



STATEMENT BY

NII ALLOTEY ODUNTON

**SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE
INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY**

**Agenda item 75 (a)
OCEANS AND THE LAW OF THE SEA**

**67th SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

11 DECEMBER 2012

New York

Check against delivery

Mr. President,

Allow me first of all to congratulate you on your election to the Presidency of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly. I have every confidence in your ability to guide the Assembly to a successful conclusion.

Mr. President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I wish to refer to the two resolutions before the General Assembly and express my appreciation to member States for their references to the work of the International Seabed Authority contained in draft resolution A/67/L.21, especially under Part VI which is entitled "The Area". I also express appreciation for the very comprehensive report of the Secretary-General which, as always, provides detailed background material for our consideration. I wish to commend the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea for its continued outstanding efforts in the preparation of this report over the years.

Mr. President,

The draft resolution welcomes two major achievements of the Authority during 2012. The first of these is the adoption by the Council at the eighteenth session of the Authority of the Regulations on Prospecting and Exploration for Cobalt-rich Ferromanganese Crusts in the Area. I am pleased to say that after many years of debate and negotiation, these regulations were adopted by consensus.

The adoption of these regulations completes the Authority's regulatory code governing prospecting and exploration for the three main types of mineral resources found in the Area. This is a significant achievement.

Already, following the adoption of the regulations, two applications for exploration for cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts have been filed. These will be considered by the Legal and Technical Commission at its meeting in February 2013 and by the Council at the nineteenth session in July 2013.

The second major achievement, also referred to in operative paragraph 48 of the draft resolution, was the decision by the Council of the Authority to recognize the designation of nine representative areas in the nodule-bearing province of the Pacific Ocean, covering 1.6 million square kilometres, as areas of particular environmental interest where no activity should take place.

Mr. President,

The draft resolution also refers to the rapid increase in exploration activity that has taken place in the past two years.

In 2012, five new applications for exploration contracts were approved by the Council of the Authority, bringing the total number of active exploration contracts in the Area to 17.

The applications approved in 2012 included applications by state and private sector enterprises sponsored by the following States Parties: Belgium, France, Kiribati, Republic of Korea and the United Kingdom. I wish to congratulate these States Parties, and their sponsored entities, on their decision to join the growing group of States with active exploration interests in the seabed beyond national jurisdiction and foster the development of the common heritage of mankind.

As envisaged by the framers of the Convention, contractors with the Authority include States Parties, state enterprises sponsored by States Parties, and private sector interests sponsored by States Parties. Sponsoring States include not only the developed, industrialized States, but also developing States taking advantage of the provisions in Part XI that were designed to allow them equal access to seabed resources. This is an important achievement that demonstrates that the system set out in the Convention and the 1994 Agreement can work.

Mr. President,

In 2011, the Authority had approved the first ever contracts for exploration for polymetallic sulphides in the Area. Contracts were awarded to entities sponsored by the Peoples' Republic of China and the Russian Federation.

I wish to inform the Assembly that I had the honour, on 30 October 2012, in Moscow, to sign a fifteen-year exploration contract for polymetallic sulphides in the Area, with the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment of the Russian Federation. I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the Government and People of the Russian Federation on this important achievement.

Mr. President,

With the increased pace of activity in the Area, much work lies ahead for the Authority in order to succeed in its task of managing the resources of the Area for the benefit of mankind as a whole. This includes the task of developing fair and reasonable financial terms for future exploitation of minerals.

It is thus more important than ever that all States Parties attend the annual meetings of the Assembly and Council and participate fully in all aspects of the work of the Authority. I therefore look forward to the widest possible participation by all members in the nineteenth session of the Authority in July 2013.
