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Item 8 of the provisional agenda*

**Annual report of the Secretary-General under
article 166, paragraph 4, of the Convention**

Restructuring of the secretariat of the International Seabed Authority

Note by the Secretary-General

1. The secretariat is one of the principal organs of the Authority. In accordance with article 166 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the secretariat shall comprise a Secretary-General and such staff as the Authority may require. In accordance with article 167 of the Convention, the staff of the secretariat shall consist of such qualified scientific and technical and other personnel as may be required to fulfil the administrative functions of the Authority. In this regard, the principle of cost-effective and evolutionary approach shall apply to the functioning of the secretariat.

2. It is recalled that a restructuring of the secretariat was conducted by the former Secretary-General after he assumed the role of the Secretary-General in 2017, within the approved budget.¹ To ensure optimal service from the secretariat to the Council and the Assembly and their subsidiary organs in alignment with the evolving priorities in implementing the mandate of the Authority and the visions of the new Secretary-General, in particular to enhance the efficiency, transparency, accountability and cost-effectiveness of the work of the secretariat, it is necessary to restructure the secretariat, as previously, within the approved budget.

3. It is also recalled that during the 29th session of the Assembly, the Assembly approved the budget of the Authority for the years 2025 and 2026, with an attached staffing table containing 33 professional and higher categories (including the Secretary-general), 2 National Professional Staff and 21 General Services staff, with one additional professional post from 2026.² The current changes to the organization of the secretariat as reflected in ISBA/ST/SGB/2025/1 were made without any change

* ISBA/30/A/L.1/Rev.1.

¹ See ISBA/23/A/4.

² See ISBA/29/A/3/Add.1-ISBA/29/C/11/Add.1.

to the approved number of posts and their levels, and therefore, without any financial or budgetary implications. The main aspects of the restructuring are described below.

Senior Management Group

4. The meetings of the Senior Management Group, including all heads of office, are further regularized to be convened weekly by the Secretary-General, and in the absence of the Secretary-General, by the Deputy to the Secretary-General/Chef de Cabinet. The Senior Management Group is composed of the Secretary General, the Chef de Cabinet and the Directors of Offices. The Secretary General can also invite other staff of the Secretariat to attend the meetings of the Senior Management Group on an ad hoc basis and depending on the topics discussed.

Executive Office of the Secretary-General

5. The Chef de Cabinet acts as the Deputy to the Secretary-General, at D-2 level, to support the Secretary-General in all aspects of the secretariat mandate and represent the Secretary-General when requested. The Chef de Cabinet coordinates the work of the secretariat and supervises the daily operation of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and of the Office of Administrative Services, with a view to further strengthening the coordination and collaboration among the substantive offices and the administrative office, mobilizing and making optimal use of the financial, human and other resources of the secretariat.

Office of Legal Affairs

6. The post of the Legal Counsel is adjusted back at the D-1 level, as has been the case in the past. The post of Knowledge Management Officer at P-3 level, vacant since November 2024, will be adjusted to a post of Legal Officer at the same level. Resources are mobilized and prioritized to support the ongoing negotiation of the draft exploitation regulations and associated standards and guidelines, including engagement of legal officer under Junior Professional Officer programme.

Office of Stewardship, Environment and Resources

7. The Office of Environment Management and Mineral Resources has been renamed the Office of Stewardship, Environment and Resources in order to better reflect its evolving functions and priorities, in particular the stewardship of the database as the knowledge bank on deep seabed science. The Office will be further strengthened with additional support of a staff “Senior Policy Officer (Mineral Resources and Economic Development)” at P-5 level under the Senior Professional Officer programme. Considering that the post of Senior Scientific Affairs Officer (Marine Geologist) at P-5 level has been encumbered at P-4 level for several years, the post was adjusted to Scientific Affairs Officer (Marine Geologist) at P-4 level to reflect the fact.

Office of contract management and capacity-building

8. A new office was established to include the Compliance Assurance and Regulatory Management Unit (CARMU) and the capacity-building unit, both of which were transferred from the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. The functions of monitoring the performance of the contractors and communication with the contractors and their sponsoring States will be further improved. The functions on regulatory management will be substantially strengthened, in collaboration with the Office of Legal Affairs, to provide more effective support to the Legal and Technical Commission in developing the associated standards and guidelines to support the exploitation regulatory framework, and standard operating procedures relating to activities of the contractors.

9. Capacity building and development for the developing States has been one key pillar of the work of the Authority. With the establishment of the new office, a centered approach will be implemented to enhance the coordination and collaboration in developing and implementing all training and capacity building programmes and projects managed by the secretariat, including the contractors' training programmes, training programmed developed by the joint training and research centers and projects funded by the Partnership Fund. The post of Training Coordinator is maintained, at P-2 level.

Office of Administrative Services

10. For optimal use of the limited resources to support the substantive work, the post of the head of the Office of Administrative Services was adjusted from D-1 to P-5 level, reporting to the Deputy to the Secretary-General/Chef de Cabinet.

