

(Unofficial Translation)

**Statement by the Chinese Delegation
at the Council of the 23rd Session of ISA
under agenda item 16:
SG Report on the Election of Members of LTC
(10 August 2017)**

Thank you, Mr. President,

The Legal and Technical Commission is an indispensable functional organ under the Council. As such, its composition is pivotal in determining the effectiveness of the Authority's work. The Secretary General's report presents a rather comprehensive overview of LTC elections and, in its conclusion, offers some specific recommendations. The Chinese delegation welcomes this and appreciates the Secretariat's work in this regard.

The report notes that the focus of the reform related to LTC elections is on the sizing of the Commission and the development of its mechanisms. In this vein, the Chinese delegation has four comments to make, in the context of this report, as follows:

Firstly, the composition of LTC should be guided by four basic requirements pursuant to the applicable UNCLOS provisions and Council decisions: one, due account shall be taken of the need for equitable geographical distribution; two, due account shall be taken of the representation of special interests; three, members shall have appropriate qualifications and competence and their composition shall reflect an appropriate balance of expertise and competence; four, due regard shall be given to economy and efficiency in the event of any adjustment to the number of members. In our view, it is important for the reform of the LTC's composition to fulfil the aforementioned requirements, with a view to a steady improvement of the quality and efficiency of the Commission's work.

Secondly, the processes for nomination of candidates and their election to the LTC should be further regulated. Paragraph 22 of the report presents a recommendation on stricter adherence to the nomination process, including that the current practice of setting a clear timetable for nominations be continued in the future elections. My delegation welcomes this recommendation. The selection of LTC members should

continue to be consensus-driven as a principle. Where consensus fails to materialise, candidates may be elected in pursuance of the applicable rules of procedure of the Council.

Thirdly, appropriate control is called for over the size of the LTC. Since the inception of the Authority, the number of LTC members has doubled, from 15 as prescribed in the Convention to 30, after several rounds of expansion. Paragraph 23 of the report, we note, refers to the fact that the Commission has functioned effectively with a nominal membership of 24. Furthermore, a larger Commission has clearly put some strain on the finances of the Authority. It is my delegation's view that the current size, i.e. a 30-member LTC, suffices to cope with the real-life demands of its mandated service to the Council. Further expansion is not advised in the immediate future.

Fourthly, the composition of the LTC is not cast in stone. It should be adjusted *as and when* the Council's functions and priorities evolve over time. The Chinese delegation supports the report's recommendation on the optimisation of the LTC's mix of expertise and disciplines. We would like to further propose that the LTC, in the light of the Council's priorities for each given phase, adjust the number of members and the mix of expertise at the proper time. We note that the development of the exploitation regulations has made it to the agenda in recent years, as a result of which the LTC now has a greater need for expertise in such disciplines as exploration and exploitation of mineral resources, oceanography, environmental protection and economics of mining. The composition of the LTC should reflect and keep up with these changed necessities.

Thank you, Mr. President.