



STATEMENT BY OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAURU DELIVERED BY THE HEAD OF DELEGATION, MR GRAHAM LEUNG TO THE 23RD SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY, KINGSTON, JAMAICA, TUESDAY 15 AUGUST 2017

Mr President

Allow me to belatedly congratulate the Secretary General for his well-deserved election to this important office. My delegation is very supportive of his work and we pledge him our full support.

I would like to commend and thank the Secretary General for his informative report (ISBA/23/A/2) and for the work undertaken in the period being reported. We note the reorganisation of the Secretariat and express our profound appreciation for their diligence and support, despite their limited resources.

Nauru would like to make the following specific observations arising from the Secretary General's report:

- We strongly encourage, especially the developed states to contribute to and support the Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area. It is a capacity building mechanism which demands our support. We share the Secretary General's disappointment that the Funds have not been replenished for almost a year and strongly appeal to the more affluent States Parties to consider further contributions towards it.
- In the same vein, we note that contributions to the Voluntary Trust Fund have been modest, and we call upon developed countries in particular and appropriate relevant agencies as well as philanthropic agencies to support its work in the spirit of international co-operation;
- We are pleased to note the development of the Satya N. Nandan library and are pleased to note the donations towards its growth. We encourage states that have not yet done so, to consider donating to contribute to its expansion. We support resources being devoted to digital access and management system for the library allowing wider access to its resources and other materials so that users outside Jamaica can utilise them;
- Nauru notes the organizing of sensitization seminars by the Authority and support further convening of such seminars in the future. It is an excellent method of bringing together key stakeholders from different disciplines and will also assist regional co-operation and understanding in scientific research and marine mineral development. While we note that funds are limited, we would encourage the holding of a sensitization seminar in a small island developing country. We encourage the Secretariat to explore innovative funding streams that could provide support for this initiative.

- We fully support the establishment and strengthening of unique databases of scientific and technical information. This is pivotal to a fuller understanding of the deep ocean environment. There is much that we do not know and the data base will help fill those gaps;
- We believe the Internship programme offered by the Authority is excellent and support its objectives. It is a programme that has the potential to assist capacity building especially for small developing countries that wish to expose young professionals to the work of the ISA. My delegation welcomes further budgetary support to allow the programme to continue.
- We join Japan in urging member states that are in arrears with their contributions to do all they can to address the issue. The work of the ISA is dependent on predictable and stable financing.

Nauru acceded to UNCLOS on 23rd January 1996.

It is one of the smallest Republics in the world covering a land mass of roughly 21 sq. km, with a population of about 10,000.

Despite our smallness, we are desirous of engagement and contribution to international law making and the work of the International Seabed Authority. We take seriously our responsibilities as a member of the community of nations and as a Sponsoring State. Let not our size be confused with thinking that we are any less committed to supporting the important objectives of the ISA.

A very good illustration of Nauru's commitment in so doing is to be found in the fact that in October 2015, Nauru's Parliament passed the International Seabed Minerals Act to govern Nauru's engagement in seabed minerals activities in the Area. Through this Act, Nauru is determined to provide a stable, transparent and predictable regulatory environment for investors in seabed mineral activities and to secure optimum benefits that will enable our country to benefit from those activities, consistent with the common heritage of mankind.

This vision is underpinned by key principles reflected in our Act such as the need for transparency in decision-making and in the management of seabed activities as well as the importance of ensuring that all activities comply with the overall obligation to protect and preserve the marine environment consistent with UNCLOS.

Mr President,

Nauru is one of the 4 Pacific Island Countries to sponsor activities in the Area and was in effect the first of them to engage in the Area. The other 3 countries are Cook Islands, Kiribati and the Kingdom of Tonga.

It has been extremely challenging for us to be able to attend the annual sessions of the Authority on a regular basis considering the resource constraints that we face, and which as you know Mr President, is a genuine issue for many, if not all, developing countries and notably small island States.

Nauru's attendance at the 23rd Session of the ISA underscores the importance it attaches to the matters brought before this Assembly for discussion and the results of the review that have been undertaken in accordance with article 154[1] of UNCLOS on the way that the ISA operates. The work of the Assembly especially the

Legal & Technical Commission is at a critical juncture, now that the Draft Regulations on Exploitation of Mineral Resources in the Area have been published and circulated. We look forward to making substantive contributions on the Draft by the deadline for submissions, and would encourage member states to fully engage in the process of expediting the process towards their eventual adoption.

In that regard, Nauru would like to urge this august assembly to consider the special needs of small island developing states to be able to fully participate in the work and processes of the Assembly, including any intersessional activities. Many SIDS face iterative and systemic capacity and resource constraints, and although we do not expect special favours or charity, we strongly advocate that the Authority ensure that the necessary conditions exist that will level the playing field.

In this connection, Nauru would like to specifically commend the efforts undertaken recently by the Secretariat to increase the training opportunities for developing countries and the ambitious initiatives announced at the UN Ocean Conference in June 2017. We wish to specially refer to the voluntary commitments registered by the Authority with the view to:

- Advancing SDG 14 and the quest for a Blue Economy through the promotion of socio-economic benefits for developing countries, including SIDS; and
- Enhancing the role of women in marine scientific research through capacity building.

A lot remains to be done but we are confident that the Secretary-General and his team will continue to ensure that the activities in the Area are undertaken for the benefit of mankind as a whole.

We look forward to welcoming the Secretary General visiting the Pacific to update States Parties of UNCLOS and the 1994 Agreement on current developments within the ISA.

Finally, my delegation wishes to record its gratitude to the Government of Jamaica for its continued support in hosting the good offices of the International Seabed Authority in this beautiful country.

Thank you, Mr President.