

P-SIDS REGIONAL TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP

“Deep seabed environmental management and monitoring”

Cook Islands

Remote workshop

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Statement by Mr. Jens Frølich Holte

State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me start by expressing my appreciation for the opportunity to speak with you today.

I recently took up the position as the Norwegian Prime Minister’s representative (sherpa) to the High-level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy. In December, the Ocean Panel presented a new ocean action agenda, where effective protection, sustainable production and equitable prosperity go hand in hand.

The deep ocean floor contains minerals that are useful for renewable energy technologies and may contribute to the transition to a low-carbon society. However, we also need to be aware of the sensitivities of these ecosystems, our insufficient knowledge and our limited understanding of potential impacts of emerging ocean activities. We must continue to advance the application of the precautionary approach and protection of the environment with regard to all activities in the Area. Long-term benefits, including long-term commercial benefits, are only possible within a framework that is environmentally sound and sustainable. This is the essence of the Ocean Panel’s recommendations.

The International Seabed Authority was established in response to the ground-breaking notion that the deep sea minerals in the Area constitute a common heritage of mankind. These valuable resources belong to all of us. Cooperation and partnership between states that are in different stages of economic development and thus have unequal opportunities to thrive in this field need to be encouraged, both at the regional and global level. Together we need to build the necessary capacity and infrastructure, share marine scientific data, engage in collaborative research and training programmes in order to ensure that benefits are indeed shared equitably in a sustainable manner. Identifying capacity building needs and good strategies will be key in this regard.

Like Norway, ISA is committed to putting environmental protection at the heart of deep-seabed mining. This is seen in ISA’s environmental requirements set out for contractors in exploration and future exploitation regulations as well as the creation of REMPs (Regional Environmental Managements Plans) and associated Areas of Particular Environmental Interest (APEIs). Norway is proud to support the Abyssal Initiative Project, whose main objectives are to ensure that your respective countries, all four being sponsoring States, are in a position to comply with your national and international obligations as seabed activities

progress, and to ensure that the necessary governance structures and mechanisms required, including Deep seabed environmental management and monitoring, are in place.

Finally, let me take this opportunity to confirm Norway's support to the work of the International Seabed Authority ever since its inception. We are proud to have been part of an effort that has already achieved astonishing results. Norway will continue to assist in building capacity and competence in areas where Norway has particular expertise. I wish you the best of luck in your efforts over the next few days.

Thank you.