



2024 Ocean Decade Conference

Satellite event | Empowering women for the ocean decade: achieving gender equality in ocean sciences and policymaking

Barcelona, Spain

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STATEMENT

by

H.E. Mr. Michael W. Lodge

Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority

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Excellencies,

Assistant Deputy Minister of Ecosystems and Oceans Science, Dr. Arran McPherson,

Secretary-General of the International Hydrographic Organization, Mr. Mathias Jonas,

Ambassador for the Ocean of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden; Ms. Anna Lindsted,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is with immense pleasure that I welcome you to our side event on 'Empowering women for the Ocean Decade: achieving gender equality in ocean sciences and policymaking'.

Let me first say that I deeply regret not being able to welcome you in person, especially considering the importance I give to the theme of today's event, not least in my capacity as an International Gender Champion, a role I proudly assumed in 2020.

I express my sincere gratitude to our event partners: the World Maritime University, the Sasakawa Global Ocean Institute, and the International Hydrographic Organization.

Over the past few years, we in the International Seabed Authority have intensified our efforts to achieve the full, equal, meaningful, and effective participation of women in deep-sea research and related fields. We have been particularly cognizant of the importance of targeted measures to

advance empowerment and leadership of women deep-sea scientists, particularly from developing States.

At programmatic level, our work is operationalized through the Action Plan for Marine Scientific Research adopted by all members of ISA in 2020 in support of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and, more recently, the Capacity Development Strategy adopted in 2022.

One excellent example of such a targeted measure is the ISA global mentoring programme ‘See Her Exceed’, or S.H.E. This programme has been designed to address the underrepresentation of women from developing States in marine deep-sea science by stimulating their personal and professional development to enhance their career opportunities.

The mentors, who are all volunteers, are world-renowned experts in their respective fields. In today’s event one of our mentors will share her experiences as a deep-sea scientist and reflect on her joint journey with her mentee so far.

The mentees include women scientists from Egypt, Indonesia, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Turkey. Besides advancing their leadership skills and professional network each mentor is working with the mentee on a professional development goal. The exciting topics they are working on range from designing a deep-sea course for university students in Africa, conducting deep-sea exploration surveys in national waters, and designing a research plan for an emerging deep-sea research group.

I invite you to visit our website, where the exceptional individuals, both mentors and mentees, are unveiled.

The parent initiative of the mentoring programme, the Women in Deep-sea Research project, has been successfully implemented by ISA since 2021 in partnership with the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Islands States of the United Nations (UN-OHRLLS).

I am proud to say that the WIDSR project now mobilizes 32 partners, including 7 member states, 5 research organisations, 5 international and regional organisations and 15 private partners to facilitate tailored capacity development initiatives for women and to mainstream gender equity policies and approaches into deep-sea research related sectors and academic fields. This showcases the unwavering commitment of our partners to gender equality in marine science and ocean affairs.

One groundbreaking achievement of the WIDSR project was a pioneering gender mapping analysis report launched in June 2022. Based on a survey of 128 participants across 23 LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, the report identified critical barriers to women scientists. It pointed out that a key challenge for women scientists from developing countries is the lack of career guidance and networking opportunities. Our S.H.E. mentoring programme is a response to this challenge.

By the close of 2023, another transformative milestone was reached under WIDSR with 19 ISA contractors pledging to dedicate half of their training slots in the ISA Contractors’ Training Programme to deserving women candidates from developing countries. This bold move signals a seismic shift towards empowering an emerging cadre of women scientists and researchers, heralding a new era of diversity and innovation in deep-sea research.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We all understand that gender equality is cross-cutting and affects the extent to which we can achieve all the Sustainable Development Goals.

I hope this event will give you further insights into the positive impact of ISA's efforts on women's careers in deep-sea sciences worldwide.

I wish you a productive session, and I count on the support and dedication of every single one of you to continue to build a more inclusive future where every woman's contribution to paving the way for a more equitable, diverse, and thriving global community is celebrated.

Thank you very much.
