

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

Manila Diamond Hotel
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WELCOME REMARKS

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Colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

A very warm welcome to the **2023 ISA-Philippines national capacity development workshop** on deep-sea related matters. It is an honor for me to welcome to the Philippines, **International Seabed Authority (ISA) Secretary General His Excellency Mr. Michael Lodge** and his team of experts from the ISA for what would be the first national capacity building workshop organized by the ISA for the Philippines.

We are also honored to be joined by the **Acting Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Undersecretary for Multilateral Affairs and International Economic Relations Hon. Charles C. Jose**. Thank you for kicking off this 3-day workshop.

We are also pleased to have here with us **H.E. Ambassador Antonio M. Lagdameo**, Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations as well as the **Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the International Seabed Authority**. We are heartened, Excellency, by the commitment of your team in the Mission, and by your commitment to coming all this way back to Manila after what have surely been a full and productive United Nations General Assembly.

To all the participants, allow me to express my deepest gratitude to each of you for gracing us with your presence. Your participation is a testament to your commitment to advancing our collective understanding of deep-sea exploration and mining, and I can assure you that your contributions over the coming days will be invaluable. We

strongly encourage a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach in dealing with these very important topics.

The Department sincerely appreciates the support of the ISA for partnering with the Philippines at the moment when all discussions on the oceans whether it is economic, security, environmental protection, sustainability or safety is of keen interest to the Filipino people. Given that interest, it may be useful to clarify what the International Seabed Authority's mandate is, and to better appreciate the work that we will all be doing for the next three days, which we hope will be the foundation for more work that we will do beyond this first workshop.

The ISA is an autonomous international organization established under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). It is the organization through which States Parties to UNCLOS organize and control all mineral-related activities in the international seabed, also known as the Area - the seabed and ocean floor and the subsoil thereof, beyond the limits of national jurisdiction. That would be 200 nautical miles from the baselines of all coastal States or more than 200 nautical miles from the baseline if the coastal State claims extended continental shelf, as the Philippines has done in the Philippine Rise. The area represents around 50 per cent of the total area of the world's oceans. So, it is not only vast, it is also declared under UNCLOS as the common heritage of humankind to be utilized for the benefit of humankind as a whole.

This means that the financial and other economic benefits derived from mineral resources must be equitably shared among all States, including small island developing states (SIDS), least developed countries (LDCs), and landlocked developed countries (LLDCs).

So why does it matter to the Philippines? It matters because activities in the Area will inevitably impact the oceans surrounding us, because it's the nature of our geography as an archipelagic State. As UNCLOS itself says, we are conscious that the problems of the ocean space are closely inter-related and need to be considered as a whole. But beyond that, as a government, we should better articulate in policies and strategies how deep-sea exploration and exploitation is to proceed so that our national interests are protected and promoted. Mindful that environmental conservation and sustainable

management, marine scientific research, and benefit sharing along with capacity development and training initiatives are at the forefront of these interests, the Department of Foreign Affairs, through the Maritime and Ocean Affairs Office, in line with the State obligations of the Philippines as a State Party to UNCLOS, has initiated several discussions with regard to policy development for the deep seabed, including in areas beyond national jurisdiction. In 2014, we had the Pioneering Workshop for Development of Sustainable Seabed Policy workshop, a subsequent inter-agency workshop in 2017, and just last year in December 2022, we conducted a National Consultation with Technical Experts, with support from the ISA and led by Dr. Mario Aurelio, who is a member of the Legal and Technical Commission (LTC) of the ISA.

We are also deeply appreciative of ISA's capacity building programs and activities, including for our Filipino scientists.

So over the next days, we will engage in active discussions. I encourage you to actively participate, so then we can broaden our horizons and deepen our knowledge in this complex topic.

Thank you.