

International Seabed Authority

Press Release



Fourteenth Session
Kingston Jamaica
26 May – 6 June 2008

**Council (PM)
Assembly (PM)**

**SB/14/2
26 May 2008**

**ELECTIONS, NEW BUDGET AND APPROVAL OF REGULATIONS
ON NEW OCEAN MINERALS
HIGHLIGHT FOURTEENTH SESSION AGENDA OF INTERNATIONAL SEABED
AUTHORITY (KINGSTON, 26 MAY-6 JUNE)**

A crucial fourteenth session of the International Seabed Authority began in Kingston today with the election of a new Secretary-General and one half of its executive Council topping its agenda.

Among its first tasks, the 155-member Assembly, led by acting President, Liesbeth Lijnzaad of The Netherlands, elected new members to the Finance Committee to fill three vacancies resulting from the resignations of Kyaw Moe Tun (Myanmar), Oleg Alekseevich Safronov (Russian Federation) and Alexander Stedtfeld (Germany). All three outgoing members had four years left of their five-year terms.

They were replaced, respectively, by their compatriots, U Soe Lynn Han (Myanmar), Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of Myanmar to the United Nations in New York, Fiedorovna Lubov Revyakina (Russian Federation), Deputy Director, Finance Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Moscow, and Michael Hackethal, Budget Commissioner at the German Ministry of Economics and Technology in Berlin.

The Assembly adopted a 14-point agenda for its two week session, including the election of a new Secretary-General to replace Satya N. Nandan of Fiji who is ending his third successive four-year term of office on 31 December. 2008.

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It will also vote to select half of its Executive Council, and continue work on regulatory regimes for polymetallic sulphides and cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts in the deep seabed Area. Before the session ends on June 6, the budget for the biennium 2009-2010 as well as the scale of assessment for contributions to it will have been adopted.

Stymied by poor attendance at recent sessions, the Authority expects it will have a majority of its members in attendance to participate in the decision-making on the important matters on the agenda. Argentina expressed concern about the lack of a quorum to conduct the election of the Secretary-General on the last day of the session and suggested the reorganization of the Assembly's programme of work to ensure that the election took place at the most auspicious time.

Ghana has nominated Mr Nii Allotey Odunton for the post of the Secretary-General and his candidacy has been endorsed by the African Union. Mr. Odunton's letter of nomination will be made available to all delegations by tomorrow. He is currently Deputy to the Secretary-General.

The representative of Senegal announced that her country had last year established a permanent mission to the International Seabed Authority in Jamaica, bringing to 23 the number of States, including the European Community, that had done so.

At the outset of the meeting, the Assembly observed a moment of silence in sympathy with and condolence for the people of Myanmar and China in their recent tragedies. In his response, the representative of China expressed confidence that the people of his nation would triumph over the disaster.

The Assembly will meet again on Thursday when the president and vice-presidents are expected to be elected.

Meeting after the Assembly, the Authority's Council elected, by acclamation, Liesbeth Lijnzaad (Netherlands) its president for 2008. Mrs. Lijnzaad, who is Head of the International Law Division of her country's Foreign Ministry, was nominated by Spain on behalf of the Group of Western European and Others States (A biographical note will be issued as press release SB/14/3).

The 36-member body also today elected Kenya, the Czech Republic and Honduras to serve as vice-presidents representing the African, Eastern European and Latin American and Caribbean States groups, respectively. The Asian group will announce its candidate for vice-president on Wednesday following consultations within the group.

The Council elected one new member to the Legal and Technical Commission (LTC). Christian Reichert, head of the Geophysical Subdivision of the German Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources, fills the seat left by the resignation of his compatriot, Michael Wiedicke-Hombach. Mr Reichert will serve out the remaining term through to the end of 2011.

The Secretary-General announced changes in the programme of work for the first week of the session. The Council will defer its meeting scheduled for tomorrow until Wednesday morning. This is to allow the LTC sufficient time to complete its work before submitting its report to the Council. On Friday, May 30, an item will be added to the Council's agenda relating to the list of candidates for the post of Secretary-General which it will submit to the Assembly for consideration.

The Council will next meet in the morning of Wednesday, May 28.

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