International Seabed Authority

Strategic Plan 2019-2023

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Foreword from the Secretary-General

It is my great pleasure to present the Strategic Plan of the International Seabed Authority (ISA) for the Period 2019–2023.

The Plan provides an overview of ISA's strategic directions for the next five years and outlines ISA's key priorities in striving to deliver optimum services to meet the needs of our member States. The Plan also recognises the unique role of ISA to ensure the orderly, safe and responsible management and development of the resources of the Area for the benefit of mankind as a whole, with the protection of the marine environment at the core of our mandate.

The Strategic Plan reflects ISA's mandate and responsibilities as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the 1994 Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the Convention. It has been developed in consultation with members and observers of ISA as well as other relevant stakeholders through an extensive process of public consultation. The final document was eventually adopted by the Assembly of ISA at its 24th Session on 26 July 2018.

As this year ISA celebrates twenty-five years since entry into force of the Convention, the adoption of the Plan reflects the commitment of ISA to a results-based approach and to be the best and most effective organisation it can be. The Plan also highlights the importance of strategic partnerships in fulfilling ISA's role and responsibilities.

We have achieved remarkable progress over the last twenty-five years, and I have every confidence that ISA will continue to go from strength to strength to meet the challenges that lie ahead and contribute significantly to the achievement of the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

ISA is fortunate to have a highly capable and committed group of staff. I am confident that, together with the support and resources of our members and strategic partners, they will make the ambition of this plan a reality.

Mr. Michael W. Lodge
Secretary-General, ISA

Strategic plan of the International Seabed Authority for the period 2019–2023

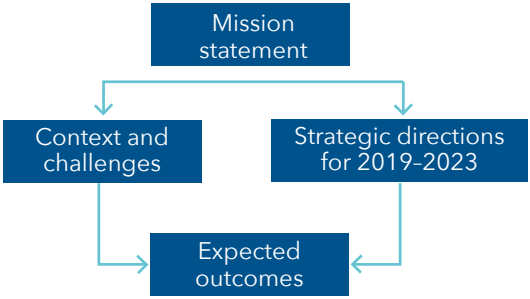
I. Introduction

The strategic plan embodies the vision of ISA for the implementation of Part XI and other provisions relating to the Area under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) of 10 December 1982 and the 1994 Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI. It takes into account that, pursuant to the 1994 Agreement, the setting up and the functioning of ISA shall be based on an evolutionary approach in order that it may discharge effectively its responsibilities at various stages of the development of activities in the Area.

UNCLOS and the 1994 Agreement constitute an intricate and unitary system of rights, obligations, duties and responsibilities in connection with activities in the Area. The system involves a broad stakeholder base which includes States parties, sponsoring States, flag States, coastal States, State enterprises, private investors, other users of the marine environment and interested global and regional intergovernmental organizations. All have a role in the development, implementation and enforcement of rules and standards for activities in the Area to ensure that these activities are carried out for the benefit of mankind as a whole.

Through this Plan, ISA aims to engage with stakeholders in implementing the regime for the Area accordingly. The strategic plan will be supplemented by an action plan, including key performance indicators, and will be kept under regular review by the Assembly.

The strategic plan consists of the following components:



The guiding principles of the strategic plan are the following:

Promote the orderly, safe and rational management of the resources of the Area for the benefit of mankind as a whole

Support the implementation of the international legal regime of the Area, including ISA rules, regulations and procedures

Promote the exchange of best practices among States and contractors

Ensure the effective protection of the marine environment

Provide public access to environmental information

Ensure the use of best available scientific information in decision-making

Require the application of the best available techniques and best environmental practices

Ensure accountability for results

The strategic directions and priorities identified in the plan are directed primarily by:

(a) UNCLOS, and in particular article 162 (2) (o) (ii), in which it is stated that: priority shall be given to the adoption of rules, regulations and procedures for the exploration for and exploitation of polymetallic nodules;

(b) The 1994 Agreement, including:

(i) Annex, section 1 (5), which sets out the matters on which ISA will concentrate between the entry into force of UNCLOS and the approval of the first plan of work for exploitation;

(ii) Annex, section 1 (5) (f), which requires the adoption of rules, regulations and procedures necessary for the conduct of activities in the Area as they progress and that such rules, regulations and procedures take into account the terms of the Agreement, the prolonged delay in commercial deep seabed mining and the likely pace of activities in the Area;

(iii) Annex, section 2, with regard to those functions of the Enterprise that complement the relevant priorities as set out in section 1 (5) of the annex;

(iv) Annex, section 5, with regard to those principles, in addition to the provisions of article 144 of UNCLOS, on transfer of technology, that complement the relevant priorities as set out in section 1 (5) of the annex;

(v) Annex, section 6, with regard to those principles for a production policy that complement the relevant priorities as set out in section 1 (5) of the annex.

