

Statement by H.E. Mr. Masaya Fujiwara,
Permanent Representative of Japan
to the International Seabed Authority
on *Agenda Item 9: Annual Report of the Secretary-General*
at the Assembly of the Twenty-Sixth Session
of the International Seabed Authority
Kingston, 14 December 2021

Thank you, Mr. President.

Let me first congratulate you on your election to the Presidency of this session of the Assembly. I have every confidence in your ability to lead us, and I assure you of my delegation's full support.

On behalf of my delegation, I would like to express my commendation and sincere congratulations upon convening the face-to-face meeting of the Assembly of the 26th session of the International Seabed Authority after a long interval.

Similarly, I would like to express the Government of Japan's deep appreciation to the Government of Jamaica for its hospitality in hosting this session of the Authority amid challenging situations.

At this juncture, let me convey sincere gratitude to the Secretary-General, Mr. Michael Lodge, for his substantive report covering the activities and arduous tasks undertaken by the Authority during the past two years.

Mr. President,

The world has continued to face unprecedented challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic. Certainly, the activities of the Authority, like those of any other intergovernmental forum, have been impacted.

Nevertheless, during this difficult time, we recognize the Authority has made steady progress in its work undertakings such as; thorough consideration of draft standards and guidelines for deep-sea mining operations by the Legal and Technical Commission. Keen consideration of the equitable sharing of financial benefits derived from activities in the Area by the Finance Committee. In this context, I wish to thank the members of the LTC and the Finance Committee for their ongoing efforts to enable the seamless work-flow of the Authority.

Japan strongly supports the role played by the Authority in the international management of the exploration for and exploitation of the mineral resources in the Area. Indeed, we highly value the Authority's continuous implementation of its mission under the leadership of the Secretary-General in accordance with UNCLOS and the Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of UNCLOS.

Japan has committed itself in the process of developing the regulations for exploitation of mineral resources in the Area. We recognize the importance of such regulations in achieving the balance between the conservation of the unique environment of the deep sea and 'the exploitation' that would bring about the equitable sharing which UNCLOS provides for the benefit of humankind as a whole. In this sense, we would like to emphasize it is highly essential to exhaust all efforts to advance the substantive discussion for the sake of developing and adopting the quality regulations by consensus.

Mr. President,

I am pleased to announce in this Forum that Japan has conducted the world's first-ever excavation test of cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts. This was conducted by Japan Oil, Gas and Metals National Corporation (JOGMEC) within the exclusive economic zone of Japan in 2020. The test aimed to *identify best practices to access essential green technology ingredients while minimizing environmental impact*, which has marked a major technological step forward. Prior, during, and following the test, any effect on the surrounding environment was carefully monitored. Based on this development trend, Japan would like to continue to contribute to enhancing a robust scientific and technical basis for the work of the Authority by sharing its expertise in the course of 'the drafting process of the regulations'.

Mr. President,

In closing, we would like to reiterate that Japan fully recognizes the ever-increasing importance of promoting deep seabed mining by enriching our expertise and ensuring human and financial resources for the Authority, and will continue to support it towards that end. Japan remains committed to working closely with the Authority and all the States Parties towards establishing and advancing a legal order in the deep seabed.

I thank you.

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