



## **Annual Ministerial Meeting of Landlocked Developing Countries' Foreign Ministers**

**23 September 2021**

### **INTERVENTION**

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

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Thank you for this opportunity to intervene on behalf of the International Seabed Authority.

During this meeting last year, ISA was pleased to offer its support in terms of capacity development in marine science, especially for women, access to marine scientific research and ensuring full participation in the exploration of the deep ocean. All of these have the potential to provide new opportunities for economic development and we must ensure that these opportunities are also available to landlocked developing countries.

Today, more than ever, it is of the utmost importance to recall that the rights granted to landlocked countries under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea are fundamentals to achieving the outcomes of the Vienna Programme of Action and ensuring that all can benefit from the promises of the Blue Economy. As far as ISA is concerned, the rights of developing landlocked States are even more explicit. They have the right to participate in deep sea mineral exploration and marine scientific research as well as to share the financial and economic benefits from deep-sea minerals.

Since last year and following our commitment to a series of concrete actions now reflected in the roadmap for accelerated implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, much progress has been made.

First, the ISA Secretariat has called for nominations of National Focal Points for capacity development. As of today, 40 nominations have been received including from five LLDCS (Botswana, Eswatini, Lao, Mongolia, Nepal). I encourage others to follow.

Second, with a view to raising awareness of potential benefits to LLDCs of the ratification of UNCLOS we have developed a dedicated publication. This publication, entitled "Landlocked developing countries and the law of the sea: an ocean of opportunity", along with sister publications aimed at LDCs and SIDS, will be launched in the upcoming weeks and I hope that all of you will join us for this important event.

Third, ISA together with UN-OHRLLS, have joined hands to advance empowerment and leadership of women in marine scientific research through the joint implementation of the "Women in Deep-Sea Research" project. This will focus on women scientists from developing States, in particular LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

As a first major deliverable under this project, a gender mapping and analysis of barriers to participation will be conducted between July and October 2021 for selected countries in LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS. Several of you have provided national focal point to enable data collection and am very grateful to them as I strongly believe that the outcomes of this work will significantly advance our common objectives.

Both ISA, and me personally, remain fully committed to support the aspirations of LLDCs as expressed in the road map.

We would like to work with every one of you, through our partnership with UNHORLLS, to support your needs in terms of capacity development in marine science, especially for women. This has the potential to provide new opportunities for economic and social development and with your help and engagement, we will strive to ensure that these opportunities are also available to the landlocked developing countries.

Thank you

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