



Assembly

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14-25 July 2014

Statement by the President on the work of the Assembly of the International Seabed Authority at its twentieth session

1. The twentieth session of the Assembly of the International Seabed Authority was held in Kingston from 14 to 25 July 2014.

I. Adoption of the agenda

2. At its 143rd meeting, on 15 July 2014, the Assembly adopted its agenda for the twentieth session ([ISBA/20/A/1](#)).

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

3. At the same meeting, Antonio Francisco Da Costa e Silva Neto (Brazil) was elected President of the Assembly for the twentieth session. Following consultations in the regional groups, the representatives of Nigeria (African States), China (Asia-Pacific States), France (Western European and Other States) and the Russian Federation (Eastern European States) were elected Vice-Presidents.

III. Election to fill a vacancy on the Finance Committee

4. Also at the same meeting, the Assembly elected Nicola Smith (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) as a member of the Finance Committee for the remainder of the term of Chris Whomersley (United Kingdom), who had resigned.

IV. Request for observer status in the Assembly

5. At its 143rd meeting, the Assembly considered requests for observer status by the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition and by the Committee for Mineral Reserves

* Reissued for technical reasons on 8 October 2014.



International Reporting Standards, two non-governmental organizations, and decided to invite both organizations to participate as observers in its meetings, pursuant to rule 82, paragraph 1 (e), of the rules of procedure of the Assembly.

V. Commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the International Seabed Authority

6. The Assembly held a one-day special event at its 144th and 145th meetings, on Tuesday, 22 July 2014, to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the International Seabed Authority.

7. During the day-long special session, the Assembly heard from distinguished guests, most of whom were instrumental in the establishment of the Authority. In his opening address, the President of the Assembly pointed to the historic importance of the special session, describing it as “a momentous occasion” for the Authority and the world, a theme that resounded in speeches throughout the day-long celebration. In welcoming the Prime Minister of Jamaica to the event, the President underscored the host country’s contribution to the work of the Authority.

8. Describing the Authority as “a radical establishment that is as vital today as it was 20 years ago”, Portia Simpson Miller, Prime Minister of Jamaica, said that there were some critical issues that the Authority must continue to address. Among them were the management and governance of mineral resources of the deep seabed, the sharing of those resources and the development of new mining techniques to protect the marine environment.

9. A message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations was delivered by the Assistant Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, Stephen Mathias, who noted that the ongoing development by the Authority of a comprehensive set of rules governing seabed mining would go a long way towards helping States derive tangible benefits from the deep seabed Area.

10. The Secretary-General of the Authority, Nii Allotey Odunton, said that there was urgent need for rationalization of data related to marine mineral resources. The Authority also needed more baseline environmental data, including the use of standardized taxonomies, for deposits, fauna and species of which very little was known. It would be important at the mining stage to have access to data, nomenclature and taxonomy references for the deposits.

11. Tommy Koh, Ambassador-at-Large, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Singapore, in a keynote speech, said that the visibility of the Authority must be raised to inform the world about its important mission. The Authority should enhance its outreach programme, and also encourage the leading law schools of the world to teach a module on Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, covering seabed mining provisions.

12. Satya N. Nandan, the first Secretary-General of the Authority (1996-2008), said that the next stage of the Authority’s work must relate to the priority item of developing a regulatory regime for exploitation of deep seabed minerals. That should be done in a timely manner. The credibility of the Authority depended very much on the confidence that it generated among its members as well as among those willing to work with it in the development of the common heritage resources.

13. Statements were also made by José Luis Jesus, member of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea and former Chair of the Preparatory Commission for the International Seabed Authority (1987-1994); Hasjim Djalal, first President of the Assembly of the Authority (1996); Vladimir Golitsyn, President of the Seabed Disputes Chamber of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (on behalf of the President of the Tribunal); Mumba Kapumpa, Ambassador of Zambia to the Republic of Korea; Baïdy Diène, former President of the Council of the International Seabed Authority (2004) and member of the Legal and Technical Commission (2002-2011); and the Chairs of the five regional groups. Some individual delegations and observers spoke, including Fiji, on behalf of the Pacific small island developing States, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, Indonesia, Tonga, South Africa, Bangladesh, Fiji, Cuba, India, the Philippines, Senegal, Guyana, Brazil, Panama, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Jamaica, Greenpeace, the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition.

