



Workshop on enhancing biological data sharing to advance deep-sea taxonomy

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OPENING REMARKS

by

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Dr. Wan-hyun Choi, President, National Marine Biodiversity Institute of Korea (MABIK), Republic of Korea

Prof. Acad. Chau Van Minh, President of Vietnam Academy of Science and Technology (VAST), Vietnam

Prof. Hoang Nghia Son, Director of Institute of Tropical Biology (ITB), Vietnam

Dr. Ellen Pape and Dr. Dao Viet Ha, members of the International Seabed Authority's (ISA) Legal and Technical Commission members (LTC).

Esteemed speakers, distinguished participants, ladies, and gentlemen,

I am honoured to welcome you all today to the **workshop on enhancing biological data sharing to advance deep-sea taxonomy**. I regret that I am not able to join you in person in Vietnam.

This workshop is the fourth in a very successful series of deep-sea taxonomy standardization workshops, initiated in 2020 with the generous support of the **Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea and the National Marine Biodiversity Institute of Korea (MABIK)**.

I want to express my sincere appreciation to the **Vietnam Academy of Science and Technology (VAST), the Institute of Tropical Biology (ITB)**, for hosting us this week and their support in the preparation of this meeting.

I also thank Dr. Pape and Dr. Ha, the members of the LTC for their guidance and co-chairing of this workshop.

This meeting truly stands as testament to the collective efforts and extraordinary progress made in advancing our understanding of deep-sea ecosystems and biodiversity, under the umbrella of the Authority.

I sincerely appreciate all the speakers and participants contributing to this workshop in-person as well as remotely.

Dear colleagues,

Along with our mission to responsibly develop the use of the mineral resources in the international seabed area (the Area), the Authority plays a crucial role in promoting and encouraging marine scientific research, disseminating its findings, and building capacity in deep-sea research. The depth and breadth of our efforts in this field follows the six strategic research priorities identified by our members through the Action Plan they adopted in 2021 in support of the UN Decade of Ocean Science. This Action Plan serves as the global deep-sea research agenda around which actions are implemented.

Since its launch in 2019, ISA's DeepData database has compiled over 136,000 biological data records including more than 25,000 identified at species level. These key environmental baseline data collected alongside mineral exploration surveys have significantly contributed to advance our understanding of deep-sea biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction.

Deep-sea taxonomy plays a pivotal role in generating and using essential biodiversity data and information needed to bolster the ISA's efforts in establishing a robust regulatory framework for managing activities in the Area.

To that end, the Authority launched in 2022 the Sustainable Seabed Knowledge Initiative (SSKI). This initiative provides a nexus to allow the Authority to effectively discharge its mandate to protect the marine environment on the basis of the best available science. In practice, this project supports the consolidation of biodiversity assessment and monitoring, as well as the development of effective environmental management measures, including through impact and risk assessments and regional environmental management plans.

In just one year, SSKI has already implemented several actions for improving deep-sea species cataloguing, promoting data sharing and building capacity in deep-sea taxonomy.

Moreover, by facilitating the exchange of biodiversity data, and ensuring that biological data adheres to the **FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable)**, the Authority is making substantial contributions to various SDGs, in particular Goal 14, as well as other global ocean agendas including the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

I am confident that this workshop will serve as a catalyst for new collaborative opportunities, and will make an important contribution to the ISA **strategic roadmap for data management**, with a focus on improving the quality and quantity of biological data.

Our commitment to **Data integration and interoperability**, exemplified by the interconnection of DeepData with other biological and taxonomic databases, can be leveraged to reach new highs ultimately raising the bar for data management and utilization data standards.

Your dedication and expertise are invaluable, and I wish you all a productive and enlightening workshop ahead.

Thank you very much.
