INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY OPENS NINETEENTH SESSION IN KINGSTON; ASSEMBLY ELECTS PRESIDENT AND ADOPTS AGENDA

The International Seabed Authority began its nineteenth session today with the election of its president and the adoption of an extensive agenda which includes consideration and approval of revised regulations on prospecting and exploration for polymetallic nodules.

Mr. Vladimir Mikhailovich Polenov (Russian Federation), was elected President of the Authority’s 165-member Assembly for the session. He is currently his country’s Ambassador to Jamaica. (See biographical note SB/19/3). The new President was nominated by the representative of Poland on behalf of the Eastern European Group.

The Assembly adopted a 12-point agenda with a minor amendment to Item 6, relating to elections to fill vacancies to the Finance Committee. Mexico proposed another amendment to the agenda that would allow discussion by the Assembly on the Outcomes of the International Workshop on Further Consideration of the Implementation of Article 82 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (ISBA/19/A/4). While delegations agreed on the importance of such discussions, it was decided that there would be sufficient time to take up the matter during deliberations on the Annual Report of the Secretary-General.

Four Vice Presidents were elected: Brazil representing the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, and Singapore, South Africa and Spain representing their respective regional groups – Asia, Africa and Western Europe and Other States.

A nine-member Credentials Committee appointed by the Assembly comprises Australia, Guyana, Jamaica, Myanmar, Namibia, Nigeria, New Zealand, Philippines, and the Russian Federation.

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In other elections, Oliver Guyonvarch (France), Chen Changxue (China), and Vishnu Dutt Sharma (India), were elected to the Finance Committee to replace their compatriots Serge Segura (France), Yao Jinsong (China) and Pradip Choudhary (India) who had resigned. They will serve the remainder of their term until December 31, 2016. (See documents ISBA/19/A/3, ISBA/19/A/5, and ISBA/19/A/6.)

The Assembly will next meet on Wednesday, July 24 to begin debate on the Secretary-General’s report which is presented under article 166, paragraph 4, of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

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