The Plan also takes into account:

The current status of implementation by ISA of the priorities set out in the 1994 Agreement, in particular those set out in section 1 (5) of the annex, and in UNCLOS, as well as activities mandated by the Council	ISA's current and projected workload, resources and capacity for the period of the present strategic plan	Other relevant international agreements, principles and objectives, including the 2030 Agenda

II. Mission statement

The mission of ISA is to be the organization through which States Parties organize and control activities in the Area, which is the common heritage of mankind, to promote the orderly, safe and responsible management and development of the resources of the Area for the benefit of mankind as a whole, including through the effective protection of the marine environment and contributing to agreed international objectives and principles, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

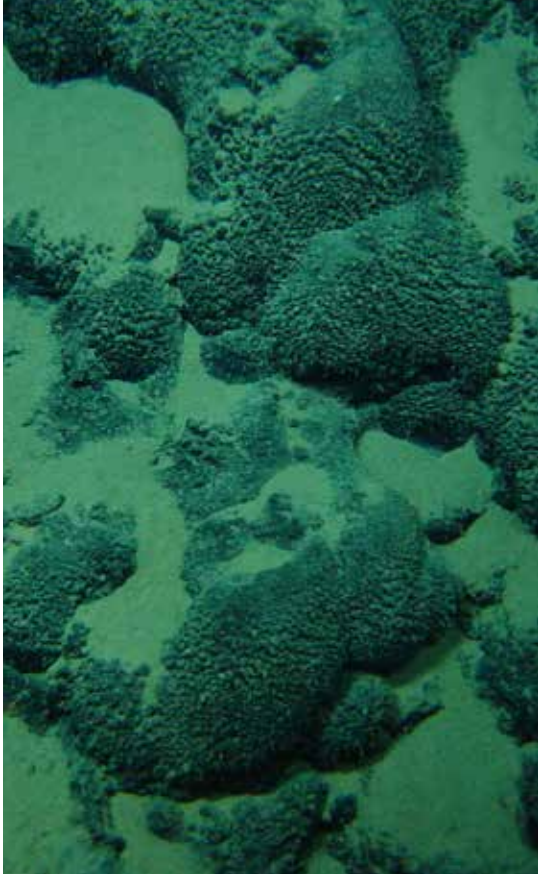
Member States of ISA agreed that this will be accomplished by developing and maintaining a comprehensive regulatory mechanism for commercial deep seabed mining that incorporates effective protection of the marine environment and of human health and safety, the equitable sharing of financial and other economic benefits from activities in the Area and allows for fully integrated participation of developing States through knowledge and best practice exchange consistent with the principle of the common heritage of mankind.

III. Context and challenges

In an ever-changing world, and in its role as custodian of the common heritage of mankind, ISA faces many challenges. It needs to achieve an appropriate balance between multiple objectives.

Globalization and sustainable development

The United Nations has adopted a new development agenda, entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"[1]. As part of this new agenda, 17 SDGs have been adopted. Of most relevance to ISA is SDG 14 – *Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development* – but other Goals also have relevance to the work of ISA (see Appendix I).



The challenge for ISA is to contribute to the timely and effective implementation of the SDGs, in particular SDG14, through implementing the economic, environmental and social mandates assigned to it under UNCLOS and the 1994 Agreement.

These mandates include:

- Ensuring that activities in the Area are carried out for the benefit of mankind as a whole[2];
- Ensuring effective protection for the marine environment[3]; and of human life[4];
- Promoting and encouraging the conduct of marine scientific research in the Area[5];
- And the effective participation of developing States in activities in the Area[6].

1 General Assembly resolution 70/1.
2 UNCLOS, art. 140 (1).
3 ibid., art. 145.
4 ibid., art. 146.
5 ibid., art. 143.
6 ibid., art. 148.

