

**STATEMENT DELIVERED MS. KHALILAH HACKMAN ON BEHALF OF THE
GOVERNMENT OF GHANA AND THE AFRICAN GROUP OF THE
INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY IN HONOUR OF THE MEMORY OF
NII ALLOTEY ODUNTON
1st AUGUST, 2022**

Acting President,
Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with profound sadness that I read this tribute on behalf of the African Group to the memory of an illustrious son of Ghana, Mr. Nii Allotey Odunton, the first and only African to have served as the Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority.

As we commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, it is only befitting that we honour the memory of our compatriot and the significant contributions he made towards realizing the objectives of the Convention. We are especially grateful to his successor and friend, Mr. Michael Lodge, for the inclusion of this solemn agenda item.

Nii Odunton, as he was fondly called, stood out as a reputable and distinguished international civil servant, with a demonstrated leadership of excellence in the field of ocean governance both at the United Nations and the International Seabed Authority, where he served in various capacities during his working life.

He deserves all the credit for his instrumental leadership in the development and conclusion of the rules and regulations for prospecting and exploration of polymetallic sulphides and cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts in the Area among other important contributions, as we have heard from the Secretary-General.

On his election as the Secretary-General, Nii Odunton committed to build upon the knowledge base of the Authority and this, he did, with a personal dedication. He would also be remembered for his sterling efforts in forging consensus on critical aspects of the work of the International Seabed Authority among different regional groups and interests.

Nii Odunton's rich experience and endearing personal attributes set him apart as an outstanding professional at the helm of the management of the oceans and its resources for the common

heritage of mankind. As we celebrate the life and work of our compatriot, the African Group is pleased in knowing that Mr. Oduntun lived to see his name etched in the annals of the history of the International Seabed Authority.

It was with much pride that the Government of Ghana, coordinated with the Authority in the naming of the ISA Museum in Kingston, Jamaica after Nii Oduntun in honour of his dedication and long-service. The Nii Allotey Oduntun Museum, which was inaugurated in July 2019, on the sidelines of the 25th anniversary of the ISA, highlights important milestones in the evolution of the work towards deep-sea exploration, including the advancements made during the tenure of Mr. Oduntun as the Secretary-General of the organization.

On behalf of the African Group, I would like to use this occasion to express our appreciation to all Member States for the expressions of sympathy and solidarity since the passing of Nii Allotey Oduntun in February this year. Our best tribute in his honour and, for our common good, is to work with a singleness of purpose in developing a robust mining code which ensures that activities in the Area are carried out

for the benefit of all and importantly, seek to protect and preserve the marine environment.

May his soul rest in peace.

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