

**STATEMENT DELIVERED ON BEHALF OF THE KINGDOM
LESOTHO BY MR. MALEFETSANE MOSEME
DURING THE SECOND PART OF THE 27TH SESSION OF
THE INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY**

“AGENDA ITEM 9: SECRETARY GENERAL’S REPORT”

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Acting President,

Secretary General,

Honourable Ministers,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates and dear colleagues.

Allow me to congratulate the newly elected bureau for the 27th Session. I assure you of my delegation's full support. I also wish to applaud our host, Jamaica on the 60 years' independence anniversary. We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the Honourable Minister of State for Environment of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group, and consequently would want to make the following comments in a national capacity.

Acting President,

The comprehensive annual report of the Secretary-General provides a good basis and overview for discussions on the work of the International Seabed Authority (ISA), in particular as regards the sustainable management and stewardship of the deep seabed and its resources for the benefit of humankind as a whole.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) created the enabling conditions for the operation of the regime of the International Seabed Area. A critical element of this regime lies in the establishment of ISA as a dedicated intergovernmental organization to regulate and manage access to and use of deep-seabed mineral resources, whilst ensuring the protection of the marine environment. In this regard, Lesotho welcomes the Authority's strategic plan and implementation actions necessary to achieve its objectives.

Acting President,

The interest of all humanity in the ocean and the conservation and sustainable use of its resources make it imperative that the global governance regime reflects the maritime interests of all States, whether coastal or landlocked. The UNCLOS regime is based on the premise that the issues of oceans space are interrelated. It provides a comprehensive framework for the entire international community, regulating all the ocean space, its uses and resources, and laying down clear and universal rules. It also represents a common denominator for the different maritime interests of all States, thus balancing their respective rights and duties.

Under the Convention, and in particular its Part XI, which deals with the regime of the Area beyond national jurisdiction, the rights of developing landlocked countries are explicit. They have the right to participate in deep-sea mineral exploration and marine scientific research, as well as to equitably share in the financial and economic benefits from deep-sea minerals.

Acting President,

As a landlocked State, Lesotho is aware that, due to ongoing technological progress and innovation, access to different maritime areas and their resources, whether living or non-living, has reached new frontiers and opened new prospects. In our view, this presents novel challenges and imperatives, such as the need to peacefully manage global common resources, and to ensure equity in access to, and the distribution of benefits from, such resources. These imperatives are also central to SDG 14 under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Acting President,

With respect to activities in the Area, the effective participation of developing States must be promoted, having due regard to their special interests and needs, and in particular to the landlocked and geographically disadvantaged among them. ISA is under the obligation to take measures to promote and encourage

the transfer of technology and scientific knowledge relating to activities in the Area, so that **all** States benefit therefrom.

Acting President,

States have the general obligation to protect and preserve the marine environment, including in the Area. The duty to prevent, reduce and control pollution of the marine environment not only relates to seabed activities subject to national jurisdiction and to activities in the Area – but also pollution from land-based sources, including rivers and pipelines. All States are under thus an obligation to adopt and enforce laws and regulations in this respect.

Acting President,

As part of its mandate, the Authority is also entrusted with the responsibility to ensure equitable sharing of benefits derived from the conducts of activities in the Area. One important stream of benefits is the development of programmes aimed at strengthening the capacities of developing States and technologically less developed States.

Acting President,

Lesotho welcome's the publication on advancing women's empowerment and leadership in deep-sea research, particularly women from developing States, including LDCs, LLDCs and SIDs. Women continue to remain underrepresented in ocean science, especially in highly technical categories. It is in this regard, that Lesotho took part in the recent gender-mapping exercise of the deep-sea research filed and related activities. On this note, we also congratulate Dr. Kirsty McQuaid from South Africa as the recipient of the SG's Award for Excellence in Deep-Sea Research.

As I conclude, **Mr. President**, Lesotho remains committed to the work of ISA, and as such it would be remiss of me not to reiterate the plight of developing landlocked States. The UNCLOS regime has improved the legal situation of landlocked States in oceans affairs. The exercise of rights and duties herein is also fundamental to achieving the Vienna Programme of Action (LLDCs) and the Istanbul Programme of Action (LDCs), to which the Authority is fully committed. As we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the adoption of UNCLOS, it is our hope that those States, which are not yet party to the Convention will so consider, and take full advantage of the legal provisions that have been designed for their benefit.

I thank you.