



Launch of the Cook Islands exploration licensing process

Kingston, Jamaica

22 October 2020

VIDEO MESSAGE

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

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His Excellency the Queen's Representative, Sir Tom Marsters,

Prime Minister Honourable Mark Brown,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Kia orana from your friends and colleagues at the International Seabed Authority in Kingston, Jamaica.

Prime Minister, may I first convey my congratulations to you on your recent appointment. On behalf of ISA I wish you all the best as you lead your country through these challenging times in front of us.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to you and to the Cook Islands for your continuing contribution to and support for the work of the International Seabed Authority.

As a member of the Authority and at the same time a sponsoring State of exploration activities in the international seabed area, Cook Islands shares one of the core goals of the Authority, which is to put in place the most rigorous standards for the conduct of exploration and future deep sea mining activities, putting the protection of the marine environment at the front and centre.

We have a remarkable opportunity with this new ocean industry to put in place the necessary regulatory and governance frameworks before any harvesting of nodules can begin.

Earlier this year, my colleagues and I, together with international experts, had planned to hold a regional capacity development workshop in the Cook Islands under our Abyssal Initiative project in partnership with UNDESA.

The workshop, part of a series designed to help build capacity amongst Pacific SIDS, was to focus on the environmental management of seabed mineral activities. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic prevented us from travelling but we look forward to rescheduling this workshop at the earliest possible opportunity in 2021.

I am also delighted that as soon as it becomes possible to travel, we will be welcoming on board Ms. Rima Browne of the Seabed Minerals Authority, who has secured a funded work placement with our database management team for next year 2021.

We have much to advance collectively, and I look forward to our on-going collaboration, and in sharing our respective knowledge, experience and best practice to secure responsible operations and a sustainable future.

I hope we have opportunity to meet again in 2021.

Meitaki ma'ata
