

**Workshop for the Promotion of Sustainable Development of Africa's Deep Seabed Resources in Support to Africa's Blue Economy**

**Third Workshop of the *Africa's Deep-Seabed Resources Project***

**1 June 2021**

**Statement by Mr. Jens Frølich Holte**

**State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway**

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me start by expressing my appreciation for the opportunity to speak with you today.

I recently took up the position as the Norwegian Prime Minister's representative (sherpa) to the High-level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy. In December, the Ocean Panel presented a new ocean action agenda, where effective protection, sustainable production and equitable prosperity go hand in hand.

The deep ocean floor contains minerals that are useful for renewable energy technologies and may contribute to the transition to a low-carbon society. However, we also need to be aware of the sensitivities of these ecosystems, our insufficient knowledge and our limited understanding of potential impacts of emerging ocean activities. We must continue to advance the application of the precautionary approach and protection of the environment with regard to all activities in the Area. Long-term benefits, including long-term commercial benefits, are only possible within a framework that is environmentally sound and sustainable. This is the essence of the Ocean Panel's recommendations.

As deep seabed mining continues to evolve as an industry, we must ensure that everyone can benefit from these developments. No country should be left behind.

The International Seabed Authority was established in response to the ground-breaking notion that the deep sea minerals in the Area constitute a common heritage of mankind. These valuable resources belong to all of us. Building capacity and sharing data and information are therefore central to our collective agenda to ensure that this wealth is indeed distributed equitably. Success in this endeavour will not only lead to a regime that ensures conservation and sustainable use of resources that should be shared by all for the benefit of all; it will also show the world that international cooperation based on mutual respect and benefit is possible.

The main purpose of the ADSR Project corresponds well with the mandate of ISA. It is also corresponds with Norway's aim to cooperate with other states to make it possible to utilize rights and obligations under the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) to improve development. Norway is convinced that the Authority's success is closely tied to the success of the UNCLOS and the institutional framework it established.

Cooperation and partnership between states that are in different stages of economic development and thus have unequal opportunities to thrive in this field need to be encouraged, both at the regional and global level. Sharing marine scientific research and data relating to seabed and minerals, engaging in collaborative research and training programmes and

assisting countries to establish the necessary infrastructure are pivotal. It will also be critical to ensure that countries are capacitated to make use of the data, information and infrastructure available. Good capacity building strategies will therefore be key for this initiative. The project has already made it possible for young African experts to be seconded to ISA, to the joint benefit of both ISA and African states.

Finally, let me take this opportunity to confirm Norway's support to this initiative and to the ISA in general. Norway has been committed to the International Seabed Authority ever since its inception, something I also underlined in 2019 when I had the chance to take part in celebrating ISA's 25 year anniversary in Kingston. We are proud to have been part of an effort that has already achieved astonishing results. Norway will continue to assist in building capacity and competence in areas where Norway has particular expertise. I look forward to following the discussions over the next few days and wish you the best of luck.

Thank you.