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Republic of Fiji

Statement on the Occasion of the 24th Session of the International Seabed Authority (ISA) Kingston, Jamaica

**Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,**

1. As stated yesterday, my delegation congratulates you on your assumption of the Presidency of the Assembly for this 24th Session of the Authority. In doing so we also appreciate the efforts of the former President for the 23rd Session.
2. To the host country, it is always good to be back in Jamaica and we thank the Government and people of Jamaica as always for their hospitality.

Mr. President,

3. The report presented by the Secretary General of the Authority yesterday provided a comprehensive overview of the Authority's work over the past year and we welcome the progress that has been achieved this far.
4. We thank the Secretary-General for his leadership and commend the tireless hard work of the Secretariat.

Mr. President,

5. With regards to the delimitation of the limits of national jurisdiction, pursuant to Article 84, paragraph 2 of UNCLOS, and as reflected by one of our voluntary commitments from the UN Ocean Conference we are working towards the finalization of our delimitation processes. We commend those members of the Authority who have been making continuous progress in this Area and those who have completed their delimitation process.
6. In relation to the 'implementation of article 82, paragraph 4 of UNCLOS', we support the efforts of the Authority in developing an equitable sharing regime and financial model.
7. As seen last week in the Council, we heard from MIT about a financial payment system on seabed mining for polymetallic nodule from Professor Richard Roth and appreciate the work he and his team have done so far.
8. However, an in-depth comparative analysis is needed of other potential financial models and Fiji like others looks forward to the report that will be issued once the comparative study has been completed as originally proposed by Germany during the Council last week.
9. A comparative analysis of financial models will ensure that we adhere to Article 82 of the Convention and decide on an equitable sharing regime benefitting all Member States. The equitable sharing regime needs to be further guided by Article 140 of the Convention ensuring that benefits derived from activity in the Area shall benefit mankind as a whole, irrespective of geographical location of States whether coastal or land-locked and considering special interests and needs of developing states.

Mr. President

10. We note also from the Secretary-General's report the staff vacancies within the Secretary and encourage all member states to circulate the upcoming vacancy announcements ensuring that we have a wide variety of applicants from both the developed and developing countries ensuring that there is a good balance of experience and expertise which will further strengthen the Secretariat.
11. With regards to the 'Voluntary Trust Fund', my delegation sincerely appreciates the continuous support by members of the Authority for their generous contributions like Norway and Pew Charitable Trust. These funds will greatly assist developing states such as SIDS and LDCs in participating at scheduled Finance Committee, LTC and Council meetings and we encourage other parties to make similar contributions.
12. In addition to this, Fiji would also like to put to the Assembly the need to find a more secure source of funding given the significance of the LTC and Finance Committee and Council so that we are not solely reliant on voluntary contributions.
13. We also express sincere appreciation to the Secretariat, members of the Authority, organizations and individuals for the generous donations to the 'Satya Nandan Library'. We recognize the valuable contribution that the library will provide and acknowledge the work of the Secretariat to digitize its records ensuring accessibility for all.

Mr. President,

14. We applaud the strengthened relationship and coordination between ISA, UN bodies and other international organizations.
15. We especially acknowledge the strengthened relationship between IMO and ISA noting that the two organizations have a joint responsibility in regulatory matters of the high sea. On this note the same collaboration would apply to the BBNJ processes.

16. In addition to this, Fiji congratulates the ISA and IMO collaboration in the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection.
17. We acknowledge the work of ISA and ICPC and considering the importance of submarine cables commends this collaboration, especially in relation to Article 112 of UNCLOS.
18. Fiji is also looking forward to the workshop for Pacific Small Island States (PSIDS) that will take place in Tonga in November this year for the Blue Growth Project, we note that this was made possible through a collaboration between the Authority, UN DESA, the Pacific Community and the Government of Tonga. This is a perfect example of cooperation and my delegation looks forward to more similar collaborations with the ISA and is also open to these kinds of collaborations in the future.

Mr. President,

19. Fiji thanks the Authority for its transparent approach to ensure that members have sufficient time to provide comments on the draft regulation. We will submit our comments by the set deadline of 30th September 2018 after consultation with our experts.
20. Fiji commends the work of the LTC in highlighting the importance of marine environment protection into the draft regulations which will concern all members of the Authority.
21. With regards to the promotion and encouragement of MSR in the Area, Fiji thanks members of the Authority who are organizing workshops focusing on this area like the upcoming one to be held in Poland this September.

Mr. President,

22. About the regional environmental management plans (REMPS) Fiji acknowledges the Council for the adoption of the Environmental Management Plan for the Clarion-Clipperton Zone in 2012 however we note more work is

needed for the development of REMPS and we call for more capacity building focused on the proper establishment, management and implementation of REMPs to be in parallel with the draft regulations before exploitation can begin. Fiji would like to reiterate the urgent need for the development of standards and guidelines on exploitation in the Area.

23. On capacity building and training Fiji would like to acknowledge the Authority for its support of capacity development opportunities and training to SIDS to raise awareness and increase the skills and knowledge on DSM. However, with regards to internships we hope that a more stable source of funding can be explored to ensure that interns from developing countries can also participate.
24. Also, as Fiji and others have stated we look forward to early notification of workshops or trainings, a detailed schedule or trainings etc would be welcomed ensuring we all have sufficient time and funding to prepare for our participation.
25. Finally, in closing **Mr. President**, my delegation would like to commend the Authority for its active participation at the UN Oceans Conference in June last year which Fiji presided over with Sweden.
26. The 7 voluntary commitments registered by the Authority will certainly go a long way in supporting the implementation of SDG 14 in line with the 'Our Ocean, Our Future: Call for Action' which was so expertly facilitated by our friends from Singapore and Portugal.
27. SDG 14 should be in our minds as we move from exploration to exploitation, especially with regards to the draft regulations and the Assembly members with the Secretary-General can ensure it is reflected in all aspects of the Assembly's work.

Thank You.

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