



Inter-Agency Consultative Group Meeting on the Follow-up and Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs

Geneva, Switzerland

17 June 2022

STATEMENT

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

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

This is the third year in a row that ISA has participated in the inter-agency meeting to review the draft road map for accelerated implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action.

We are delighted to do so and to reaffirm our commitment to the work of UN-OHRLLS and the Vienna Programme of Action.

Over the past year, we have continued our efforts to turn our commitments into action and let me take this few minutes to highlight some of the progress we have made.

In September 2021, we launched our series of publications aimed at raising awareness among LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS of the potential benefits to them of ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and participation in activities in the international seabed area (deep sea exploration, exploitation, marine scientific research).

Our dedicated publication, entitled “Landlocked developing countries and the law of the sea: an ocean of opportunity”, is available on the ISA website and has been distributed to all LLDCs.

As indicated in the road map, we continue to accelerate our efforts to enhance the role and participation of women scientists from LLDCs in deep sea research.

In 2021, we had launched, together with UN-OHRLLS, our “Women in Deep-Sea Research” project which will focus on women scientists from developing States and in particular those from LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

The first major deliverable under this project, which is a gender mapping and analysis of barriers identified for selected countries in LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS has been carried out and we expect this report to be released soon. I am particularly pleased that we were able to take advantage of the network of focal points for capacity development that we established since 2020 and directly include the NAFOPs of several LLDCs in the data collection and analysis process for this report.

We continue to make progress in the development of a dedicated capacity development strategy as requested by the Assembly of ISA. A draft strategy has been circulated for consultation and again I am pleased that the national focal points of LLDCs were able to participate in this process. The draft strategy will be presented to the Assembly of the ISA in July 2022, and I hope that this will reinforce and further revitalize our capacity development activities.

Both ISA, and me personally, remain fully committed to support the aspirations of LLDCs as expressed in the road map. UNCLOS recognizes and places special emphasis on the needs of developing landlocked States, including the right to participate in exploitation of living resources in the EEZ, to flag vessels and conduct innocent passage, and the right of access to and from the sea and freedom of transit. These rights are fundamental to achieving the outcomes of the Vienna Programme of Action.

As far as the ISA and the deep sea 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 in the financial and economic benefits from deep sea minerals. 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.

I continue to urge the landlocked developing States, who make up 10% of the membership of ISA, to take full advantage of the opportunities available to them under UNCLOS. I also urge the remaining 12 landlocked developing States who are not yet party to UNCLOS to become parties as soon as possible.