Also included are the importance of:

- fostering healthy development of the world economy and balanced growth of international trade;[7]
- ensuring the development of the resources of the Area[8];
- the orderly, safe and rational management of the resources of the Area[9];
- the enhancement of opportunities for all States parties[10];
- the development of the common heritage for the benefit of mankind as a whole[11].

The need for exploitation regulations

The primary means by which ISA is required to organize, carry out and control activities in the Area on behalf of mankind as a whole is to adopt and uniformly apply rules, regulations and procedures.[12] The basis for these rules, regulations and procedures is annex III to UNCLOS, which complements part XI and is further governed by the 1994 Agreement. Annex III, sets out the basic conditions for prospecting, exploration and exploitation in the Area. The 1994 Agreement stipulates that rules, regulations and procedures relating to the conduct of activities in the Area are to be adopted as those activities progress.

Regulations governing exploration have been adopted, and the challenge now is to make the transition to exploitation. Regulations for exploitation must reflect best international standards and practices, as well as agreed principles of sustainable development.

In planning its work, ISA must carefully analyse the prospects for commercial deep seabed mining, as well as deep sea technology development. Although market uncertainty and volatility are major factors driving commercial investment, beyond the control of ISA, the need for regulatory certainty, with clear requirements to ensure environmental protection and clear financial terms, is a critical element in advancing deep seabed mining.

7 ibid., art. 150.
8 ibid., art. 150 (a).
9 ibid., art. 150 (b).
10 ibid., art. 150 (g).
11 ibid., art. 150 (i).
12 ibid., annex III, art. 17.

Environmental protection

Ensuring effective protection for the marine environment from harmful effects which may arise from such activities in the Area[13] receives detailed attention in UNCLOS and the 1994 Agreement. The 1994 Agreement provides that the adoption of rules, regulations and procedures incorporating applicable standards for the protection and preservation of the marine environment[14] is one of the matters on which ISA will concentrate between the entry into force of UNCLOS and the approval of the first plan of work for exploitation. UNCLOS requires ISA to adopt rules, regulations and procedures designed to prevent, reduce and control pollution and other hazards to the marine environment having the potential to interfere with the ecological balance of the marine environment. ISA is also required to protect and conserve the natural resources of the Area, preventing damage to the flora and fauna of the marine environment[15].

Promoting the sharing of the results of marine scientific research

Marine scientific research plays a critical role in the responsible management of the oceans and its resources. Such research is also vital to scientific advancement and to the effective, efficient and commercially and environmentally sustainable conduct of activities in the Area. It is first mentio-

The challenge for ISA is to adopt a policy and regulatory framework for environmental management that achieves the effective protection of the marine environment, under circumstances of considerable scientific, technical and commercial uncertainty. The framework should be adaptive, practical and technically feasible. It must satisfy the extensive marine environmental protection requirements of UNCLOS, as well as taking into account relevant aspects of the SDGs. and other international environmental targets, such as the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The process for developing the framework and its implementation must be transparent and allow for stakeholder input. The development of regional environmental assessments and management plans, in particular, demands a collaborative and transparent approach to both the collection and sharing of environmental data. The process must ensure the fully integrated participation of developing States, not least in connection with international obligations to build technical capacity.

13 ibid., art. 145.
14 Agreement, annex, sect. 1 (5) (g).
15 Convention, art. 145.

ned in the preamble to UNCLOS, and an entire chapter of UNCLOS (Part XIII) is devoted to the subject, which is also addressed with regard to the Area in Part XI[16], and in the 1994 Agreement. As explicitly stated, it is among the priorities of ISA, notably with regard to the need to ensure acquisition of scientific knowledge[17].

Under article 143 (2) of UNCLOS, ISA must promote and encourage the conduct of marine scientific research in the Area and coordinate and disseminate the results of such research and analysis when available. ISA may also carry out marine scientific research in its own right[18].

The challenge for ISA is to adopt strategies and to seek adequate resources to enable it to strengthen cooperation with States parties, the international scientific community, contractors and relevant international organizations, such as the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IOC-UNESCO) and the International Hydrographic Organization, and collaborative programmes such as JPI Oceans, to obtain, assess and disseminate quantitative and qualitative data and information in an open and transparent manner.

16 ibid., art 143.
17 Agreement, annex, sect. 1 (5) (i).
18 Convention, art. 143 (2).

