

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**MESSAGE TO THE 20<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL  
SEABED AUTHORITY**

**15 July 2014**

It gives me great pleasure to greet this important commemoration. I thank Jamaica, the host country of the International Seabed Authority, for its hospitality and for its commitment to the United Nations.

The International Seabed Authority was established on the day when the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea entered into force. This year we also celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the Convention. 2014 is also the International Year of Small Island Developing States.

These occasions, taken together, offer an opportunity to reflect on the links among the innovative regime set up by the Convention and the Agreement, the forward-looking work of the Authority and the quest for sustainable development.

The concept of the “common heritage of mankind” represented by the seabed, ocean floor and subsoil, beyond the limits of national jurisdiction (the Area) was a major innovation in international law. It replaced uncertainties concerning the future of the seabed with a regime of shared benefits and responsibilities for all States, including land-locked ones.

Today, at a time when ocean-based economic development is at the top of many Governments’ agendas, we understand better than ever the far-reaching implications as well as the benefits of the regime contained in the Convention.

I commend the work carried out by the Authority under the able leadership of Ambassador Satya Nandan and now Mr. Nii Odunton.

The ongoing development by the Authority of a comprehensive set of rules governing seabed mining will go a long way toward helping States to derive tangible benefits from the Area.

At the same time, the proactive role of the Authority towards the protection and preservation of the marine environment will contribute to the sustainability of mining activities.

As we all know, Member States are deep in discussion about the future development agenda. In this context, States should recommit themselves to implementing the Convention and participating in the work of the Authority.

Only with the unfailing support of all can the concept of the common heritage of mankind be meaningfully put into practice for the benefit of generations to come.

I wish all the best to the Authority in continuing the important work that it has carried out since its inception.