

STATEMENT of AMBASSADOR J. KOONJUL

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

1 June 2021, 7 a.m. New York Time

**Mr. Michael W. Lodge
Secretary General of the ISA
Distinguished Panelists and Participants**

Good morning and good afternoon.

On behalf of the Government of Mauritius, I wish you all a very warm welcome to this virtual workshop.

It would have been so much nicer to host you in person in Mauritius, unfortunately the pandemic has disrupted all our plans.

However, we are pleased that you are able to join us from different time zones to participate in the third Workshop on the Promotion of Sustainable Development of Africa's Deep-Seabed Resources (ADSR). This is indeed the miracle of technology.

I thank the ISA for taking this initiative and the Government of Norway for its valuable support without which this virtual workshop would not have been possible.

I am pleased to see the Norwegian State Secretary, Mr Jens Holte, amongst us for which I personally thank him.

Norway has always been in the forefront on matters concerning the oceans, be it oil exploration or mineral and marine resources exploitation. In fact, our program for this workshop includes a session on the Norwegian case study on exploration of mineral resources in its national jurisdiction.

The capacity building program that has been prepared for you is very comprehensive and is geared towards providing an understanding of the legal framework governing the exploration of resources in the high seas, the functioning of the International Seabed Authority as well as the exploration of mineral resources both in the national jurisdiction and the area for which the ISA holds responsibility. This is the third capacity building program that has been organized for the Africa region. This time the target participants come from the Indian Ocean region. In fact, all of you come from the eastern African region and island countries for which marine resources can play an enormous role in your respective economies.

Africa, which is already endowed with huge amounts of mineral resources on land, also has an equally rich potential of marine resources on the EEZ and the continental shelf of its coastal countries.

The 2050 Africa Integrated Maritime Strategy adopted in 2014 is aimed at coordinating maritime policies of AU members, which is a priority goal for Africa's inclusive growth and sustainable development. I am pleased to see the AU

Commissioner for Economic Development, Trade and Industry amongst us. He will surely speak in detail about this strategy in the area of Blue Economy.

Sustainable mineral extraction is therefore a new frontier not only in Africa but for the whole world.

Most of your countries have already established your EEZs and many of you have also made submissions to the CLCS for your extended Continental Shelf. Mauritius and Seychelles can pride ourselves for being the first mid ocean Small Island Developing States to have made a joint submission for the ECS in the Mascarene Plateau Region. Following the conferment of an area of 396,000 sq kms of ECS, Mauritius and Seychelles are now co-managing this area which is potentially rich in mineral and hydrocarbon resources.

This workshop can therefore be particularly useful for the participants of these 2 countries, as well as for all the participants with whom they can share their experience.

This workshop will also give you an opportunity to identify gaps in our administration. For example, engaging in mineral exploration resources does not only involve expertise in the sector but also capacity in establishing legal frameworks, contract negotiations with private companies and monitoring capability to ensure maximum benefit from such ventures.

I urge not only to listen to the magnificent pool of experts gathered for this purpose but also to ask pertinent questions and provide suggestions and comments which can make such workshops more interesting and more attuned to your needs.

I wish you a very fruitful and productive workshop.