

## **Responses on behalf of Mr Michel W. Lodge, Secretary-General – 3 July 2024**

*Why would the ISA be well served by allowing Mr. Lodge to have a third term? Please explain why members of the Assembly should return Mr. Lodge to the SG position*

The decision to elect the Secretary-General of ISA rests fully with the members of the Assembly. However, during his tenure as Secretary-General, Mr Lodge has been committed to advancing the work of ISA around the world, including through the adoption of its first strategic plan, aligning the programs and activities of the Authority towards realizing the Sustainable Development Goals and overseeing work on the development of the exploitation regulations. He has also worked to promote the participation of developing countries in activities in the Area and in the work of ISA and has been a persistent advocate for women's empowerment and leadership in ocean affairs.

### **Questions relating to Ambassador Tito**

*Ambassador Teburoro Tito of Kiribati in a conversation last week with Leticia Carvalho while in New York, along with other members of the delegation from Brazil, proposed that Ms. Carvalho consider withdrawing her bid for Secretary General. In exchange, Mr. Teburoro suggested that perhaps Ms. Carvalho could take a position at the ISA, if funding for such a post could be found (or Brazil covered the cost) and the Assembly approved it, and she could perhaps run for Secretary General in four years. Mr. Tito told Eric Lipton of The NYT in an interview last week that he had sought and received Mr. Lodge's approval to make such a proposal. This way, Mr. Tito said, Ms. Carvalho and Mr. Lodge could work together to address the ISA's needs. Why did this seem like a good proposal to Mr. Lodge?*

*Mr. Tito said that Mr. Lodge approved Kiribati to ask Kiribati to sponsor Mr. Lodge for his third term because Great Britain has a policy of not supporting a person for a UN-affiliated post for more than two terms. Is this correct?*

*Mr. Tito said that Mr. Lodge and Mr. Tito first met decades ago, when Mr. Lodge, as a young lawyer, was living in Kiribati and briefly consulted as a legal aid lawyer for Mr. Tito's family, after his sister died while at the hospital after she was improperly sedated during a childbirth. He said that Mr. Lodge did not see the case through completely, but that is how they first met. Is this accurate?*

Mr Lodge has no comment on any questions concerning hearsay. Mr. Lodge was not privy to the discussions referenced and is not party to the alleged proposal.

*Several ISA permanent representatives have said to me that at a meeting of the African group Mr. Lodge told those assembled that a senior position at the ISA could be reserved for someone from the African group, as a way to ensure that the African nations felt included in ISA leadership. This post might include the ISA legal counsel position, I was told. Mrs. Khalilah Hackman, Minister-Counsellor, Legal Adviser, Permanent Mission of Ghana to the United Nations, was mentioned as one possible candidate for the Legal Counsel job at the ISA.*

This is hearsay. Mr. Lodge has no comment on matters concerning hearsay.

It is important to note that staff positions at ISA are not at the discretion of the Secretary-General, nor are positions reserved for any particular regional group. All vacant positions are advertised through official channels and subject to competitive recruitment. With respect to the position of legal counsel, there is no vacancy at present.

It should also be noted that ISA adheres to the most rigorous standards of good governance for international organizations and is also dictated by the rules and principles enshrined in the 1982 United Nations, to promote the participation of the representatives of developing States in the work of international organizations. The Secretariat has always firmly stood by this principle, as is demonstrated by the composition of its staff.

*Other ISA permanent representatives told me that there has been a discussion including perhaps helping certain nations with two years worth of arrears to cover those past due payments so that they could vote in the Secretary General election. Is that an offer you have made to any nations or their representatives?*

Mr Lodge has no comment on any questions concerning hearsay.

*There has been an extremely large number of turnovers in top ISA positions in the last three or so years, in some cases with several cycles through different executives for the same position. Some former employees point to Mr. Lodge as the reason for this high turnover, and disputes with employees and in some cases, improper or forced terminations. What is Mr. Lodge's reaction to these assertions?*

It is not accurate to suggest that there has been a disproportionately rapid rate of staff turnover. Additionally, ISA follows and complies with a robust and comprehensive sets of rules, regulations and procedures as well as policies that are adopted by the United Nations. These allow staff to pursue claims before an independent appeals board and, on further appeal, before the United Nations Administrative Tribunal, should they wish to do so.

