



Republic of Nauru

**Statement delivered by His Excellency David Adeang, President of the Republic of Nauru
at the 29th session of the International Seabed Authority**

Kingston, Jamaica

Tuesday, 30th July 2024

Thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the floor.

Your Excellencies and distinguished delegates, ekamawir omo, and warm greetings from myself and the people of Nauru.

Let me first thank the government and the people of Jamaica for their warm hospitality and for the kindness afforded to my delegation and me. It is a pleasure to experience this beautiful country. I also take this opportunity to express my condolences to those families in Jamaica and the Caribbean who lost loved ones during the passage of Hurricane Beryl and I am humbled to see how communities have pulled together in the aftermath of this tragic event.

Nauru extends congratulations to the Republic of Vanuatu on the occasion of its Independence Day today. We further align ourselves with the statement made yesterday by the Cook Islands on behalf of the Pacific island nations.

Mr President,

As small island developing States, we share a common bond and face similar challenges in our quest to mitigate the ravages of climate change. We are not meeting our climate objectives for countries like Nauru to survive. Our vulnerability is real despite our negligible contribution to low carbon emissions. We cannot continue business as usual. We need the international community to move towards a just energy transition. Nauru is doing its part to safeguard our collective futures by offering the world the critical metals found on the seafloor while endorsing appropriate safeguards for marine environmental protection as demanded by the Convention.

The landmark agreement that is the Convention is vital to the well-being of Nauru, providing us and many island states with a unique set of rights and opportunities that could soon be key to securing the lives and livelihoods of my people as we prepare for life in a warming world. The Convention also aimed to restore an equitable balance in the rights, interests and obligations between those countries that have access to technology and those, such as my own that do not.

Yet, I continue to see obstacles being put in our path and that of other small island developing States who sponsor activities in the Area, including a suggested re-interpretation of effective control which I consider will serve to

undermine our effective participation in activities in the Area and potential to privilege developed nations with access to capital and technology.

As the world's first developing state to utilise these unique provisions of the Convention and to sponsor mineral exploration activities in the Area, Nauru has consistently led from the front and is grateful to be joined by other small island developing States. Indeed, at a national level we have advanced our legal framework and institutional functioning to ensure the effective regulation over our sponsored entity in conjunction with the Authority. We are fully cognisant of our responsibilities as a sponsoring State, and it should not be assumed we are a less regulated jurisdiction.

Our sponsorship arrangement is a matter of strategic importance to my country, and my cabinet and I are fully supportive and committed to the work of our dedicated seabed minerals regulator, the Nauru Seabed Minerals Authority.

Mr President,

We are concerned with the marine environment, hence our strong demand with our sponsored entity NORI, to come up with best available scientific information to best carry out our work. Equally, we are also concerned with matters relating to the safety of life at sea and will ensure that such safety receives the highest priority as activities in the area progress through our continued engagement with member States of the ISA and relevant flag States.

In July 2023, Nauru demonstrated our good faith, and took a decision not to sponsor an application for exploitation as we acknowledged the ISA needed more time to finalise the exploitation regulations. In so doing, we ensured Council members were afforded more time to continue their important work. It also allowed our sponsored entity to gather and analyse additional environmental data. Indeed, through our sponsored partner, NORI we have collected and submitted to the ISA the most comprehensive dataset ever for this area of the ocean. Consequently, I am confident that the exploitation application currently being finalised by NORI reflecting over a decade of offshore environmental research, collected in collaboration with world leading institutions and industry experts will provide the ISA with the environmental data and insights they require to make an informed decision based on real scientific data, not emotion and conjecture.

The responsible development of deep-sea minerals is not just an opportunity for Nauru and other small island developing states; it is a necessity for our survival in a rapidly changing world. We cannot afford to be left behind as the global community transitions to a clean energy future. We must be active participants in shaping our own destiny and securing a sustainable future for our people.

Mr. President,

I commend the work of this Authority. It is an unparalleled organization that has brought us on a fascinating journey of marine exploration, an exponential contribution to marine scientific research and in upholding the rule of law in ocean affairs. We should rightly be proud of our collective achievements.

However, as we stand on the cusp of a new industry, I fear that the rights afforded by the Convention to the effective participation of developing states are at risk from a minority who seek to disrupt our processes and work.

Mr President,

I urge the member States of this Authority to recognize the significance of this moment and to work together to complete and adopt regulations in 2025 to allow for the responsible consideration of deep-sea mineral exploitation. This timeline is crucial to ensure that the development of this new industry proceeds in a responsible and transparent manner, with the full participation of developing states. By doing so, we can ensure that the rights and interests of developing states are protected, that the highest environmental standards are upheld, and that the benefits of this new industry are shared equitably among all nations.

We must not miss this opportunity. We must not lose momentum. We must not run the risk of jeopardizing the operationalization of the common heritage of humankind principle. We cannot afford to wait indefinitely.

My delegation will continue to participate actively in the work of this Authority to deliver its mandate under the Convention.

I thank you.