VI. Annual report of the Secretary-General

14. The Assembly considered the annual report of the Secretary-General ([ISBA/20/A/2](#)) at its 146th, 147th and 148th meetings, on 23 and 24 July 2014. At the 146th meeting, the Secretary-General introduced his report to the Assembly, as required under article 166, paragraph 4, of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The Secretary-General reviewed the Authority's work since the nineteenth session and outlined the progress that had been made in the implementation of its work programme for the period 2012-2014.

15. The Secretary-General's report provided an account of the Authority's work over the previous 12 months, including the status of membership of the Authority, the permanent missions to the Authority and the relationship between the Authority and the host country. The Secretary-General also highlighted the current status of accession to the Protocol on Privileges and Immunity of the Authority and urged members who had yet to accede to consider joining the Protocol. On administrative matters, the Secretary-General informed parties on vacant posts that had been filled during the reporting period and the Authority's participation in the United Nations common system. He reminded parties of the outstanding arrears amounting to \$283,731 from 43 members and gave an account of the status and contributions to the Voluntary Trust Fund and the Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research. The Secretary-General also briefed the members on the status of the Satya Nandan Library, publications and website of the Authority.

16. On substantive matters, the Secretary-General gave a report on the development of the regulatory regime in the Area, the status of contracts and the relationship between the Authority and other relevant international organizations. He highlighted the launching of the stakeholder survey and the work currently under way in establishing an online database of national laws and urged more countries to submit information about their national laws to the Authority. An account was also made on the Authority's dealings with the Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction. The Secretary-General also briefed members on the capacity-building initiatives and training and outreach programmes of the Authority. He concluded by highlighting article 154 of the

Convention, which calls for the work of the Authority to be reviewed every five years, and requested the Assembly for terms of reference for such a review.

17. Following the introduction by the Secretary-General, members presented group and national statements in response to the Secretary-General's report. They thanked the Secretary-General for his report and for the successful commemorative event celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the Authority and applauded the good work carried out during the nineteenth session of the Authority. Some delegations welcomed the work currently under way on the formulation of the regulatory regime for exploitation and underscored the Authority's duty of care for ocean and seabed environmental integrity. A number of delegations welcomed the launching of the stakeholder survey and encouraged further future engagements with stakeholders. A few delegations expressed gratitude for the contributions that had been made to the Authority's endowment and trust funds. Others noted that the Authority was entering into a new phase of its existence, with its particular challenges, and called for the strengthening of the secretariat to meet the demands of the increased workload. A number of delegations applauded the Secretary-General's initiative for data standardization and noted that work on such standardization of taxonomy would commence with nodules and later address sulphides and crust.

18. At its 147th meeting, the Assembly continued its debate on the Secretary-General's report and heard an address from the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Jamaica. The Minister reiterated the host country's unwavering support for the Authority. He observed that it was fitting that the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the Authority coincided with the celebration of the International Year of Small Island Developing States and with the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, to be held in Samoa in September 2014, and called for the fostering of genuine and durable partnerships. The Minister applauded the holding of sensitization seminars and workshops as a tool for outreach and noted the call for the holding of such workshops in landlocked States. He also commended the Secretary-General for the conceptualization of the establishment of a museum and expressed Jamaica's support for that initiative and looked forward to advancing the issue further. The delegation of Japan presented a ferromanganese crust sample gift to the Secretary-General and announced a donation of \$21,000 to the Voluntary Trust Fund. Mexico, on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, called upon permanent missions to play a more active role in the work of the Authority.

