



2024 International Day of Women and Girls in Science

Kingston, Jamaica

11 February 2024

STATEMENT

by

H.E. Mr. Michael W. Lodge

Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority

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As we mark the International Day of Women and Girls in Science on 11 February, it brings me immense pride to reflect on the strides we have made towards fostering inclusivity and empowering women from the realm of deep-sea research. The International Seabed Authority (ISA) has been at the forefront of advocating for gender equality in this field, as demonstrated by our Voluntary Commitment “Advancing women’s empowerment in marine scientific research” ([#OceanAction 40786](#)), registered at the 2017 UN Ocean Conference and renewed in 2022.

The significant progress we have seen with the Women in Deep-Sea Research project (WIDSR) implemented jointly with the Office of the High Representative of the United Nations for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States together with more than 20 partners representing governments, research institutes, international and regional organizations and exploration contractors is a testament to our dedication and the collective efforts of our partners. I am thrilled to announce that, as of the end of 2023, 17 ISA contractors have become partners in the WIDSR project and pledged to allocate 50 per cent of their training opportunities under the ISA-Contractor’s Training Programme to qualified women applicants. This initiative not only underscores our commitment to gender equity but also amplifies the potential impact of our collective actions.

Our focus extends beyond the WIDSR project. We continue to champion initiatives that create platforms for women to excel in marine sciences, ensuring they have the resources, opportunities and support needed to thrive. This includes enhancing access to education, training, mentorship and leadership roles, alongside fostering an environment where women’s contributions are recognized and celebrated. We plan to strengthen these efforts with our S.H.E. (“See Her Exceed”) Mentoring Programme, which debuted on World Oceans Day in June 2023. The S.H.E. programme aims to address the underrepresentation of women

scientists from developing countries in deep-sea research by providing mentoring opportunities in marine geosciences, deep-sea biology and oceanography, fostering career progression and building professional skills and networks. The S.H.E programme mentors, eminent professionals and practitioners, committed to advancing mentees' development goals over 12 months, reflecting efforts towards women's empowerment and leadership in marine science.

In line with our strategic vision, we remain devoted to dismantling the barriers that hinder women's participation in marine scientific research, especially those from developing states, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. Our efforts are geared towards not just achieving gender balance but ensuring that women have meaningful and impactful roles in shaping the future of ocean science.

As we move forward, let us renew our commitment to this cause, recognizing that our journey toward gender equality in marine science is far from over. Through our continued collaboration, innovation and dedication, we can build a more inclusive, equitable and sustainable future for marine scientific research.

I invite all stakeholders, partners and the global community to join us in this endeavour. Together, let's pave the way for more women and girls to lead, innovate and inspire in the field of marine science for the betterment of our planet and future generations.

Thank you for your unwavering support and commitment to empowering women in deep-sea research.
