



**Workshop on Enhancing Image-based Biodiversity Assessments
to Advance Deep-Sea Taxonomy**

Kingston, Jamaica

Tuesday, 12 October 2021

(to be repeated on Thursday, 14 October 2014)

OPENING REMARKS

by Mr. Michael W. Lodge,

Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority

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It is my great pleasure to welcome you to this virtual workshop on enhancing image-based biodiversity assessments to advance deep-sea taxonomy.

I would like to express my appreciation to the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea and to the National Marine Biodiversity Institute of Korea for their generous support in the organization of this workshop. I also wish to express my thanks to Prof. Kerry Howell of the University of Plymouth, UK, for her assistance in designing the programme of this workshop and accepting to chair its deliberations. My sincere appreciation also goes to all the speakers and the panelists for their contribution to this event.

This workshop constitutes another milestone in the implementation of the mandate given to ISA by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, particularly as it relates to the protection of the marine environment from potential harmful effects that may arise from activities in the Area.

It also corresponds with ISA's unique role to promote and encourage marine scientific research in the Area and to coordinate and disseminate the results of such research.

Advancing deep-sea taxonomy is critical to generate the biodiversity data and information that is necessary to support the Authority as it strives to establish an effective regulatory framework for activities in the Area. It will in particular further strengthen the scientific basis of regional environmental management plans and monitoring programmes.

For this reason, the ISA Strategic Plan and High-Level Action Plan for the period 2019-2023 both identify specific actions to be taken towards this end. Furthermore, the ISA Action Plan in support of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, adopted by all Members of the Authority in 2020, identifies six strategic research priorities, including one of particular importance to this workshop: “Standardizing and innovating methodologies for deep-sea biodiversity assessment, including taxonomic identification and description, in the Area.”

The Authority has been working in the field of deep-sea taxonomy for several years. Since 2013, a series of workshops have been conducted. Until today, emphasis has been placed on the importance of standardizing taxonomic identification and description of deep-sea species through enhanced collaboration with key stakeholders, including contractors and scientists.

Our most recent workshop, organized in September 2020, identified key needs, priorities and collaborative approaches to advance deep-sea taxonomy. The Secretariat is currently consolidating the outcomes of the workshop in the form of a roadmap, which will guide the effective integration of deep-sea taxonomic information into ISA’s efforts to ensure that activities in the Area are carried out in an environmentally responsible manner. These results, as well as specific actions that the Secretariat has already initiated within the roadmap, will be presented during this workshop.

Our objective now on this occasion is to identify the best means of sharing images, and to optimize and standardize their application for biodiversity assessments, especially for species identification and description.

I hope that this workshop will enable the development of innovative tools and methodologies for biodiversity assessments, raise awareness of scientific advances and promote capacity-building efforts in the field of deep-sea taxonomy.

Considering the level of expertise represented here and the diversity of the stakeholders participating in the discussions, I am confident that, together, we will reach these ambitious objectives.

I wish you a fruitful discussion and look forward to the outcomes of the workshop.

Thank you.
