

Statement of the Kingdom of Thailand on Agenda Item 9 : Consideration of the interim report of the review committee established pursuant to the decision of the Assembly to oversee the periodic review of the international regime of the Area pursuant to article 154 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

Mr. President.

Since this is our first intervention, let me express, on behalf of the delegation of Thailand, our sincere congratulations upon your election as the President of the Assembly of the 22nd session of the International Seabed Authority. We are confident that under your wisdom and your able leadership, the meeting of the Assembly will successfully achieve its objectives. We also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report and thank the Secretariat for all the arrangements provided to delegations during this session.

Mr, President,

My delegation welcomes the interim report of the periodic review of the International Seabed Authority pursuant to article 154 of the UNCLOS. As we are at the important juncture of the existence of the Authority, two decades after its establishment, it is timely to look at the lessons learned, take stock of the challenges as well as explore ways forward in the light of the evolution of the activities of the Authority.

To cope with the challenges ahead, all the organs and subsidiary organs of the Authority must be prepared and enhanced. The intensive discussion during the meeting of the Council on the election of the members of the Legal and Technical Commission demonstrated the need to establish a common understanding of the relevant provisions of UNCLOS which, in this case, are article 163 and 165. We are therefore supportive of the recommendations 26 and 27 of the interim report of the Review Committee. We also agree with those recommendations of the interim report aiming at ensuring transparency, improving human capacity and enhancing working method of all organs and subsidiary organs of the Authority.

Mr. President,

As the activities of the Authority will progressively move to the exploitation, we support the idea that the Authority's work should be based on a long-term strategy which is translated into a clear Work Programme. We welcome the working draft of the Regulations for Exploitation of Mineral Resources in the Area, presented together with the other technical discussion paper. The discussion on this draft

regulations can be part of the Work Programme of the Authority with a clear timeline, considering the possibility that, in 5 years, some contractors might be ready to proceed to exploitation stage.

Furthermore, as the main mandate of the Authority is to administer the Area and its resources for the benefit of the mankind, it is important to explore mechanisms to address the common heritage of mankind in all aspects of the exploitation, including the environmental protection for the benefit of future generations. Therefore, we wish to see the review committee reflect on how the Authority could better implement the article 140 of UNCLOS, especially the materialization of the concept of common heritage of mankind.

Mr. President

We would like to join previous speakers in commending the Authority's fulfillment of its capacity building mandate, especially the training programmes or scholarship through the exploration contracts. We are grateful of the valuable opportunities provided for some trainees from Thailand to participate in the at-sea training programme, in particular this year, a colleague from my agency could participate in the programme offered by the Japan Oil, Gas and Metals National Corporation (JOGMEC). As noted by the report of the Secretary-General, 200 training places would be made available by contractors in the next 5 years. We can therefore fairly expect the capacity of developing countries can be enhanced in accordance with the spirit of the UNCLOS.

Mr. President

We have heard that many delegations wish to see the interaction between the Authority and the ongoing United Nations process regarding the development of an international legally binding instrument under the UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, as known as BBNJ process. My delegation is of the view that the outcome of this review and already this interim report can provide us with food for thoughts about the institutional mechanism of the new instrument which will also be dealing with resources of areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Last but not least, my delegation would like to take this opportunity to thank the Government of Jamaica for the hospitality extended to us during this session of the Authority.

I thank you Mr. President.