



World Oceans Day 2021

“Promoting global knowledge of deep-sea biodiversity for the benefit of humankind”

Webinar: “ISA DeepData connects with IOC-UNESCO Ocean Biodiversity Information System, facilitating global access to deep-sea biodiversity data”

8 June 2021

Opening Remarks

By H.E. Michael W. Lodge,
Secretary-General of the International Seabed
Authority

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I am pleased to welcome you to this webinar and to launch our latest initiative designed to facilitate global access to deep-sea biodiversity data collected in the international seabed area.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea mandates the Authority to regulate and control seabed mineral activities in the Area. At the core of this mandate is the responsibility of the Authority to ensure the effective protection of the marine environment from harmful effects that may arise from activities in the Area as well as to promote and encourage marine scientific research in the Area.

Both the Authority’s Strategic Plan and the High-Level Action Plan for the period 2019-2023, identify specific actions to be undertaken to deliver against these responsibilities. They include establishing strategic alliances and partnerships that contribute to promoting and encouraging marine scientific research in the Area as well as sharing of data and information.

In the context of the ISA Action Plan in support of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, this means that we are committed to find better ways to disseminate, exchange and share scientific data and deep-sea research outputs and increase deep-sea literacy.

As part of this initiative, the Authority has officially joined the International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange (IODE) network to serve as a node for the Ocean Biodiversity Information System (OBIS) of IOC-UNESCO.

This is particularly significant as the Authority is the first UN body to become a node of OBIS, which clearly reflects the importance of the legal regime administered by the Authority as a mechanism for enhancing our collective understanding of deep-sea ecosystems and

biodiversity. This will enable us to share more effectively the biological data and other deep-sea related information compiled in our own global repository, DeepData.

The unique function of DeepData is to compile data and information related to deep-sea mineral resources and their environment collected by the exploration contractors. This includes extensive historical data collected over the past several decades of seabed exploration. These data and information are crucial to inform decision-making processes and support the development and implementation of measures for the sustainable management of the resources of the Area.

As many of you know, OBIS is a leading global database on biodiversity and biogeography information and boasts high standards of data quality and visualization. Our new collaboration will thus increase the visibility of DeepData as well as the efforts of the Authority and its contractors towards promoting marine scientific research and dissemination of data in a transparent manner.

This synergy created between these two leading global databases is a very good example of the importance of establishing strategic partnerships to leverage complementary capacities, and networks to deliver transformative knowledge on the biodiversity of the seabed and to create a legacy of new data, tools and training that will facilitate the effective protection of the marine environment.

I am pleased to be joined today by his Excellency Mr. Luis del Solar Dorrego, Permanent Representative of Argentina to ISA. I am grateful to Argentina for your ongoing support as champion of our Marine Scientific Research Action Plan in support of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development adopted by the Assembly in December 2020.

It is also a great pleasure to welcome Mr. Ariel Troisi, Chair of IOC-UNESCO. I wish to express my appreciation to IOC-UNESCO for its ongoing support for the Authority's work and unique mandate and to congratulate technical colleagues in ISA and OBIS for the hard work that has made this collaboration possible.

My thanks also go to Dr. Gordon Paterson, Member of the Legal and Technical Commission of the Authority, for assisting in designing the programme of this webinar and accepting to moderate its discussion.

As we celebrate World Oceans Day, I am thrilled to launch this new important initiative for the Authority, and I encourage all of you to actively explore opportunities to utilize the valuable data and information published in DeepData and OBIS.
