



**Workshop on the Development of a Regional Environmental Management Plan for the Area of the Northern Mid-Atlantic Ridge with a focus on Polymetallic Sulphides (PMS) deposits**

Kingston, Jamaica

**23 November 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 to this workshop on the development of a regional environmental management plan for the Area of the Northern Mid-Atlantic Ridge with a focus on Polymetallic Sulphides (PMS) deposits.

I especially wish to thank the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation and the All-Russia Scientific Research Institute for Geology and Mineral Resources of the Ocean, as well as the European Commission, through its Atlantic REMP project, for their ongoing collaboration and the support provided to the organization of this important workshop.

I also wish to express my appreciation to Dr. Georgy Cherkashov and Dr. Gordon Paterson, both members of the Legal and Technical Commission of ISA, for accepting to co-chair its deliberations as well as their invaluable contribution to designing the programme of this workshop.

My sincere gratitude also goes to the Atlantic REMP project as well as Duke University and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) for their technical support in the preparation of this workshop.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea mandates the Authority to ensure effective protection of the marine environment from harmful effects that may arise from exploration and exploitation of mineral resources in the Area. Accordingly, and pursuant to Article 145 of the Convention, the Authority is required to develop measures and tools to provide for the effective protection of the marine environment, including marine biodiversity.

At the core of the Authority's efforts to implement this mandate lies the development of regional environmental management plans (REMPs). Work on the development of REMPs – although they were not called REMPs at that stage – originated more than a decade ago with scientific discussions on the design of a network of Areas of Particular Environmental Interest (APEIs) in the Clarion-Clipperton Zone.

As a result of that work, the first REMP for the CCZ was adopted by the Council of the Authority in 2012. As interest in seabed exploration has expanded into other regions of the global ocean, it became imperative for the Authority to develop REMPs in other areas where exploration is taking place.

It has been a priority of my first term of office for the Authority to demonstrate environmental leadership and precautionary management in this regard. I was pleased, therefore, that in 2018, the Council endorsed a strategy for the development of REMPs presented by the Secretariat, provided budgetary resources for an environmental programme, and agreed on two key principles to guide the future work:

- First, all REMP's should be developed under the auspices of the Authority.
- Second, REMP's should be developed in priority areas before exploitation starts. This includes the Area of the Northern Mid-Atlantic Ridge, where we have three contracts for exploration for Polymetallic Sulphides deposits.

The workshop that is opening today is a continuation of work started in Szczecin, Poland, in 2018, followed by a workshop in Evora, Portugal, in 2019. Since those two workshops, a lot of progress has been made, particularly to ensure that the process is supported by strong scientific evidence and reflects inputs received from all stakeholders including ISA members, observers, contractors, and the scientific community.

Building on the momentum generated so far, this workshop aims to:

- identify potential management approaches and measures that can be considered in the development of a REMP in the Northern Mid-Atlantic Ridge, including spatial and non-spatial measures as well as approaches for addressing cumulative impacts at the regional level, and
- discuss the framework for implementation, including collaborative framework for future monitoring, research and capacity development.

I want to acknowledge with appreciation the valuable contributions of various experts who assisted with the post-Evora workshop activities. With your help, we were able to further refine the workshop results regarding the qualitative modelling of cumulative impacts and the application of area-based management tools. This important work provides a strong foundation for this workshop's deliberation, along with the earlier workshop reports and the Regional Environmental Assessment Report and Data Report.

Your deliberations will be critical to advance the work carried out so far and to help us identify potential measures that can be put in place to achieve the objectives set out in the Convention, the 1994 Agreement and the rules, regulations and procedures of ISA.

I thank you all for your participation and ongoing support to the work of the Authority.  
I wish you fruitful and productive discussions and I look forward to the outcomes of the workshop.

I thank you.

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