



South Africa's Anniversary Messages to be delivered by Her Excellency, Ambassador Lumka Yengeni, on the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Independence of Jamaica and Fortieth Anniversary of the Adoption and Opening for signature of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

Mr President of the Assembly

The Most Honourable Andrew Michael Holness, Prime Minister of Jamaica, Her Excellency, Ms Kamina Johnson-Smith, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica,

His Excellency, Mr Tomasz Abramowski of Poland, President of the 27th Session of the Council,

His Excellency, Mr Michael Lodge, Secretary-General of the ISA,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour and privilege to deliver these anniversary messages on behalf of the South African delegation at our national capacity. We fully align ourselves with the anniversary messages delivered by Nigeria on behalf of the African Group. The first message is on the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Independence of Jamaica and the South African delegation joins the people of Jamaica in celebrating this milestone which is clearly a defining moment in their lives. Jamaica has always had a natural, yet significant bond with South Africa. This was clearly demonstrated by Jamaica's role in the political and diplomatic process to end apartheid in South Africa. This has been internationally recognized. In 1978, Michael Manley, the then Prime Minister, was among a group of eminent persons awarded the UN gold medals for distinguished service in the struggle against apartheid. He led the Commonwealth Observer Mission to South Africa in 1992 and 1993 and again in 1994 to observe the first democratic elections. Michael Manley also received South Africa's Order of the Companions of Oliver Tambo (Gold Award) for promoting the interests and aspirations of the Republic of South Africa at the higher levels through excellent cooperation and active expression of solidarity and support.

Mr President

Jamaica and South Africa established diplomatic relations on September 9, 1994, five months following the historic free and democratic elections. Jamaica and the Republic of South Africa had, on 28 June 2022, signed a Joint Communiqué, signalling their agreement to strengthen the longstanding cooperation between the two countries in several critical areas, including science and technology, art, culture, entertainment, the creative industries and sport. A plan of action is now in place to enhance bilateral relations between Jamaica and South Africa. These inaugural political consultation between the two countries was a fulfillment of the Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Arts and Culture, allowing for cultural exchange and ease

of movement back and forth for artists which was signed in 2009 and a memorandum of understanding which was signed in 2015. Jamaica and South Africa have a shared vision and commitment to advancing relations, and both have a strong desire to ensure that our frameworks for engagement are maximised in areas of cooperation that redound to the benefit of our peoples.

Mr President

Let me turn now to the second message which is on the Fortieth Anniversary of the Adoption and Opening for signature of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (“UNCLOS” or “Convention”). The South African delegation is pleased to join States Parties to the Convention in commemorating the 40th Anniversary of the Adoption of the Convention. It is common cause that oceans and the law of the sea are critical to sustainable development. The Convention also called the "Constitution for the oceans", has 168 parties, and sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out. The *Future We Want* recognizes the importance of the Convention to advancing sustainable development and its near universal adoption by States. Integration of the environmental, social and economic dimensions is at the core of UNCLOS. The Convention recognizes the desirability of establishing, with due regard for the sovereignty of all States, a legal order which will facilitate international communication and promote the peaceful uses of the seas and oceans, the equitable and efficient utilization of their resources, the conservation of their living resources, and the study, protection and preservation of the marine environment. To that end, UNCLOS establishes a delicate balance between the need for economic and social development through the use of the oceans and their resources and the need to conserve and manage those resources in a sustainable manner. Effective implementation of the legal framework for the oceans with UNCLOS at its core will have a critical impact on progress in all the target areas of SDG 14. Central to UNCLOS is the balance of the enjoyment of rights and benefits with the concomitant undertaking of duties and obligations.

Mr President

Another subject which must be addressed so that the Convention and its implementing agreements could continue to contribute effectively to sustainable development is the issue of capacity building and the transfer of technology to developing countries. Although the Convention provides for cooperation in this area, evidence has shown that despite the fact that many developing countries have declared Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) and have sovereign rights over their extended continental shelf, and have deposited the requisite coordinates with the Secretary-General, they have not been able to realize the full potential of these zones for their sustainable development due to lack of capacity and technology to fully explore and exploit both the living and non-living resources in these maritime zones. Four decades after the opening for signature of this land-mark instrument, which is hailed as the constitution of the oceans and seas, the time is ripe for developed countries that are States Parties to honour their obligations and assist developing countries so that they would have the capacity to explore and exploit the marine resources within their national jurisdictions in the manner envisaged in the Convention and its implementing instruments.

I thank you for your attention.