

**Statement by Pakistan at the General debate on the Annual Report of the
Secretary General of the International Seabed Authority, Kingston,
Jamaica
29th ISA Assembly Session**

30 July 2024

**Mr. President,
Secretary General,
Excellencies, Distinguished delegates and Observers,**

At the outset, we thank the Secretary General for his comprehensive annual report and appreciate the Secretariat for their support.

2. The report outlines an overview of the progress made by the International Seabed Authority to ensure precautionary and responsible governance of the Area and its mineral resources for the benefit of humankind, based on the principles established in UNCLOS and the 1994 Agreement.

Mr. President,

3. It is heartening to note that the year 2024 marks the 30th anniversary of the entry into force of the UNCLOS and the establishment of the ISA. Pakistan appreciates the ISA's continued commitment to advancing its programs and initiatives in alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly emphasizing Sustainable Development Goal 14 (Life Below Water) to ensure the sustainable use and conservation of ocean resources.

4. In our view, the ISA's Strategic Plan and High-Level Action Plan are instrumental in providing a comprehensive strategic framework to guide the ISA's work for the sustainable management of seabed resources and the protection of the marine environment. We also welcome the Secretary-General's Call to Action, to accelerate sustainable development through deep-sea science, technology, and innovation for the benefit of all humankind, which was issued at the margins of the 2023 United Nations SDGs Summit held in New York.

Mr. President,

5. The United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development presents a crucial opportunity to enhance sustainable ocean development. However, many developing States continue to face significant challenges in strengthening the means of implementation and developing partnerships for ocean sustainability. The lack of adequate financing and investments for the development of sustainable ocean-based economies exacerbates these challenges for countries in the Global South. Therefore, capacity-building initiatives, including the transfer of marine technology, are imperative to address these issues.

6. The legal regime for the deep seabed under Part XI of UNCLOS and the 1994 Agreement is based on two core expectations: that the regime would have a universal character and that due attention would be given to the interests and needs of developing countries. In this regard, Pakistan appreciates a dedicated strategy of the

ISA on capacity building, which is important to bridge the North-South gap and to effectively realize the principle of the common heritage of humankind.

7. As deep-seabed mining technology continues to develop rapidly, including technology for monitoring the impacts of mining on the marine environment, there is a need for greater attention to the implications and modalities for implementation of UNCLOS, Article 144, based on the technological needs of the developing States.

Mr. President,

8. The equitable sharing of the financial and other economic benefits from activities in the Area is an essential element of the legal regime created by Part XI of UNCLOS. In this regard, the benefit-sharing mechanism under consideration within the mining code, must be based on the principle of the “common heritage of humankind”, which is central to the work of the Authority.

9. The BBNJ Treaty is also a significant addition to the existing international ocean governance framework and will allow humanity to continue to enjoy equitably and without discrimination, the social, economic and environmental benefits that the high seas have to offer. In this regard, we agree with the Secretary General’s report, which highlights that the ISA will also have an important contribution to make to the effective implementation of the BBNJ Treaty.

Mr. President,

10. While my delegation continues to follow the ongoing negotiations on the deep seabed mining code in the ISA Council with interest, Pakistan believes that a robust and comprehensive regime for exploitation, including rules on equitable benefit sharing should be in place before mining could commence anywhere in the “Area”. Until then, my delegation opposes the approval of any work plan for the commercial exploitation of mineral resources in the “Area”. In this regard, Pakistan recalls the decision adopted by the Council last year in which the Council considers that the commercial exploitation of mineral resources in the Area should not be carried out in the absence of these rules and “intends to” continue the elaboration of these rules and regulations with a view to their adoption during the 30th session of the Authority.

11. In conclusion, the Government of Pakistan is fully committed to the work of ISA and looks forward to cooperate and collaborate with other Members of the Authority for this purpose.

I thank you.
