

Comments on the ISA Capacity Development Strategy (Draft)

After carefully studying the ISA Capacity Development Strategy (Draft) and the strategic plan and high-level action plan for the period of 2019-2023, we have the following comments to the Draft:

1. As for "2.3 *Stimulating innovative approach to capacity development in support of continuous professional development*", it is suggested that "*the existing types of training for international trainees should be improved, so as to encourage contractors to still fulfill their training obligations by providing online training course in case of COVID-19 pandemics or other uncontrollable circumstances.*".

2. Regarding Article 27, "*The Secretariat will also strengthen its efforts to secure and maintain support for the recognition of excellence of young researchers through the Secretary-General's Award for Excellence in Deep Sea Research.*", the Award for excellence in deep-sea research is just established for those *who have made outstanding contributions to the advancement of scientific knowledge of the deep-sea environment, or to the development of environmentally sustainable regulatory frameworks.* In the first three sessions (2018-2021), the awards have been granted to biological or ecological scientists. If it is limited to the scientists in the field of deep-sea environment, the award will not be in consistency with its original intention, and also can't encourage young researchers who have made outstanding contributions to deep-sea geology, deep-sea mining and metallurgical technology, as well as deep-sea engineering. It is suggested that the application qualification of the Award be extended to cover all deep-sea research fields, such as deep-sea geology, environment, mining, beneficiation and metallurgy, and engineering. If it is still just for environmental experts, it is suggested that the name of the Award be

changed to "*Secretary-General's Award for Excellence in Deep Sea Environmental Research*".

3. Regarding Section 3.1, it is recommended that young trainees from developing countries should be provided more training on professional knowledge for office work, such as resource evaluation methods, laboratory testing and analysis of minerals among others. The previous training for trainees of the ISA just focused on at-sea survey, but actually, the office work including the research and analysis is also important. Trainees, based on the established selection system, can participate in the contractor's office work for a period of time by exchange and internship programs, so as to further understand and familiarize the whole resource exploration process.

4. In Article 37 and "Output 4.d", it is mentioned that *the contractors pledging to allocate 50% of training opportunities to qualified women*. Here, whether the 50% is required for every year, every five years or through the whole contract period time needs to be further clarified. In addition, in case the number of qualified women applicants is less than half in the actual recruitment, it will be difficult for contractor to fulfill such commitment even if they are all admitted. It is suggested that the expression should be changed to "*During each five-year period, when there are sufficient qualified women applicants, the contractors pledge to allocate 50% of the training opportunities to qualified women*".

5. In "5.1 improving global deep-sea literacy", it is suggested the following content should be added, i.e. "*the ISA will take measures, such as issuing authentication certificates and providing popular science materials, to encourage countries or institutions to build deep-sea science popularization bases and carry out deep-sea science popularization activities for improving the public's knowledge and understanding of the deep-sea, and also make annual statistics on the number of popular*

science bases, the times of popularization activities and the number of people participating in popularization activities." Furthermore, it is suggested that the content of "*the number of deep-sea science popularization bases, times of science popularization activities and the number of people participating in science popularization in various countries shall be counted by the ISA on an annual basis*" should be added in the "*Output*".

6. Regarding "*5.3 Promoting the development of communications programmes and outreach on deep-sea related matters in relevant institutions*", it is recommended that materials related to the ISA, such as materials about communication products, information materials, or compendium of the work of exploration contractors, be issued in all six official languages of the United Nations, so as to improve the understanding and availability of information by people in various countries.

7. Regarding Article 43, it is mentioned that "*further consideration could also be given to engage in discussion with non-governmental organizations having observer status with the Authority and other non-traditional donors to identify how they intend to contribute to the capacity development programmes and activities implemented by the Authority*". Actually, ISA has 94 observers, including 30 observer states and 32 intergovernmental organizations, besides 32 non-governmental organizations. It is suggested that the content of "*non-governmental organizations with observer status*" be replaced with "*observer states, intergovernmental organizations or non-governmental organizations with observer status*".

8. Section VII indicates that the implementation of the strategy will be undertaken by the secretariat of the Authority, and Section VI indicates that the monitoring and evaluation indicators for the implementation of

the strategy are designed by the secretariat. It is recommended that the monitoring and evaluation of activities for the implementation of the strategy should be undertaken by a third party or periodically evaluated by the Assembly.

9. It is found "*Strategic Direction 6.4. Carry out a detailed resource assessment of the reserved areas that are available to the Enterprise and developing States.*" and "*Strategic Direction 6.5. Identify possible approaches to the independent operation of the Enterprise in a way that meets the objectives of the Convention and the 1994 Agreement while taking into account that the Enterprise lacks capital and is limited to operating through joint ventures*" are missed in the Draft. It is recommended that this draft version should be improved by adding the related items, for the implementation of Strategic Directions 6.4 and 6.5.