19. Statements were also made under this item by the delegations of Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada (on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand), Cameroon, Chile, China, the Cook Islands, Cuba, Fiji, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Kiribati, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria (on behalf of the African Group), Norway, Myanmar, Mozambique, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, Tonga, Uganda and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Statements were also made by the observer delegation of the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the International Cable Protection Committee, IUCN, Greenpeace and the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition. Members expressed their general satisfaction with the detailed report and indicated their support for the work that had been undertaken during the reporting period by the Authority as part of its programme of work for the period 2014-2015.

VII. Adoption of the budget and scale of assessments

20. At its 149th meeting, on 24 July 2014, the Assembly considered the report of the Finance Committee ([ISBA/20/A/5-ISBA/20/C/19](#)), the proposed budget for the Authority for the financial period 2015-2016 ([ISBA/20/A/3-ISBA/20/C/10](#)) and the scale of assessments for 2015 and 2016. On the basis of the recommendations of the Council ([ISBA/20/C/21](#)), the Assembly adopted the decisions contained in document [ISBA/20/A/12](#).

VIII. Approval of revised regulation 21 of the Regulations on Prospecting and Exploration for Polymetallic Sulphides

21. At the same meeting, the Assembly considered and approved the revised regulation 21 of the Regulations on Prospecting and Exploration for Polymetallic Sulphides in the Area and the Regulations on Prospecting and Exploration for Polymetallic Nodules in the Area, as provisionally adopted by the Council at its 198th meeting, on 18 July 2014 (see [ISBA/20/C/22](#) and [ISBA/20/C/23](#), respectively). The decision of the Assembly is contained in documents [ISBA/20/A/9](#) and [ISBA/20/A/10](#).

IX. Appointment and report of the Credentials Committee

22. At its 146th meeting, on 23 July 2014, the Assembly appointed a Credentials Committee consisting of the following nine members: Belgium, Indonesia, Kenya, Myanmar, Panama, South Africa, Russian Federation, Trinidad and Tobago and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

23. The Credentials Committee held one meeting, on 23 July 2014, during which it elected Godelieve Van den Bergh (Belgium) as its Chair for the twentieth session. The Committee examined the credentials of the representatives participating in the current session of the Assembly. The Committee had before it a memorandum by the secretariat dated 23 July 2014 on the status of those credentials.

24. At its 149th meeting, on 24 July 2014, the Assembly adopted the report of the Committee. The decision of the Assembly relating to credentials is contained in document [ISBA/20/A/7](#).

X. Election of the Council

25. At its 149th meeting, on 24 July 2014, the Assembly elected the following members of the Council for a four-year period beginning on 1 January 2015, subject to the understandings reached in the regional and interest groups:

Group A

Italy¹
Russian Federation

¹ Italy would relinquish its seat in Group A in favour of the United States of America if the United States became a member of the Authority; this does not prejudice the position of any country with respect to any intervening election to the Council.

Group B

France
Germany²
Republic of Korea

Group C

Australia³
Chile⁴

Group D

Fiji
Jamaica
Lesotho

Group E

Cameroon
Ghana
Indonesia⁵
Mexico
Nigeria
Singapore
Tonga

26. The decision of the Assembly is contained in document [ISBA/20/A/8](#).

XI. Dates of the next session of the Assembly

27. The next session of the Assembly will be held from 6 to 25 July 2015. It will be the turn of the Group of Western European and Other States to nominate a candidate for the Presidency of the Assembly in 2015.

² Germany is re-elected for a period of four years (2015-2018), on the understanding that Belgium will occupy the seat in Group B for the year 2016.

³ Australia is re-elected for a period of four years (2015-2018), on the understanding that in 2017 it will relinquish its seat in Group C to Indonesia. Australia will be a member of Group E in 2017.

⁴ Chile is re-elected for a period of four years (2015-2018), on the understanding that in 2018 it will relinquish its seat in Group C to Indonesia. Chile will be a member of Group E in 2018.

⁵ Indonesia is re-elected to the Council for a period of four years (2015-2018) on the understanding that in 2017 it will relinquish its seat in Group E to Australia and will occupy the seat in Group C relinquished by Australia, and in 2018 Indonesia will relinquish its seat in Group E to Chile and will occupy the seat in Group C relinquished by Chile.