The importance of capacity-building and technology transfer in realizing the common heritage of mankind

Capacity-building and technology transfer are closely linked and UNCLOS therefore sets out specific requirements to deal with them accordingly. ISA is thereby required to take measures to acquire technology and scientific knowledge relating to activities in the Area[19] and to ensure a variety of both capacity-building and technology transfer mechanisms for developing States[20]. In line with this, States are required by UNCLOS to cooperate actively with competent international organizations and ISA to encourage and facilitate the transfer to developing States, their nationals and the Enterprise of skills and marine technology with regard to activities in the Area[21].

Facilitating the participation of developing States in activities in the Area

ISA must promote the participation of developing States in activities in the Area. This is explicit in UNCLOS and the 1994 Agreement. Activities in the Area shall be carried out with a view to ensuring the expansion of opportunities for participation in such activities consistent with articles 144 and 148[22]; the enhancement of opportunities for

The challenge for ISA is to ensure that capacity-building and technology transfer measures are developed and implemented effectively, subject to all legitimate interests including, inter alia, the rights and duties of holders, suppliers and recipients of technology[23] and that they reflect the needs of developing States, identified through transparent processes in which developing States are full participants.

19 ibid., art. 144 (1) (a).
20 ibid., art. 274.
21 ibid., art. 273.
22 ibid., art. 274.
23 ibid., art. 150 (c).

all States Parties, irrespective of their social and economic systems or geographical location, to participate in the development of the resources of the Area[24]; and the development of the common heritage for the benefit of mankind as a whole[25]. The challenge for ISA is to identify mechanisms, including capacity-building programmes, to ensure fully integrated participation by developing States in activities in the Area at all levels. This includes identifying possible approaches to the future establishment of the Enterprise in a way that meets the requirements of UNCLOS and the 1994 Agreement.

Equitable sharing of benefits

ISA must adopt rules, regulations and procedures for the equitable sharing of financial and other economic benefits derived from activities in the Area[26]. Similar rules, regulations and procedures must also be adopted for the distribution of payments made through ISA under article 82 (4) of UNCLOS, in respect of the exploitation of non-living resources on the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles[27].

Organizational development

In accordance with the 1994 Agreement, the setting up and the functioning of the organs and subsidiary bodies of ISA shall be based on an evolutionary approach, taking into account the functional needs of the organs and subsidiary bodies concerned in order that they may discharge effectively their respective responsibilities at various stages of the development of activities in the Area. It is also emphasized in the 1994 Agreement that, in order to minimize costs to States

The challenge for ISA in developing equitable sharing criteria is to understand the financial and economic model for deep seabed mining in an environment of considerable commercial uncertainty, including the trends of and the factors affecting supply, demand and prices of minerals which may be derived from the Area, bearing in mind the interests of both importing and exporting countries, and in particular of the developing States among them[28].

24 ibid., art. 150 (g).
25 ibid., art. 150 (i).
26 ibid., art. 140 (2).
27 ibid., art. 82 (1).
28 ibid., art. 164 (2) (b).

Photo Credit: Franz Dejon/IISD

Parties, all organs and subsidiary bodies to be established under UNCLOS shall be cost- effective[29].

Transparency

Transparency is an essential element of good governance and is therefore a guiding principle for ISA in the conduct of its business as a publicly accountable international organization. This includes transparency in the internal administration of ISA, as well as its internal procedures, the procedures of its various organs and subsidiary bodies and its procedures towards States. Transparency plays a fundamental role in building trust in ISA and in enhancing ISA's accountability, credibility and support across its stakeholder base.

The challenge for ISA is to respond effectively and efficiently to the needs of the regulatory regime and to be ready to perform its functions as a supervisory body in anticipation of the commencement of the commercial exploitation of deep seabed minerals. ISA must adapt, enhance and increase its structural and functional capacities at a rate that keeps pace with progress in deep sea mining, covers all necessary disciplines and ensures that adequate and appropriate levels of flexibility are built into the system.

A major challenge to creating an Authority with the necessary institutional capacities will be to secure adequate funding, especially during the transition from exploration to exploitation. This makes it essential to plan well in advance for the future evolution of the organization and it s subsidiary bodies.

29 annex, sect. 1 (2).

IV. Strategic Directions

Strategic direction 1

Realize the role of ISA in a global context

Strategic Direction 1.1. Align its programmes and initiatives towards the realization of those SDGs relevant to its mandate.

