

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE ASSEMBLY TO THE
INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY ON THE OCCASION OF THE
20TH ANNIVERSARY OF ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF THE SEA

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Before I give the floor to the Secretary-General, I beg to take just a few moments to say a few words on this historic day.

As we pause, look back and commemorate the 20th anniversary of the International Seabed Authority, as President of the Assembly this session, I want to pose a few simple questions for reflection. I believe that we have arrived at a juncture where we ought to take a good look at what our journey has been so far and reflect upon what we need to do. We should collectively ask ourselves - What kind of organization would we like to see the Authority turn out to be in the next 20 years? Have we been equipping our Authority adequately to meet the challenges of the years to come. Are the laws, regulations and rules governing the operation of this international organization sufficient to meet the demand of its purpose?

This 20th Anniversary is indeed an appropriate time for us to reflect upon these questions. Great individuals who preceded us had a particular vision in mind when they conceived the idea of setting up this Authority. They pursued and overcame their differences and agreed to work on a formula that ensures equitable sharing of benefits amongst all the human inhabitants of this earth from the resources in the Area as Common Heritage of Mankind. Ours is the tasks to fulfill this dream and to ensure that the bond that bound us together then will continue to be the anchor and the uniting force that encourages good will and co-operation for the next 20 years and beyond.

Today, we will hear wise words, some perhaps reminiscing, others predicting. Whatever the sentiment may be, I urge the Assembly, to pay good attention to the commemorative sentiments that will be echoed in this Assembly today. We are fortunate that a few of those who began this game are still around to witness what their vision looks like 20 years on.

Excellencies,

We will not go wrong if we root our work solidly on the foundation laid in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and in the 1994 Agreement. These guiding foundations together with the Decisions and agreed Method of Work we've weaved over the years continues to provide the blue print for the success of our organization.

Mr. Secretary-General, I wish to thank you and your hard working staff for the good work for the last 20 years. With your allotted resources, and bound by your numerical composition, you've serviced the

Authority well. You've serviced the Assembly, the Council and its subsidiary bodies. On this 20th Anniversary, on behalf of the members of the Assembly of State Parties, I say thank you.

To all members and observers of the Authority, those who have contributed resources, time and expertise to ensure the viability of the Authority as a reputable International Organization - Thank you.

With those opening remarks – I shall now give the floor to the Secretary General for his 20th Anniversary Commemorative Address.

H.E. Mr. Antonio Francisco Da Costa e Silva Neto
President of the ISA Assembly
July 2014