

**Norwegian Statement in the Assembly on the Annual Report of Secretary-General  
at the 24th Session of the International Seabed Authority in Kingston, Jamaica, 16-27 July 2018  
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Mr. President,

Let me start by thanking the Secretary-General for having provided us with a comprehensive and useful report on the activities of the Authority. We would also like to thank the entire Secretariat for all the work throughout the year and in preparation of this session. We recognize that the increased activity, including the two-part session of the Council, has an impact on the workload of the Secretariat.

Mr. President,

The oceans are a priority for Norway. We live off the ocean. We care for the ocean. And we take ocean management seriously. Last year the Government presented a Whitepaper to the Parliament on oceans and foreign policy and also developed an Ocean Strategy. Earlier this year at the World Economic Forum Prime Minister Solberg launched a high level panel of heads of government on sustainable ocean economy which will deliver its report in 2020.

Under the Law of the Sea Convention States have the duty to protect the marine environment and the right to utilize the ocean and its resources.

The world is dependent on the Oceans for our survival, as the largest ecosystem on Earth provides essential benefits, such as ecosystem services, food, income, energy and transport. And in order to enjoy ocean services we must protect the ocean from harm. And this is when ocean management becomes challenging - when you aspire to both protect and use the ocean. For all its sea areas Norway has adopted science based management plans where different elements of use and conservation are seen together in a holistic perspective.

Norway has been able to benefit from utilization of marine resources. It is important that all States are enabled to benefit from their own resources, protect their interests and fulfil their responsibilities under the Law of the Sea. Thus capacity building is a priority for Norway. For decades Norway has cooperated with developing states in relation to ocean issues. One example is our ongoing cooperation with seven West-African countries in their establishment of the outer limits of the continental shelf. And as the Secretary General mentioned in his statement yesterday, it is now our intention to contribute 500.000 USD to a Secretariat project promoting the sustainable development of Africa's deep seabed resources in support to Africa's Blue Economy, and another 60.000 USD to the fund for the Legal and Technical Commission and the Finance Committee.

Mr. President,

The Seabed Authority is trusted with an important mandate under the Convention and the 1994 Agreement: To promote utilization of marine mineral resources which are the common heritage of mankind. So far the focus has been on exploration, and the Authority has done a tremendous job in establishing relevant rules and procedures and facilitating activity on the seabed.

Now we are about to enter a new phase: Exploitation. It is indicated that some contractors in a not too distant future might be ready to start mineral extraction. It is very encouraging that calculations done by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology indicate that seabed mining in the Area can be profitable. Their models indicate that seabed mining can contribute to the world's supply of important minerals and generate revenues that can form the basis for benefit sharing from utilisation of the minerals which are the common heritage of mankind.

In this regard, continued priority must be given to completing the draft Exploitation Regulations. It was encouraging to take part in the detailed discussions on the Regulations in the meeting of the Council last week, and we are looking forward to continued work on this, including the written submissions due in September and the working group that was established on the financial model. We must maintain progress on the issue to make sure that the Regulations are ready when the day comes that a contractor is ready to start exploration. We owe that to the contractors, but even more so, we owe it to ourselves when the fundamental purpose of Part XI and the Authority is about to be realised for the benefit of mankind as a whole.

One of the important functions of the Regulations is to secure the marine environment. The oceans are suffering from accelerating degradation due to multiple stressors, triggered by human activities and compounded by climate change impacts. We need effective measures to protect the oceans, and initiating deep sea mining carries a huge responsibility. We need to make sure that the Regulations establish safe thresholds and functional procedures. The discussions in the Council last week indicated that this might have implications for what we demand of the contractors and the sponsoring States, how the Secretariat is staffed and works, how scientific knowledge is fed into the processes and used, how the Legal and Technical Commission functions, practices relating to confidentiality and transparency etc. We must be willing to discuss every element that can contribute to good processes and prevent environmental harm.

In relation to the environmental issue I should also highlight the development of the Regional Environmental Plans. The efforts of the Secretariate in this regard are appreciated, including the involvement of the scientific community. Let me here also highlight the importance of good contact with relevant regional ocean management organizations, such as the OSPAR Commission and the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission, as mentioned in the Secretary General's report.

Mr. President,

The last point I want to mention is the ongoing negotiations at the United Nations in New York on a legally binding agreement on biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ). The new agreement should and will have implications for the Authority and seabed mining. Therefore we all must make sure that the perspective of the Authority and its mandate are taken duly into account in the negotiations. One question is how the powers of a possible new environmental body under the new agreement shall be shaped in relation to the Authority's mandate to manage the mineral resources in the Area. In Norway's view management decisions, such as decisions on where mining should take place and not, should be taken by the Authority here in Kingston.

Mr. President,

Norway is committed to the work of the Authority, and we want to contribute to the development of a mining code that effectively protects the environment and takes into consideration the interests of developing countries.

Finally, this Delegation would like to thank the Government and the people of Jamaica for your hospitality. We look forward to returning to Jamaica for future sessions.