



Assembly

Distr.: General
25 August 2005

Original: English

Eleventh session

Kingston, Jamaica
15-26 August 2005

Statement of the President on the work of the Assembly at the eleventh session

1. The eleventh session of the Assembly of the International Seabed Authority was held at Kingston from 15 to 26 August 2005.

Adoption of the agenda

2. At its 98th meeting, on 15 August 2005, the Assembly adopted the agenda for the eleventh session (ISBA/11/A/1).

Election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the Assembly

3. At the 98th meeting, on 15 August 2005, Olav Myklebust (Norway) was elected President of the Assembly for the eleventh session. At the 99th meeting on 18 August, following consultations in the regional groups, the representatives of Brazil (Latin American and Caribbean States), South Africa (African States), Bangladesh (Asian States) and Poland (Eastern European States) were elected as Vice-Presidents.

Appointment of the Credentials Committee

4. At its 99th meeting, on 18 August 2005, the Assembly elected a Credentials Committee in accordance with rule 24 of its rules of procedure. The following were elected as members of the Credentials Committee: Argentina, Austria, Finland, Jamaica, Japan, Pakistan, Slovakia, Sudan and Uganda. Subsequently, Helmut Tuerk (Austria) was elected by the Committee as its Chairman. The Committee met on 24 August 2005. The report of the Committee is contained in document ISBA/11/A/9. At its 101st meeting, on 25 August 2005, the Assembly adopted the report of the Credentials Committee. The decision of the Assembly relating to credentials is contained in document ISBA/11/A/10.

Election to fill vacancies on the Finance Committee

5. At its 99th meeting, the Assembly elected Alexander Stadtfeld (Germany), Antonin Parizek (Czech Republic), Oleg Alekseevich Safronov (Russian Federation)

and Kyaw Moe Tun (Myanmar) as members of the Finance Committee to replace Bernd Kreimer (Germany), Boris Idrisov (Russian Federation), Ivo Dreiseitl (Czech Republic) and Aung Htoo (Myanmar), respectively.

Annual report of the Secretary-General

6. At the 99th meeting, on 18 August 2005, the Secretary-General introduced his annual report to the Assembly (ISBA/11/A/4 and Corr.1). In introducing the report, the Secretary-General informed the Assembly that Trinidad and Tobago had acceded to the Protocol on Privileges and Immunity of the Authority on 11 August 2005. The Secretary-General particularly drew the attention of the Assembly to paragraph 64 of his report. He informed the Assembly that, in respect of the Authority's efforts to promote marine scientific research in the Area, the limited role of scientists from developing countries in those activities was becoming increasingly apparent. He noted that, at this early stage of the process, the applicability of some of the techniques used for research in the Area to address similar matters in the exclusive economic zones of many developing countries was readily acknowledged. Paragraph 64 therefore contained a proposal to establish a trust fund to promote marine scientific research and, inter alia, to provide opportunities for qualified scientists from institutions in developing countries to participate in research activities conducted by international scientists at sea or in laboratories of scientific institutions.

7. Following the presentation by the Secretary-General, statements were made by the delegations of Argentina, Austria, Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil (on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States), Canada, Chile, China, France, Ghana, Greece, Indonesia, Iraq, Jamaica, Kenya, Namibia, the Netherlands, Nigeria (on behalf of the Group of African States), Pakistan, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Senegal, Spain, South Africa, the Sudan, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United Republic of Tanzania and Yemen. The observer delegations of the United States of America and of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the United Nations Secretariat also made statements.

8. With respect to the Headquarters Agreement between the Government of Jamaica and the Authority, the representative of Jamaica informed the Assembly of the ongoing security arrangements made by the Government of Jamaica for the Authority and its staff in accordance with its responsibilities under the Agreement.

9. In relation to section VII of the report (Relations with the United Nations and other bodies), a number of delegations expressed support for the participation of the Authority in UN-Oceans. The Secretary-General was requested to report on activities within the body, the results of the process, and how the structure would assist the Authority.

10. With regard to section VIII of the report (Secretariat), and on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, Brazil noted the Group's concern that no staff member of the Secretariat was from that region. He said that the Group would be happy to receive formal notifications of vacancies within the Secretariat in order to put forward credible candidates.

11. Several delegations complimented the Authority on its library and website and on its impressive record of publications. It was noted that the publications were a

useful means for the dissemination of information among members, including information on the results of marine scientific research. A request was made that proceedings of workshops and other publications should also be made available on CD-ROM, and distributed to member States.