Strategic Direction 1.2. Establish and strengthen strategic alliances and partnerships with relevant subregional, regional and global organizations with a view to more effective cooperation in the conservation and sustainable use of ocean resources, consistent with UNCLOS and international law, including the pooling of resources and funding, where appropriate, in particular in connection with marine scientific research, to avoid the duplication of efforts and to benefit from synergies.

Strategic Direction 1.3. Build a comprehensive and inclusive approach to the development of the common heritage for the benefit of mankind as a whole that balances the three pillars of sustainable development.

Strategic Direction 1.4. Promote the effective and uniform implementation of the international legal regime of the Area, including ISA rules, regulations and procedures, and pay particular attention to the needs of developing States.

Strategic Direction 1.5. Strengthen cooperation and coordination with other relevant international organizations and stakeholders in order to promote mutual "reasonable regard" between activities in the Area and other activities in the marine environment and to effectively safeguard the legitimate interests of members of ISA and contractors.

Strategic direction 2

Strengthen the regulatory framework for activities in the Area

Strategic Direction 2.1. Adopt rules, regulations and procedures covering all phases of deep sea mineral exploration and exploitation on the basis of best available information and in line with the policies, objectives, criteria, principles and provisions set out in UNCLOS and the 1994 Agreement.

Strategic Direction 2.2. Ensure that the rules, regulations and procedures governing mineral exploitation incorporate best practices for environmental management and are underpinned by sound commercial principles in order to promote investment on a "level playing field".

Strategic Direction 2.3. Ensure that the legal framework for activities in the Area is adaptive and responsive to new technology, information and knowledge and advances in international law relating to the Area, in particular in connection with international law rules on responsibility and liability.

Strategic Direction 2.4. Ensure that the regulatory framework gives due consideration to and promotes the participation of developing States in activities in the Area in accordance with UNCLOS and the 1994 Agreement.

Strategic Direction 2.5. Advance the development of the regulatory framework for activities in the Area, taking into account trends and developments relating to deep seabed mining activities, including objective analysis of world metal market conditions and metal prices, trends and prospects, through a predictable process with clear timelines, based on consensus, and that allows for stakeholder input in appropriate ways.

Strategic Direction 2.6. Adopt rules, regulations and procedures for the equitable sharing of financial and other economic benefits derived from activities in the Area.

Strategic Direction 2.7. Conduct a study of the potential impact of mineral production from the Area on the economies of developing land-based producers of those minerals which are likely to be most seriously affected, with a view to minimizing their difficulties and assisting them in their economic adjustment, taking into account the work done in this regard by the Preparatory Commission[30] and develop possible criteria for economic assistance.

30 Agreement, annex, sect. 1 (5) (e).

Strategic direction 3

Protect the marine environment

Strategic Direction 3.1. Progressively develop, implement and keep under review an adaptive, practical and technically feasible regulatory framework, based on best environmental practices, for the protection of the marine environment from harmful effects which may arise from activities in the Area.

Strategic Direction 3.2. Develop, implement and keep under review regional environmental assessments and management plans for all mineral provinces in the Area where exploration is taking place.

Strategic Direction 3.3. Ensure public access to environmental information.

Strategic Direction 3.4. Develop scientifically and statistically robust monitoring programmes and methodologies to assess the potential for activities in the Area to interfere with the ecological balance of the marine environment.

Strategic direction 4

Promote and encourage marine scientific research in the Area

Strategic Direction 4.1. Continue to promote and encourage the conduct of marine scientific research with respect to activities in the Area, with particular emphasis on research related to the environmental effects of activities in the Area.

Strategic Direction 4.2. Collect and disseminate the results of research and analysis, when available.

Strategic Direction 4.3. Strengthen and, as appropriate, establish strategic alliances and partnerships with relevant subregional, regional and global organizations, including IOC-UNESCO, the International Hydrographic Organization and collaborative programmes such as JPI Oceans, to share data and information in an open and transparent manner, avoid the duplication of efforts and benefit from synergies, for example, by aligning with the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, which will address knowledge gaps to be identified by the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment (World Ocean Assessment).

Strategic Direction 4.4. Be proactive in engaging with the international scientific community through workshops and sponsored publications and by promoting access to non-confidential information and data, in particular those data relating to the marine environment.

Strategic Direction 4.5. Compile summaries of the status of environmental baseline data and develop a process to assess the environmental implications of activities in the Area[31].

