



Statement by H.E. Ambassador Rabab Fatima, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to International Seabed Authority at the Assembly of the 26th Annual Session of the Authority, 13 December 2021, Kingston, Jamaica

Mr. President

Mr. Secretary-General,

Excellencies,

As I join the Assembly for the first time since my appointment as the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the International Seabed Authority, I wish to extend my warm felicitations to you on your election as the President of the 26th Session of the Assembly.

I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in steering the work of this important session.

I wish to also warmly congratulate Mr. Michael W. Lodge on his re-election as the Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority.

I also join others in thanking the Council President Mr. Mohammed Khurshed Alam for steering the work of the Council so skillfully.

Mr. President,

We welcome the report of the Secretary General on ISA's work, especially on the implementation status of the Strategic Plan for 2019-2023. We are pleased to see the effective use of the performance indicators which were adopted by the Assembly at its 25th Session.

The report has highlighted the inter-linkages of the ISA's work with at least 12 SDGs. This reveals the importance of deep sea resources for accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; as well as our efforts to recover more resilient from the devastating impacts of the pandemic.

Mr. President,

Bangladesh is now poised to enter into its next development phase. Last month, the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted the resolution on graduation of Bangladesh from the LDC category.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina envisions transforming Bangladesh into a developed country by 2041. We have identified the blue economy as a key enabler to fast-pace this journey. We wish to place high importance of harnessing the potential of deep-sea resources in our priorities for the blue-economy.

Recognizing this potential we have remained actively engaged in the work of the ISA. As an elected member, and also as the current president of the Council, we have been making important contribution in the formulation of ISA's policies, strategies, codes and technical guidelines.

Mr. President,

With its unique mandate and scientific knowledge in this field, ISA can play a critical role to help us fulfill our development priorities.

Allow me to share a few specific thoughts in this regard:

First: the vast and unexplored resource frontiers of the sea-bed have the potentials to bring transformative changes in the lives and livelihoods of billions of people.

We need support from the ISA for ensuring our equitable share of seabed resources, especially in the ISA controlled areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Second: although we have resolved our maritime boundaries with our neighbours, we have not been able to harness the full potentials of the blue economy, especially the business potentials in the deep sea, such as seabed mining.

We wish to build stronger partnership with the ISA to explore the possibility of enhanced public and private sector investment in this area, and to encourage our entrepreneurs to tap into the opportunities of this niche frontier of the blue economy.

Third: marine scientific research, capacity building and access to marine technology are critical for Bangladesh to reap the full benefits of seabed resources.

In the past, we have benefited from various capacity building initiatives of ISA. We are encouraged to know that the ISA is going to sign a MOU with the Indian Ocean Rim Association to facilitate joint marine scientific research in the deep sea and capacity building for the state parties.

We wish to engage in further collaboration and work more closely with the ISA to enhance our capacity to conduct marine scientific research in the Area.

Fourth: as a highly climate vulnerable country, we attach high importance to the protection of the marine environment by ISA while exploring minerals from the seabed. On our part, we have enacted the Maritime Zones Law to address all aspects of ocean and law of the sea, including efficient utilization, conservation, and protection of marine environment and its resources. We believe that the Regional Environmental Management Plans (REMPs) by ISA can make an important contribution in this regard.

Finally: I wish to congratulate Secretary General Lodge for being recognized as one of the International Gender Champions in 2020 for his outstanding contribution to promote the role of women in marine scientific research.

We encourage the ISA to continue its good work to create more space for the women in the new and emerging opportunities that the activities in the deep-sea, the ocean can offer.

I wish to conclude, Mr. President, by reiterating you of my delegation's full support to your work and to a productive outcome of this session.

I thank you Mr. President.