

Statement delivered by His Excellency Deryck Murray

Permanent Representative of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Mr. President,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you back to Jamaica and have you preside over this session of the Assembly.

Trinidad and Tobago also congratulates the Secretary-General on his re-election and thanks him for the comprehensive annual report presented in its new format as contained in ISBA/26/A/2 and ISBA/26/A/2/Add.1.

Mr. President, my delegation wishes to be associated with the earlier statement by Costa Rica on behalf of GRULAC. Nevertheless, we are compelled to add some comments.

For example, Mr. President, my delegation holds strongly to the conviction that 40 years from the adoption of UNCLOS (even 25 years from the conclusion of the Preparatory Conference and the establishment of the Authority) is ample time during which the mandated Organs should have been operationalized.

Instead, we have caused the Legal and Technical Commission (LTC) to grow in an ad hoc manner, assuming functions that were intended for an Economic and Planning Commission if that would have been operationalised, even the Enterprise.

Thus “what if”?

We are faced with the prospect of discussing “what if” the trigger does not produce the mandate Regulations and standards and guidelines. It seems to me Mr. President, that this august body remains comfortable in discussing rather than OPERATIONALISING. My delegation reiterates the call to operationalise the Enterprise and the Economic and Planning Commission, NOW.

Having said this, Trinidad and Tobago commends the Secretary-General for his stewardship and the able Secretariat for the support provided, which undoubtedly contributed to the continued functioning of the Secretariat in pursuit of its tasks despite the restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Trinidad and Tobago congratulates the Authority on its success in fulfilling its obligations towards implementing the strategic directions set out in the strategic

plan. As a small island developing state (SID), Trinidad and Tobago particularly appreciates the concerted efforts to achieve Strategic direction 5. "Build capacity of developing states".

My delegation commends the members of the Legal and Technical Commission (LTC) and the Finance Committee for the notable commitment displayed to achieve the outputs delivered to this Assembly. Working across different time zones is not an easy feat, yet these members have been extremely diligent and productive.

Mr. President, we note that there are limited funds available in the respective voluntary trust funds; the voluntary trust fund to support the participation of members of the Council and the Assembly from developing states, the voluntary trust fund to defray the cost of participation by members from developing countries in the LTC and the Finance Committee and the voluntary trust fund for the work of the Special-Representative to the Secretary-General. We wish to encourage stakeholders to contribute to the aforementioned voluntary trust funds to assist in advancing of the work of the Authority. Special thanks to the member states that committed, at the meeting of the Council last week, to contributing to the trust funds.

In addition, Mr. President, it was reported that all contractors had fulfilled their financial obligations regarding the payments of the annual overhead charge. Accordingly, Trinidad and Tobago extends appreciation to these contractors.

In conclusion, we reaffirm our commitment to the work of the ISA and we will continue to work assiduously with others to achieve the consensus needed to advance our work to the benefit of humankind.

Thank you Mr. President.