

# ISA-PHILIPPINES NATIONAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP ON DEEP-SEA RELATED MATTERS

Manila Diamond Hotel

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## WELCOME REMARKS

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*Acting Secretary for Foreign Affairs /*  
*Undersecretary for Multilateral Affairs and*  
*International Economic Relations*

Distinguished guests, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, good morning. It is my honor to open today's consultation on deep seabed mining.

First of all, I would like to welcome to the Philippines the **International Seabed Authority (ISA) Secretary General Michael Lodge**, and his team of experts. I thank the ISA for making this workshop possible.

I would also like to acknowledge the presence of **Ambassador Antonio Lagdameo**, Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations as well as the **Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the International Seabed Authority**.

I also take this opportunity to thank the **Maritime and Ocean Affairs Assistant Secretary Maria Angela Ponce** for taking the initiative in organizing this very timely and important workshop.

The Philippines, as one of the fastest-growing economies in Asia and the world, aims to increase production, expand industries, and improve infrastructure throughout the country. To support the energy needs of this expansion, the Philippines is aggressively promoting renewable or green energy. **President Marcos Jr.**, during his last State of the Nation address, **firmly believes that "renewable energy is the way forward"**.

And with the pressure to reduce carbon emissions, the demand for green-energy technologies increased all over the world. Scientific and technological advancements over the past decades have rendered even the most remote parts of the ocean accessible—including discovery of new, valuable resources in the deep seabed.

Resources containing elements such as cobalt, manganese, copper, nickel and rare earth metals, which are crucial for the production of batteries, solar panels, and electric vehicles, are reportedly found in abundance on the seabed and ocean floor, most of which are beyond national jurisdictions, in the form of minerals that are unique to the deep ocean such as **cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts and polymetallic nodules**.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the Constitution of the Oceans, declared all the **seabed** and **ocean floor** beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, known as the Area, **as a common heritage of mankind**. UNCLOS, through the 1994 Agreement, also established the **International Seabed Authority (ISA)**, which organizes and controls all mineral-resources-related activities in the Area for the benefit of mankind as a whole.

The **Philippines, as State Party to UNCLOS** and an *ipso facto* member of ISA, is under obligation to take all appropriate steps to ensure that exploration and exploitation activities under their jurisdiction or control (including within areas beyond national jurisdiction) are appropriately managed, in accordance with international standards. This requires the adoption of national policies, laws and regulations dealing with issues that may arise from deep seabed exploration and exploitation activities.

Potential environment degradation brought about by the increased activities in the seabed is one of the primary considerations. The Philippines, as an archipelagic State, is entirely dependent on the sea and our state's ecosystem is affected by changes in the larger ocean ecology. We are therefore **committed to the conservation and sustainable management of the oceans and the seabed**.

I am pleased that we have a diverse pool of workshop participants from **government officials, experts, academics, and representatives from the private sector**. The Philippines encourages a whole-of-society approach to tackle these matters and form a holistic strategy for the Philippines with regard to the exploration and possible development of the seabed in the future.

We are also honored to have the experts from International Seabed Authority to share their knowledge and experiences in order to increase our awareness and understanding of the UNCLOS and the 1994 Agreement, raise awareness of the potential economic and environmental benefits and risks of seabed mining, identify the key issues and challenges that need to be addressed in developing a deep-sea related policy and regulatory framework for the Philippines.

I have seen the workshop schedule and it seems that you indeed will have a deep dive into the seabed related matters. I encourage everyone to pay close attention, and learn more about these exciting topics, and of course to participate and learn from each other.

I wish the organizers and participants a successful workshop.

Thank you.