

STATEMENT OF THE AFRICAN GROUP ON THE ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE ISA SECRETARY-GENERAL DELIVERED BY HON. UDI  
ODUM, MINISTER OF STATE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF  
NIGERIA

2<sup>ND</sup> AUGUST, 2022

---

**Acting President,**

**Excellencies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group and would like at the outset to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the Authority's active pursuit of the 2019-2023 strategic plan adopted

by this Assembly in 2018 in furtherance of the Authority's mandate.

We welcome the well-structured format of the report contained in the high-quality print-out which read together with the online version, make for easy comprehension of the activities of the Authority and how those activities feed into and complement global efforts for the sustainable management and use of ocean resources.

The 2019-2023 Strategic Plan remains a useful roadmap for advancing the work of the Authority and provides the framework for the ISA's contribution to the implementation of the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The achievement of SDG 14 on "life below water" is inextricably linked with the realization of other SDGs on alleviating, poverty and hunger, providing decent work, realizing climate objectives, providing educational opportunities, as well as addressing the gender

gaps in the area of marine scientific research among several others. This nexus was highly acknowledged during the 2022 UN Ocean Conference and gives credence to the findings of the Independent Review commissioned in 2021, which establishes that apart from SDG 14, the ISA is meaningfully contributing to 11 other SDGs.

We also take note of the very fruitful cooperation of the Authority with the United Nations in support of the UN Ocean Decade and commend ISA's

active participation and representation during the 4<sup>th</sup> Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC) to develop an international legally binding instrument on marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ), the UN Ocean Conference and the 2022 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. This kind of visibility reinforces the primacy of UNCLOS in regulating all activities in the ocean.

We commend, the Secretary-General for convening the High-Level Event on "*fostering*

*international and regional cooperation in support of the sustainable development of the blue economy of LDCs, LLDC, and SIDs".* In welcoming the prioritization of the interest of these categories of States, we wish to stress the need to build on these discussions through concrete action that would ensure that no one is left behind when it comes to the realization of the benefits of the ocean and its vast resources.

We would like to thank the Authority for the three publications which are designed to provide

useful information to LDC's LLDCs and SIDS on the benefits which avail to them under the Convention. We view them as useful resources to guide and support policy-making and implantation at the national and regional levels.

Ensuring the fully integrated participation by developing states in the activities in the Area, is in our opinion, fundamental to giving full meaning to the principle of the Common Heritage of Mankind. It is in this regard, that the African Group has repeatedly called for the

operationalization of the Enterprise. It would be a missed opportunity should the Council not reach consensus, in its next meeting, on the appointment of an interim Director-General, at P5 level, to take over from the Special Representative at the end of his mandate in 2023. We note that States Parties agree in principle to the step-by-step approach envisaged for the transitioning of the functions of the Enterprise from the LTC to an autonomous functioning Enterprise and welcome the



constructive engagement of member states on a draft decision to be tabled by the African Group at the next Council meeting.

**Acting President, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

For the African Group, we believe that the Memorandum of Understanding between the ISA Secretariat the African Union Commission which has been approved by the Council would help strengthen the existing fruitful relations with

the continent and contribute to the realization of Africa's Blue Economy and the 2063 Agenda.

We welcome the continuing efforts to build capacity for developing states. The Africa Deep Seabed mining project (ADSR), which is being implemented in partnership with the African Union and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation stand out for us, as an important mechanism for knowledge sharing and enhancement of the capacities of African Experts. We look forward to highly enriching

deliberations during the upcoming workshops to be hosted in Abuja by the Government of Nigeria and the Kingdom of Morocco come October.

We also welcome the initiative of the Deep Dive Platform which was launched in June this year.

We take note of the 5 learning modules and encourage member states to raise awareness in their respective countries of the availability of this tool.

**Acting President,**

Allow me to note the continued dedication of the Secretary-General to the empowerment and leadership of women in the area of marine scientific research and to commend the several initiatives undertaken in that regard. We take this opportunity to acknowledge the presence with us of the recipient of the 2021 SG Award for Excellence in Deep-Sea Research, Dr. Kristy McQuaid from South Africa and applaud her

contribution to the body of knowledge on deep sea research.

Before concluding, we wish to express our support to the Secretary-General for the important reforms undertaken to deliver a Secretariat that is fit for purpose. We Congratulate Ms. Mariana Durney on her appointment as Legal Counsel and assure her of the support of the Group.

It is however a matter of concern that Africans are highly under-represented in the staffing of the Secretariat. We note with concern that none of the two African officers in the Secretariat are in managerial or senior positions. We do not believe that this is attributable to the lack of requisite capacity in the region and call for this imbalance to be addressed to ensure equitable representation of all the regions in the Secretariat.

In closing, allow me to reiterate once again, the commitment of the African Group to the mandate of the ISA and our intention to remain active and constructive in our engagements and throughout the process for the elaboration of the draft regulations on exploitation.

**I thank you.**