12. Ghana informed the Assembly of a training programme on the preparation of submissions to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf to be convened in Accra in December 2005. The workshop would be convened jointly with the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea. Nigeria offered to host a workshop in 2006 on seabed mineral resources development.

13. In relation to section XI.C of the Secretary-General's report, many delegations expressed their support for the ecosystem-based approach to the protection and preservation of the marine environment in the Area. In that regard, and on the matter of the protection of biodiversity in the Area, some delegations stated their interest in the results of the high-level open-ended workshop on marine biodiversity beyond the limits of national jurisdiction to be convened by the United Nations in 2006.

14. Support was expressed for the Authority's project for the establishment of a geological model of polymetallic nodule deposits in the Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone of the Pacific Ocean. China noted that the extensive experience that had been acquired by contractors could contribute meaningfully to the project.

15. With regard to paragraph 60 of the report, on the Kaplan project, France pointed out that IFREMER was not a part of the project, but had allowed scientists of the project to participate in a cruise that it undertook as part of its obligations under its contract with the Authority. China expressed its appreciation of the progress being achieved in the Kaplan project, and informed the Assembly that it would allow scientists of the project to participate in its Ocean 1 cruise scheduled for 2006.

16. Several delegations commented on paragraph 64 of the report, on the establishment of a trust fund to provide opportunities for qualified scientists from developing countries to participate in marine scientific research activities conducted by international scientists in the Area. There was much support for the Secretary-General's proposal. Many delegations expressed their support for this capacity-building initiative and said that they looked forward to the more detailed proposal to be provided by the Secretary-General at the twelfth session, as recommended by the Finance Committee in paragraph 12 of its report.

Report of the Finance Committee

17. At its 101st meeting, on 25 August 2005, the Assembly considered the report of the Finance Committee (ISBA/11/A/8-ISBA/11/C/9), and the recommendations therein to the Assembly and the Council.

18. Following consideration of the report, the Assembly decided to appoint Deloitte & Touche as independent auditor of the Authority for 2005 and 2006. The Assembly also approved the assessed contributions of Denmark, Latvia and Burkina Faso, which became members of the Authority in 2004 (Denmark) and 2005 (Latvia and Burkina Faso), to the administrative budget of the Authority and the Working Capital Fund for 2004 and 2005, as recommended by the Finance Committee in paragraph 8 of its report.

19. With respect to the administration of the voluntary trust fund for financing the participation of members of the Legal and Technical Commission and members of the Finance Committee from developing countries for 2006, the Assembly adopted the recommendation contained in paragraph 10 of the report of the Finance Committee. The Assembly noted with appreciation a contribution to the voluntary fund of \$5,000 by Nigeria and a pledge of a further contribution of \$10,000 by Trinidad and Tobago. The Secretary-General was asked to continue to seek further donations to the fund from members of the Authority and other sources.

20. The Assembly urged all members of the Authority to pay their assessed contributions in full and on time. It was noted that, as at 30 June 2005, 37 members of the Authority were in arrears for a period of two years or more. The Secretary-General informed the Assembly that the delegation of Iraq had met with him to inform him that Iraq would soon rectify its arrears in contributions.

Tribute to Kenneth Rattray

21. At the 100th meeting of the Assembly, on 23 August 2005, the Secretary-General read to the Assembly a statement that he had issued when he learned of the passing away of Kenneth Rattray on 4 January 2005. The Assembly observed a minute of silence in memory of Mr. Rattray. Statements were made by the President of the Assembly and by Argentina, Austria, Australia, Bangladesh (on behalf of the Group of Asian States), Brazil (on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States), Cameroon, Canada (on behalf of the Group of Western European and Others States), China, France, Ghana, Indonesia, Namibia, Nigeria (on behalf of the Group of African States), Papua New Guinea, the Russian Federation (on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States) Senegal, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia and the United States of America.

Request by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources for observer status in the Assembly

22. The Assembly considered a request for observer status by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN). It invited IUCN to participate as an observer in its meetings.

Next session of the Assembly

23. The twelfth session of the Assembly will be held at Kingston, Jamaica, from 7 to 18 August 2006.

24. The Assembly noted that the terms of office of the members of the Finance Committee and the Legal and Technical Commission would expire on 31 December 2006. Elections to those bodies for the period 2007-2011 would therefore be held at the twelfth session of the Assembly. With respect to the question whether existing members of those bodies were eligible for re-election, the Secretary-General expressed the view that those members who had already served for two terms could be considered eligible for re-election given the disparity that existed between different language versions of the text. There was no general agreement on this. In addition, the regular election would be held for one half of the members of the Council.