



STATEMENT
22 May 2024

Message of the ISA Secretary-General to commemorate International Day of Biological Diversity

On the International Day of Biological Diversity, the International Seabed Authority (ISA) celebrates the rich biodiversity of the ocean depths and highlights the crucial role of deep-sea research in operationalizing the unique mandate it has been assigned by the United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea to act as steward of the Area and its resources for the benefit of all humanity.

ISA plays a crucial role in promoting and encouraging much needed scientific research in marine areas beyond national jurisdictions, building a legacy for current and future generations and broadening public knowledge and understanding of the deep-sea environment and its ecosystems. This research is essential to ensure the effective protection of the marine environment and sustainable use of ocean resources, benefiting all humanity.

Since 2001, ISA exploration contractors have invested more than US\$300 million on environmental baseline studies covering a wide range of deep-sea ecosystems from abyssal plains to mid-ocean ridges and seamounts. The collected environmental data are available to all through our open database, DeepData which currently hosts over 130,000 records of biological organisms. These and other data are shared with the Ocean Biodiversity Information System (OBIS) of IOC-UNESCO through the ISA OBIS Node.

This is just one example of how more than four decades of exploration and scientific research of the Area contribute to a precautionary approach to the sustainable management of the Area and its resources.

Our flagship programme, the Sustainable Seabed Knowledge Initiative (SSKI), under the [ISA Action Plan for Marine Scientific Research in support of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development](#), is committed to accelerating the systematic description of deep-sea species and developing standardized approaches for sharing biological data, as well as enhancing deep-sea literacy and providing opportunities for capacity development.

Launched in May 2023 on the International Day of Biological Diversity, the “One Thousand Reasons” campaign has awarded 10 grants to eight research institutions and two citizen scientists to describe nearly 100 species by the end of 2024. This initiative is just part of a monumental effort to describe at least one thousand new deep-sea species by 2030, enhancing our collective knowledge of life in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction.

This year again, ISA is excited to lead and support the global community in this vital endeavour which aims at celebrating the importance of biodiversity for all. Together with our Member States and all our partners we remain more committed than ever to redouble our efforts to ensure that, collectively, we can ensure the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction for the benefit of humanity.

About ISA

ISA is an autonomous international organization mandated by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to protect the seabed for the shared benefit of humankind. ISA is committed to the principle that all nations of the world should benefit from responsible, sustainable and regulated economic activities in the deep seabed, including deep seabed mining and from the potential resources the deep seabed holds for a global green transition. The ISA works to ensure that the voices of all states and stakeholders, including developing states, civil society organizations and all ISA Member States, are effectively heard in discussions around the sustainable development of the deep seabed.

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