Nations, New York.*

*26 July 2023.*

Thank you, Mr. President.

At the outset, please allow me to express my deepest appreciation and sincere gratitude to the Government and people of Jamaica for their warm and gracious hospitality. Allow me again to extend my congratulations to you, Mr. President, on your election. We hold utmost respect and full confidence in your leadership.

Mr. President, as a Small Island Developing State at the very forefront of the climate crisis, including the impacts of climate change on the Ocean, the Republic of Vanuatu remains deeply concerned about the introduction of additional pressures on the Ocean from other anthropogenic activities.

Vanuatu ranks among the world's most vulnerable countries. Owing to our geography, we have been rated as the country most at-risk, from natural disasters, in the world. The Ocean holds special and profound significance to us. Like other Pacific Islands, Vanuatu relies on the Ocean for everything – including climate and food security, and our health and well-being. And it is in the health and well-being of the Ocean where our biggest hope for sustainable development lies, as we are Large Ocean States. The Ocean is deeply interconnected to the very fabric of our cultures. The Ocean defines us as Pacific people.

Current scientific knowledge has provided evidence that deep-sea mining would result in significant and possible irreversible harm to the unique and diverse ecosystems

present in the deep sea. That is why we support a precautionary pause at the International Seabed Authority, and we acknowledge the leadership and stand in solidarity with those in our Pacific family - Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, Samoa, and Fiji - who were among the first to take a stance against deep-sea mining on the international stage.

We acknowledge the growing support for a precautionary pause or a moratorium on deep sea mining, and we welcome the recent announcements in this respect from a number of Member States.

Mr. President, Vanuatu is honoured to join Chile, Costa Rica, France, and Palau in putting forward the new agenda item regarding the discussion on the conservation of the marine environment in the Assembly, the supreme organ of the Authority. We look forward to addressing this later under the agenda item.

We are convinced that deep-sea mining is not a sustainable solution to the challenges that we are facing today – we cannot call this a ‘clean transition’ or a ‘green transition’ if it comes at the cost of nature and biodiversity.

In this regard, we urge all Member States to align with the Global Biodiversity Framework adopted at the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP15 in Montreal, as well as the recently adopted Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction – the BBNJ/ High Seas Treaty.

These commitments and agreements emphasise the importance of protecting marine biodiversity and marine environment as a whole, at a time of unprecedented challenges. We must not add to those challenges.

This is why we signed onto France’s Partnership for the Deep Sea, in the words of the Declaration, and I quote “...to join forces to implement action to ensure the protection of the marine environment, as well as the development of a strategic and rigorous scientific research project for the Deep Sea and its ecosystems” – end of quote. We appreciate the statement delivered by H.E. Hon. Minister Hervé Berville, and thank him for his leadership.

Excellencies, distinguished leaders, and fellow delegates, we need your leadership and political efforts to protect our one, shared, global Ocean. You can count on Vanuatu’s support.

Mr. President, I thank you for giving me the floor.