

**Statement by the Republic of Sierra Leone on the Report of
the Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority
under Article 166, Paragraph 4, of the United Nations
Convention on the Law of the Sea
July 29-Aug 2, 2024**

**Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,**

1. The Republic of Sierra Leone aligns with the statement delivered by the Distinguished Representative of Ghana on behalf of the African Group. I make this additional statement on the Annual Report of the Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority (ISA) under Article 166, paragraph 4, of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in our national capacity.
2. My delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for the comprehensive report, which thoroughly outlines the Authority's activities and developments over the past year. The report addresses critical issues of importance to my

delegation, and I would like to highlight and respond to some key areas.

3. My delegation commends the ISA's ongoing efforts to develop a robust regulatory framework for exploiting deep-sea mineral resources. We strongly support the emphasis on environmental impact assessments (EIA) and environmental management plans (EMP), which ensure that deep-sea mining activities are conducted sustainably and responsibly. We strongly support the development of Regional Environmental Management Plans as a proactive measure to protect vulnerable marine areas. These plans should be tailored to each region's environmental conditions and conservation needs.
4. Sierra Leone firmly supports a robust and independent inspection, compliance, and enforcement mechanism, and we commend the progress made in this area. We urge robust environmental standards to be incorporated and enforce rigorous monitoring mechanisms to minimize ecological disruption and protect biodiversity. We also agree that

finalizing and adopting the regulations will ensure that the dual mandate of the Authority is holistically implemented.

5. The report's discussion on financial mechanisms and the equitable sharing of benefits from seabed resources resonates deeply with the African Group's aspirations. It is imperative that the exploitation of these resources contributes equitably to the economic development and social welfare of all member States.

6. We support establishing a fair, transparent financial framework that ensures equitable benefit-sharing. The economic mechanisms should include provisions for royalties, fees, and other forms of revenue that are distributed justly and equitably among member states.

Mr. President,

7. The report highlights the importance of capacity-building and technological transfer to developing countries, ensuring that all member States, especially African countries, can benefit equitably from the seabed's resources.

8. We urge for increased funding and resources dedicated to capacity-building initiatives. These include training programs, workshops, and scholarships to enhance developing countries' technical expertise in seabed activities, particularly African States. Sierra Leone calls for stronger partnerships between the ISA, Member States, and educational institutions to facilitate technology and knowledge transfer.
9. To enhance the understanding of deep-sea ecosystems, Sierra Leone calls for increased investment in scientific research and a comprehensive database for sharing environmental and geological data collected from exploration and exploitation activities.
10. In line with the principle of the Common Heritage of Humankind, Sierra Leone emphasize the importance of inclusive stakeholder engagement, ensuring that the voices of indigenous communities, civil society organizations, and scientific experts are heard in the ISA's decision-making processes.

11. In conclusion, **Mr. President**, Sierra Leone reaffirms its commitment to the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the mandate of the International Seabed Authority. We believe that through collaborative efforts and adherence to sustainable practices, we can harness the seabed's resources for the benefit of all humanity while preserving the health of our oceans.

12. We thank the Secretary-General for the detailed report and look forward to continued progress in regulating and managing seabed activities. Together, we can ensure that deep sea treasures are explored responsibly and equitably, securing a prosperous and sustainable future for all nations.

Thank you.