



Assembly

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25 May-5 June 2009

Statement of the President of the Assembly of the International Seabed Authority on the work of the Assembly at the fifteenth session

1. The fifteenth session of the Assembly of the International Seabed Authority was held at Kingston from 25 May to 5 June 2009.

I. Adoption of the agenda

2. At its 120th meeting, on 25 May 2009, the Assembly adopted its agenda for the fifteenth session (ISBA/15/A/1).

II. Election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the Assembly

3. At the 120th meeting, Mario José Pino (Argentina) was elected President of the Assembly for the fifteenth session. Following consultations in the regional groups, the representatives of India (Asian Group of States), South Africa (African Group of States), New Zealand (Group of Western European and Other States) and the Russian Federation (Group of Eastern European and Other States) were elected as Vice-Presidents.

III. Elections to fill a vacancy in the Finance Committee

4. At its 120th meeting, the Assembly was invited to note that Liu Jian (China) had resigned from the Finance Committee effective 9 April 2009. The Assembly was informed that the Permanent Mission of China to the Authority had notified the Secretary-General that Wang Quanling was nominated by China to replace Mr. Liu for the remainder of his term on the Finance Committee. The Assembly elected Wang Quanling as member of the Finance Committee for the remainder of the term of Mr. Liu.

IV. Request by the World Wildlife Fund for observer status in the Assembly

5. At its 120th meeting, the Assembly considered a request for observer status by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and decided to invite WWF to participate as an observer in its meetings.

V. Request by the Commonwealth Secretariat for observer status in the Assembly

6. At its 120th and 124th meetings, on 25 May and on 5 June 2009, the Assembly considered a request for observer status by the Commonwealth Secretariat and decided to invite the Commonwealth Secretariat to participate as an observer in its meetings.

VI. Report of the Credentials Committee

7. The Assembly appointed a Credentials Committee in accordance with rule 24 of its rules of procedure. The Committee was composed of Australia, Côte d'Ivoire, Fiji, Germany, Guyana, Haiti, Japan, Mozambique and the Russian Federation. Katy Chia-Ti Lin (Australia) was elected by the Committee as its Chairman.

8. The Committee held one meeting, on 2 June 2009, during which it examined the credentials of representatives participating in the fifteenth session of the Assembly. The Committee had before it a memorandum by the Secretariat dated 2 June 2009 on the status of those credentials. The report of the Committee is contained in document ISBA/15/A/6. At its 123rd meeting, on 4 June 2009, the Assembly adopted the report of the Committee with the oral revisions proposed by its Chairman. The decision of the Assembly relating to credentials is contained in document ISBA/15/A/7.

VII. Annual report of the Secretary-General

9. At the 121st meeting, on 28 May 2009, the Secretary-General introduced his annual report to the Assembly (ISBA/15/A/2), as required by article 166, paragraph 4, of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

10. Statements on the report of the Secretary-General were made by the delegations of Argentina, the Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Ecuador, Fiji, Germany, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Senegal, South Africa, Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United Republic of Tanzania. The observer delegation of the United Nations also made a statement.

11. Members of the Authority expressed their satisfaction with the first annual report issued by the Secretary-General since assuming the position and indicated their support for the work that had been undertaken by the Authority.

12. Member States also spoke on a range of issues, including the status of assessed contributions of members to meet the expenses of the Authority, the need for timely adoption of the draft sulphides regulations and concerns over some coastal States' submissions relating to the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles.

13. Delegations supported and welcomed the interactions of the secretariat with the Commission of the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic and the International Cable Protection Committee, as well as the secretariat for the Convention on Biological Diversity. Some delegations also proposed a similar contact with the Economic Community of West African States and other interested regional and subregional bodies to promote better understanding of the potential environmental impact of deep seabed mining in the areas beyond national jurisdiction. It was also suggested that the International Cable Protection Committee, which has a membership of 54 countries and is mandated to provide leadership and guidance on issues related to submarine cable planning, installation, operation, maintenance and protection, be invited by the Authority to become an observer.

14. Delegations also expressed appreciation for the Authority's efforts to promote knowledge and understanding of the deep sea ecology through the organization of technical workshops and sensitization seminars and requested that similar seminars continue to be held to promote the Authority and its work, subject to invitation by member States.

15. Some delegations commented on the work of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, established under article 76, paragraph 8, and annex II of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, to consider data and information submitted by coastal States where these limits extend beyond 200 nautical miles.

16. Delegations urged the 22 members of the Authority that had not yet become parties to the 1994 Agreement relating to the implementation of Part XI of the Convention to become parties to it as soon as possible. Delegations also welcomed the Congo, Liberia and Switzerland, which had become parties to the 1994 Agreement in the last year.

17. Delegations also urged member States that had not yet ratified the Protocol on the Privileges and Immunities of the Authority (ISBA/4/A/8) to do so. It was noted that, as at 13 February 2009, 31 members were parties to the Protocol.

18. Delegations also expressed their appreciation for the voluntary trust fund, noting that it had helped to ensure the participation of members from developing countries in meetings of the Legal and Technical Commission and the Finance Committee. A contribution to the fund by Norway of \$50,000 was noted with appreciation.

19. The value of the Endowment Fund was acknowledged by many delegations, who noted that it would help scientists from developing countries to participate in activities in the Area, thus strengthening the concept of the common heritage of mankind. The delegation of Norway announced that Norway would be making a contribution of \$250,000 to the Endowment Fund. Members of the Assembly expressed their appreciation to Norway for a generous contribution.

20. On 28 May 2009, Kenneth Baugh, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica, made a statement to the Assembly in

which he reiterated his Government's commitment to the International Seabed Authority and reassured the Authority of his country's support as host country.

21. Many delegations expressed their appreciation to the host country for its support of the Authority and the hospitality extended to representatives at sessions of the Authority.

VIII. Report and recommendations of the Finance Committee

22. At its 123rd meeting, on 4 June 2009, the Assembly considered the report of the Finance Committee (ISBA/15/A/5-ISBA/15/C/6). The decision of the Assembly relating to the budget of the Authority and related matters is contained in document ISBA/15/A/8.

IX. Date of the next session of the Assembly

23. The tentative dates for the sixteenth session of the Assembly are 26 April to 7 May 2010. It will be the turn of the Group of Western European and Other States to propose a candidate for the presidency of the Assembly in 2010.