11. It was noted that the secretariat had maintained one information and communication technology (ICT) team under the Office of Administrative Services and one data management team under the Office of Stewardship, Environment and Resources. With enhanced collaboration and efficiency, the post of IT manager (P-4), vacant since May 2024, was adjusted to IT Manager at P-3 level; the post of the Associated IT Officer at P-2 level, vacant since January 2025, was cancelled.

Financial and budgetary implications

12. In making these changes, the Secretary-General has been guided by the need to improve the efficiency and quality of services provided by the secretariat. In restructuring the secretariat, the Secretary-General has sought to utilize the talents available in the best possible manner and to the maximum extent. It is noted that further reorganization may be required in the light of evolving priorities and in the light of the Assembly's consideration and outcome of the periodic review of the international regime of the Area pursuant to article 154 of the Convention.

13. The restructuring of the secretariat outlined by the Secretary-General in the present report has been accomplished within the approved budget for the financial period 2025-2026 and has no financial or budgetary implications. A revised staffing table is shown in the annex to the present document.

Annex

Staffing table

| <i>Functional title</i> | <i>Professional and higher</i> | <i>National Professional Officer</i> | <i>General Service</i> |
|---|------------------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Executive Office of the Secretary-General | | | |
| Secretary-General | 1 (USG) | | |
| Deputy to the Secretary-General/Chef de Cabinet | 1 (D-2) | | |
| Communications Specialist | 1 (P-4) | | |
| Associate Copy Editor | 1 (P-2) | | |
| Office Manager | 1 (P-2) | | |
| Senior Liaison Assistant, Office of the Permanent Observer for the International Seabed Authority to the United Nations in New York | | | 1 |
| Senior Communications Assistant | | | 1 |
| Administrative Assistant | | | 1 |
| Staff Assistant | | | 1 |
| Office of Legal Affairs | | | |
| Director/Legal Counsel | 1 (D-1) | | |
| Senior Legal Officer | 1 (P-5) | | |
| Legal Officer | 1 (P-4) | | |
| Legal Officer (Regulatory Affairs) | 1 (P-4) | | |
| Legal Officer | 1 (P-3) | | |
| Legal Officer | 1 (P-3) | | |
| Associate Legal Officer | 1 (P-2) | | |
| Documentation and Conference Management Officer | | 1 | |
| Administrative Assistant | | | 1 |
| Administrative/Library Assistant | | | 1 |
| Office of Stewardship, Environment and Resources | | | |
| Director | 1 (D-1) | | |
| Scientific Affairs Officer (Marine Geologist) | 1 (P-4) | | |
| Environmental Coordinator | 1 (P-4) | | |
| Programme Coordinator (Marine Scientific Research) | 1 (P-4) | | |
| Programme Manager (Marine Environment) | 1 (P-4) | | |
| Scientific Officer (Geographic Information System) | 1 (P-3) | | |
| Database Manager | 1 (P-3) | | |
| Associate Programme Officer | 1 (P-2) | | |
| Senior Information Management Assistant | | | 1 |
| Administrative Assistant | | | 1 |
| Office of Contracts Management and Capacity-building | | | |
| Director | 1 (D-1) | | |
| Chief, Compliance Assurance and Regulatory Management Unit | 1 (P-5) | | |
| Quality Assurance and Compliance Officer | 1 (P-4) | | |
| Environmental Audit Officer (from 2026) | 1 (P-4) | | |
| Contract Management Officer | 1 (P-3) | | |
| Programme Management Officer (Capacity-Building) | 1 (P-3) | | |

| <i>Functional title</i> | <i>Professional and higher</i> | <i>National Professional Officer</i> | <i>General Service</i> |
|---|------------------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Training Coordinator | 1 (P-2) | | |
| Administrative Assistant | | | 1 |
| Office for Administrative Services | | | |
| Head of Office | 1 (P-5) | | |
| Budget/Internal Oversight Officer | 1 (P-4) | | |
| Finance Officer | 1 (P-4) | | |
| Human Resources Officer | 1 (P-4) | | |
| Communications and Information Technology Manager | 1 (P-3) | | |
| Associate Procurement Officer | 1 (P-2) | | |
| Associate Security and Facilities Officer | | 1 | |
| Senior Budget and Treasury Assistant | | | 1 |
| Senior Finance Assistant | | | 1 |
| Administrative Assistant | | | 1 |
| Budget Assistant | | | 1 |
| Communications and Information Technology Assistant | | | 1 |
| Travel and Human Resources Assistant | | | 1 |
| Human Resources Assistant | | | 1 |
| Finance Assistant | | | 1 |
| Procurement Assistant | | | 1 |
| Driver/General Services Assistant | | | 2 |
| The Enterprise | | | |
| Interim Director General | 1 (P-5) | | |
| Research Assistant | | | 1 |
| Total | 34 | 2 | 21 |

Abbreviation: USG, Under-Secretary-General.