31 UNCLOS, art. 165 (d).

Strategic direction 5

Build capacity for developing States

Strategic Direction 5.1. Ensure that all capacity-building programmes and measures and their delivery are meaningful, tangible, efficient, effective and targeted at the needs of developing States, as identified by developing States.

Strategic Direction 5.2. Seek and maximize funding opportunities for the Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area and its beneficiaries, together with participation in global financing mechanisms.

Strategic Direction 5.3. Enable capacity-building measures to be mainstreamed into relevant initiatives.

Strategic Direction 5.4. Build on the achievements of contractor training programmes and assess their long-term impact on capacity-building.

Strategic direction 6

Ensure integrated participation by developing States

Strategic Direction 6.1. Continue to promote and seek opportunities for integrated participation by developing States in the implementation of the regime for the Area, paying special attention to the needs of land-locked and geographically disadvantaged States, small island developing States and the least developed countries.

Strategic Direction 6.2. Undertake a review of the extent of the participation by developing States in the Area, identify and understand any specific barriers to such participation and address them accordingly, including through targeted outreach and partnerships.

Strategic Direction 6.3. In cooperation with States Parties, initiate and promote measures providing opportunities to personnel from developing States for training in marine science and technology and for their full participation in activities in the Area[32].

Strategic Direction 6.4. Carry out a detailed resource assessment of the reserved areas that are available to the Enterprise and developing States.

Strategic Direction 6.5. Identify possible approaches to the establishment of the Enterprise in a way that meets the objectives of UNCLOS and the 1994 Agreement while taking into account that the Enterprise lacks capital and is limited to operating through joint ventures.

Photo Credit: Franz Dejon/IISD

32 (UNCLOS, art. 144 (2) (b).

Photo Credit: Franz Dejon/IISD

Strategic direction 7

Ensure equitable sharing of financial and other economic benefits

Strategic Direction 7.1. Adopt and apply in a transparent manner rules, regulations and procedures for the equitable sharing of financial and other economic benefits derived from activities in the Area.

Strategic direction 8

Improve the organizational performance of ISA

Strategic Direction 8.1. Strengthen its institutional capacity and functioning through the allocation of sufficient resources and expertise to deliver its work programmes.

Strategic Direction 8.2. Facilitate a fuller, more active and more informed participation by members of ISA and other stakeholders through the adoption of working methods which are focused, targeted and effective and delivered under enhanced conditions of transparency and accountability, leading to a more inclusive approach to decision-making.

Strategic Direction 8.3. Keep work programmes and working methodologies under review such that they achieve the objectives set by members of ISA within a reasonable time frame and cost-effectively through improved planning and management.

Strategic Direction 8.4. Assess long-term options for funding its operations.

Strategic direction 9

Commit to transparency

Strategic Direction 9.1. Communicate information about its work in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Strategic Direction 9.2. Facilitate access to non-confidential information.

Strategic Direction 9.3. Adopt clear, open and cost-effective working practices and procedures and ensure that the chain of responsibility and accountability of all relevant actors is fully understood and properly managed in the development, implementation and enforcement of technical, environmental, operational, scientific and safety regulations and standards for activities in the Area.

V. Expected outcomes

Successful implementation of the Strategic Plan and its strategic directions will result in the delivery of:

- **A comprehensive legal framework** for carrying out activities in the Area for the benefit of mankind as a whole[33], including necessary measures to ensure:

(i) Effective protection for the marine environment[34];
(ii) Effective protection of human life[35];
(iii) Orderly, safe, and rational management of the resources of the Area, including the efficient conduct of activities in the Area and, in accordance with sound principles of conservation, the avoidance of unnecessary waste[36], drawing on the best available scientific evidence and generally accepted applicable international rules and standards.

- An appropriate mechanism to provide for the **equitable sharing of financial and other economic benefits** derived from activities in the Area on a non-discriminatory basis37, as further directed by the objectives, principles and requirements set out in article 13 (1) of Annex III to UNCLOS and section 8 of the annex to the 1994 Agreement.

- The ability to **promote and encourage the conduct of marine scientific research** in the Area and to coordinate and disseminate the results of such research and analysis when available, as required under article 143 (2) of UNCLOS.

- The ability to acquire **technology and scientific knowledge** relating to activities in the Area and to promote and encourage the transfer to developing States of such technology and scientific knowledge so that all States Parties benefit therefrom[38] and to promote effective participation of developing States in activities in the Area as specifically provided for in Part XI[39].

