

**DRAFT CLOSING REMARKS BY  
SENATOR THE HONOURABLE KAMINA JOHNSON SMITH, JP  
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN TRADE**

**INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY (ISA) SIDE EVENT IN THE MARGINS OF THE  
4TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SIDS**

**“Leveraging SIDS knowledge, technology, innovation and capacity to advance deep-sea  
research for the benefit of humanity”**

**Monday 27<sup>th</sup> May, 2024 4:00 – 5:30pm  
American University of Antigua**

- Hon. Mark Brown, Prime Minister of the Cook Islands
- H.E. Mr. Michael W. Lodge, Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority
- Senator the Hon. Samantha Marshall, Minister of State in the Ministry of Health, Wellness, Social Transformation and the Environment with special responsibility for the Blue Economy of Antigua and Barbuda
- Dr. Mohamad Maliki Bin Osman, Minister in the Prime Minister’s Office, Second Minister for Education and Foreign Affairs of Singapore
- Mr Andreas Kravik, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway
- Under-Secretary-General Mr. Li Junhua, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and Secretary-General of the SIDS4 Conference

Excellencies, Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Thank you for sharing your time with us this afternoon to explore and highlight this important topic of leveraging SIDS knowledge, technology, innovation and capacity to advance deep-sea bed research for the benefit of humanity.

As host country of the International Seabed Authority and a developing ocean economy, the Government of Jamaica is pleased to be one of the co-sponsors of this side event Singapore.

Let me again express my appreciation to Secretary-General Lodge for the kind invitation extended to Jamaica to participate in this side event.

I also extend a special thanks to all panellists and attendees, and of course, the organizers of this event.

We were particularly grateful to have the Honourable Mark Brown, Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, with us to deliver his keynote address. His insights were well received and resonated with everyone here today.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this event highlighted how the International Seabed Authority, through its unique and exclusive mandate, has significantly contributed during its thirty years of existence, to the protection of the environment beyond national jurisdiction for the benefit of all humanity.

It has also sought to bring to the fore, challenges, opportunities and best practices in deep-sea research, and the role of partnerships to build resilience in the ocean economy in SIDS in line with their national priorities. While, I was not able to be present for most of the panel discussions, I am assured that it was an enriching debate and that its outcomes will serve to bolster our collective efforts to reap the benefits from the blue economy while ensuring its preservation for humanity in the future.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The importance of ocean-based activities and the development of the blue economy in SIDS are critical to sustainable development. Strategic partnerships, including with organizations such as the ISA, and other specialized entities, as well as partnerships among SIDS, help to build the collaborative efforts needed to increase capacity and drive progress in SIDS' ocean economies.

Against this background, we welcome the training opportunities provided to develop skills and knowledge in the blue economy and deep-sea research, even as we encourage more! and we applaud all relevant stakeholders for promoting and facilitating training and education programmes.

I wish to specifically commend the ISA for its efforts in executing its mandate to support capacity building efforts. The Authority has enshrined the importance of science-based decision making and strategic research priorities as part of its action plan dedicated to advancing the deep-sea research agenda. The

special emphasis on enhancing the role of women from developing States in marine scientific research programmes in the Area has also yielded commendable results, and we look forward to continued progress with the action plan.

### **Reflections on Jamaica's Commitment**

The benefits of the blue economy can be transformative for SIDS. States like Jamaica are already heavily reliant on activities such as coastal and marine tourism, but this is only one example of an ocean-based activity that has the potential to catalyse transformation towards a sustainable ocean economy, and which delivers on the vision for protection, production and prosperity.

Jamaica also continues to focus on the target of protecting 30% of our Exclusive Economic Zone by 2030. We are conscious of the fact that protecting 30% of our Ocean will achieve 20% of our mitigation targets. Achieving the 30% target in respect of our EEZ will also help us with sustainability of fisheries, biodiversity protection and carbon retention. All of these sectors connect communities with benefits of the blue economy.

We have now protected 26% of our EEZ. The progress we have made thus far, could not have been achieved without strategic partnerships and wide community consultation. We therefore encourage even greater collaboration by SIDS seeking to protect and build their blue economies while ensuring that no one is left behind.

### **Call to Action**

With the International Seabed Authority - the competent organization under UNCLOS at the centre - we should recommit to the protection of the environment beyond national jurisdiction for the benefit of all humanity, using the best available science, transparency and equity in the stewardship of the Area and its resources.

For this reason, Jamaica is pleased to join other countries which have endorsed the ISA Call to Action. We recognize the importance of the unique role of the Authority to promote and encourage marine scientific research in the Area for the benefit of all, including developing States. We encourage other ISA Member States to join this call and recommit to supporting the implementation of the ISA Action Plan for Marine Scientific Research as part of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, the global agenda for deep sea science.

We all acknowledge the substantial contribution that the Authority continues to make to advance the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically SDG 14 - Life Below Water. We commend, therefore, its efforts to boost the capacity of developing States, including through better access to critical data and knowledge.

### **Closing**

Ladies and Gentlemen, it has been an afternoon of fruitful discussions. Thank you again to all invited guests for your contributions and engagement. A special thanks to the ISA for providing this platform for deliberations.

We look forward to more positive tangible outcomes from deep-sea research for the benefit of our countries, and we encourage all partners present to work together for a sustainable and inclusive blue economy.

Thank you.