



**Workshop on Marine Scientific Research in the Area:  
Establishing collaborative platform to enhance biodiversity knowledge for environmental  
management in mid ocean ridge ecosystem focusing on the Indian Ocean**

Kingston, Jamaica

**15 December 2020**

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 all to this workshop on marine scientific research in the Area.

I would like to thank the Ministry of Natural Resources of China, the China Ocean Mineral Resources R & D Association (COMRA) and the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology for their collaboration in convening this workshop. I also wish to express my appreciation to Dr. Pedro Madureira, member of the Legal and Technical Commission, and Dr. Pei-Yuan Qian of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, for accepting to co-chair this workshop.

The convening of this workshop reflects the ongoing efforts of the Authority to implement the mandate given to it by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). This unique mandate covers a wide range of obligations. As such, it is the duty of the Authority to promote and encourage marine scientific research in the Area as well as coordinate and disseminate the results of such research. Under UNCLOS, the Authority is also required to strengthen the research capabilities of developing States and technologically less developed States and to ensure the effective participation in deep-sea exploration and research programmes.

All of these obligations are essential and support the other components of the mandate of the Authority including its responsibility to protect the marine environment from potential harmful effects that may arise from seabed activities.

This workshop is the first organized by the Authority since we formally presented the Action Plan for Marine Scientific Research in support of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development developed by the Authority. Aligned with the Authority's Strategic Plan and High-level Action Plan for 2019-2023, the Action Plan is currently being considered by the Assembly for adoption by the end of the year.

Among the six strategic research priorities identified in the Action Plan, one focuses particularly on facilitating technology development for activities in the Area including in relation to ocean observation and monitoring. Through this, we are confident that it will be possible to advance scientific knowledge and understanding of deep-sea ecosystems and biodiversity.

To deliver successfully against this strategic research priority, improved cooperation and coordination among contractors and the scientific community are a prerequisite. I strongly believe that this is the key to find innovative and financially sustainable technological solutions to support effectively science-based policy decision-making processes to ensure the sustainable development of activities in the Area.

The outputs of this workshop will therefore be useful to help us identify the immediate actions needed to establish a platform for collaboration through which we will, together with all of you, progress further in the implementation of the mandate of the Authority.

Looking at the level of expertise represented today and in the different panels, as well as the diversity of stakeholders participating in the discussions, I am confident that your deliberations will be of utmost importance to assist the Secretariat in undertaking this important task.

Thank you all for your participation and continued support to the work of the Authority.

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