33 Convention, art. 140 (1).
34 ibid., art. 145.
35 ibid., art. 146.
36 ibid., art. 150 (b).
37 ibid., art. 140 (2).
38 ibid., art. 144, and as further governed by the principles set out in the 1994 Agreement, annex, sect. 5.
39 Convention., art. 148.

- An Authority with the **institutional capacity**, public acceptance, credibility and state of readiness to act as a "fit-for-purpose" regulator of activities in the Area by reference to contemporary benchmarks, and as a publicly accountable supervisory body that facilitates access to information and values contributions by stakeholders.

- Enhanced **effectiveness** and reach of ISA in carrying out its functions under UNCLOS through effective two-way stakeholder communication.

- An **effective contribution by ISA to the achievement of relevant SDGs** by alignment of its programmes and initiatives.

- Identification and prioritization of **technical assistance** needs for developing States, including those to help facilitate participation in activities in the Area.

- The establishment of a **monitoring programme** to observe, measure, evaluate and analyse, by recognized scientific methods, on a regular basis, the risks or effects of pollution of the marine environment resulting from activities in the Area, ensure that existing regulations are adequate and are complied with and coordinate the implementation of the monitoring programme[40].

40 ibid., art. 165 (2) (h).

APPENDIX I

Contribution by ISA to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals

Contribution of ISA to the

Through fostering strategic partnerships, including with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to enhance the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Through:

- the promotion of the rule of law;
- the development of effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels;
- responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels;
- broadened and strengthened participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance.

Through its contribution to increasing scientific knowledge, developing research capacity and the transfer of marine technology and the advancement of a common and uniform approach, consistent with the Convention and international law, to the sustainable use of ocean resources.

Through the development of specific research programmes designed to improve the assessment of essential ecological functions of the deep sea oceans through long-term underwater oceanographic observatories in the Area.

Through the encouragement of sustainable production practices.

Through its contribution to improving the technological capabilities of developing countries.

achievement of the SDGs

Through the distribution of payments received by ISA in accordance with equitable sharing criteria.

Through the promotion of the transfer of skills and knowledge through training programmes and scholarships to least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries.

Encouragement of gender equality through dedicated efforts to increase opportunities for qualified women from developing States to participate in marine scientific research programmes.

Through its contribution to:

- sustainable economic growth and the promotion of access for least developed countries to the Area and its resources
- the protection of labour rights for those engaged in activities in the Area in conjunction with the International Labour Organization.

ANNEX II

Decision of the Assembly of the International Seabed Authority relating to the Strategic Plan of the Authority for the period 2019–2023

The Assembly of the International Seabed Authority,

Recalling its decision of 18 August 2017, at the twenty-third session of ISA,[41] to request inter alia, the Secretary-General, in view of the importance of a long-term plan defining the strategic direction and aims of ISA, to submit a draft strategic plan to the Assembly for consideration at its twenty-fourth session, in 2018, and to regularly inform member States on progress with respect to the plan,

Recalling also that all 29 exploration contracts currently signed by ISA will be in force during the period of the Plan,

Acknowledging the challenges for ISA raised by the transition from exploration to exploitation,

Emphasizing the importance of ensuring that the Strategic Plan be kept under regular review and the results monitored for effectiveness,

1. *Adopts* the Strategic Plan of ISA for the Period 2019–2023, as contained in the annex, which provides a uniform basis for the strengthening of existing working practices of ISA;

2. *Invites* members of ISA and observers, as well as the organs of ISA, to support the implementation of the Strategic Plan;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General, as a matter or priority, to prepare a high- level action plan, to include key performance indicators and a list of outputs for the next five years, and taking into account available financial and human resources, for consideration by the Assembly at its twenty-fifth session;

4. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to provide the Assembly with a detailed overview of the implementation mechanisms to be established, including for monitoring, evaluation and learning;

5. *Emphasizes* the importance of ensuring that the implementation mechanisms also include provision for midterm and final evaluation, to enable an assessment of the implementation and impact of the Strategic Plan, enhancing the organization development effectiveness and accountability, as well as informing, with lessons learned, the development of the next Strategic Plan;

6. *Recognizes* that the operative period of the Strategic Plan will be five years, without excluding the possibility, once the first review is undertaken, of adopting a longer-term plan in the future.

41 ISBA/23/A/13.

SEABED