



2024 International Women’s Day

Kingston, Jamaica

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STATEMENT

by

H.E. Mr. Michael W. Lodge

Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority

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The International Seabed Authority (ISA) is thrilled to join the worldwide observance of International Women’s Day. This year’s theme, ‘Invest in women: Accelerate progress,’ deeply aligns with our values, highlighting the essential contribution of women to global development. It is more than just a celebration; it is a reflection of the significant advances we have made in enhancing the participation and empowerment of women within the realm of ocean affairs. This theme embodies our ongoing efforts to create a more inclusive, equitable marine science and exploration community where the contributions of women are celebrated and recognized as integral to our collective success.

Reflecting on the journey thus far, it brings me immense pride to acknowledge the tangible strides we have made towards gender equality.

The Women in Deep-Sea Research (WIDSR) initiative stands as a beacon of ISA’s dedication to fostering inclusivity within the scientific community. This pioneering project, developed in collaboration with the Office of the High Representative of the United Nations for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, along with the support of over 20 international partners, showcases our unwavering commitment to gender equality in ocean science. By the close of 2023, a transformative milestone was reached: 19 ISA contractors pledged 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.

I am proud to highlight the remarkable achievement of having trained 468 women in various capacities, with 158 of these trailblazers benefiting from our Contractors' Training Programme, further underscoring our commitment to empowering women in ocean science and exploration.

We also proudly launched the S.H.E. ("See Her Exceed") mentoring programme. This visionary initiative was crafted to uplift and guide women scientists from developing countries, propelling them to the forefront of marine geosciences, deep-sea biology and oceanography. More than just a programme; it is a commitment to nurturing their professional growth, enhancing their leadership skills and expanding their global networks. We are excited to announce that we will soon reveal the names of the eight pioneering mentees who will embark on this transformative journey under the guidance of eight distinguished mentors.

Stay tuned as we prepare to celebrate the unveiling of these exceptional individuals and the significant impact they are poised to make in deep-sea research.

Since assuming the role of an International Gender Champion in 2020, I have been deeply committed to driving transformative change at every level. I invite all stakeholders, partners and the global community to join us in this endeavour.

Your support and dedication to empowering women in deep-sea research fuels our shared journey towards a more inclusive future. Together, we are not just inspiring change; we are actively crafting a world where every woman's contribution is celebrated, paving the way for a more equitable, diverse and thriving global community.

Thank you.
