SEABED AUTHORITY CONCLUDES TWENTY-FIRST SESSION

The Assembly of the International Seabed Authority at its final meeting of the 21st Session in Kingston today approved the recommendations of its Finance Committee relating to financial and budgetary matters; and decided to undertake the first review of the operations of the international regime of the Area as provided for under article 154 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

In other matters, the Assembly approved the report of its Credentials Committee and set 11 - 22 July, 2016 as the date of its twenty-second session in Kingston.

The decision on financial and budgetary matters (document ISBA/21/A/L.3) was adopted without discussion as the Council had already acted on the report and recommendations of the Finance Committee. It had also been presented to the Assembly by the Committee’s Chair, Olav Myklebust (Norway) on 16 July. (See Press release SB-21-6).

The Assembly also decided, after some debate, (document ISBA/21/A/L.2), to undertake a general and systematic review of the manner in which the international regime of the Area had operated in practice. It would be conducted by consultants under the oversight of a review committee, comprising the President and the Bureau of the Assembly and the President of the Council, with the current President of the Assembly remaining a member until the completion of its work.

The representative of Argentina raised some questions about the composition of the review committee, such as the need to include regional group representatives, in addition to the vice-presidents of the Bureau and to ensure equitable geographical representation among selected consultants. He also expressed the need for specific mention of the Enterprise, the Authority’s future mining arm, in its terms of reference.
Although some members, including Brazil, South Africa and Trinidad and Tobago, agreed with some of Argentina’s concerns, a majority, including Australia, Canada, Fiji, France, India, Norway and the United Kingdom, preferred the adoption of the decision in its current form, with a minor change to paragraph 4 (d) of the annex to include a specific reference to the Enterprise.

The Assembly approved the report of the Credentials Committee (ISBA/21/A/7), which was presented by its Chair, Indera Persaud (Guyana). She reported that of the Authority’s 167 members, the credentials of 62 were received by the Secretariat. The Credentials Committee comprised Argentina, Canada, Czech Republic, Guyana, Indonesia, Nigeria, South Africa, Tonga and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Jamaica thanked delegates for their expressions of appreciation towards the host country and its people. The representative reminded members that “we are engaged in a marathon, not a sprint, despite the record Jamaica holds in that area.”

* * * * *