*Some ISA permanent representatives and other ISA associated diplomats have said to me that they question the travel that Mr. Lodge has done in 2024--to China, Cameroon, Japan, Egypt, Italy, and the Caribbean nation of Antigua and Barbuda, among other stops. These individuals believe that Mr. Lodge has inappropriately been using ISA resources as part of a re-election campaign. What is Mr. Lodge's response to these assertions?*

This is not accurate. The travel of the Secretary-General is exclusively on ISA business and is planned months in advance in collaboration with member States. It is a key part of Mr. Lodge's role to visit member States and to attend relevant international conferences. With respect to the visits mentioned, full details of the scope of such visits are available in ISA press releases, but a summary has also been provided below for your reference and to demonstrate how ill intended and groundless the suggestions you have received are.

| <b>Visit</b>        | <b>Purpose of visit</b>  |
|---------------------|--|
| China               | Invitation by Chinese Government to High-level consultations with Chinese government officials; attend Seventh International Symposium on the Continental Shelf and the Area (alongside the President of ITLOS, the Chair of the Continental Shelf Commission and the Director of the UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea); courtesy visit to ISA-China Joint Training and Research Centre. |
| Egypt               | High-level consultations with Egyptian government officials; signature of MOU and launch of ISA-Egypt Regional Training and Research Centre (planned since July 2023)  |
| Cameroon            | Invitation by Government of Cameroon: High-level consultations with Cameroon government officials; guest of honour to Cameroon National Day celebration; launch of training course at Cameroon Diplomatic Academy (planned since July 2023)  |
| Japan               | Invitation by Government of Japan to high-level consultations with Japanese government officials in Tokyo; attendance at opening of ISA workshop on a regional environmental management plan; visit to institutions in Kobe and signature of letter of cooperation with KOBEC (planned one year in advance).   |
| Italy               | Invitation by Government of Italy to attend and present keynote speech to high-level symposium on critical mineral supply (planned since November 2023).   |
| Antigua and Barbuda | Attendance at the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4), a decennial UN conference, also attended by the UN Secretary-General and the executive heads of the majority of UN specialized agencies and   |

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|  | institutions. ISA held two side events, and bilateral meetings with heads of state and senior officials from multiple SIDS.* |
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\* It is noted that Ms. Leticia Carvalho also attended SIDS4 alongside the ambassador of Brazil to Jamaica, although we are not sure in what capacity. She also spent several weeks in New York between March and June 2024 and participated in campaign events organized for her.

*Others have told The NYT about offers to pay travel costs to the ISA Assembly meeting in July/August to encourage certain nations to be present to vote, or the intense effort to arrange proxy votes for nations that do not have representatives present. Is this appropriate to make these kinds of offers to try to influence the outcome of the election of SG?*

The Secretariat of ISA has no knowledge of any such proposals. Both as Secretary-General, and as a candidate for election, Mr. Lodge condemns any attempts to influence voting by paying for delegations to attend meetings.

*Some have suggested that Mr. Lodge is too closely aligned with countries and certain contractors that want to see seabed mining exploitation contracts approved soon. How does Mr. Lodge respond to this suggestion?*

The Secretary-General has regular interactions with member states, contractors, state enterprises and private entities, including site visits, conferences, and research institutes. These interactions reflect the proper and professional continuance of the ISA's mandate.

Additionally, negotiations on the regulation of mineral-related activities have been taking place for more than ten years, in a reasoned, deliberate way and following at each stage the most rigorous standards of international governance. Each of the relevant bodies involved in the negotiations of the Mining Code will be provided with the opportunity to consider and discuss the code, in a deliberate, reasoned way. The regulations will only be approved should ISA's member States reach a consensus on its content.

*Collectively, we have suggestions here that a) Mr. Lodge dating back to 2016 received inappropriate compensation from the ISA b) that some interested parties have offered to pay arrears for nations so they can vote in the SG election c) that the SG has been campaigning while making ISA work trips d) that a candidate for SG was tentatively offered a post at the ISA in exchange for dropping out of the race for SG g) That offers of travel costs and proxy vote arrangements are being made to try to influence the vote for SG. This is a troubling collection of claims about an election involving the secretary general of the ISA. What is your reaction to this?*

Collectively, you have a collation of vague, unsubstantiated, unfounded and anonymous rumours, gossip and hearsay which are demonstrably untrue, lack any foundation of fact or evidence and do not stand up to any objective scrutiny. Mr. Lodge condemns attempts to use the media to make politically motivated attacks on his integrity and that of the ISA. These unsubstantiated accusations are clearly aimed at undermining the reputation of the secretariat and its dedicated, highly qualified international civil servants.

As an autonomous international organisation, ISA and its staff members, including the Secretary-General, follow the most rigorous standards of international good governance and management.

It should also be noted that ISA's accounts are independently audited on an annual basis by an internationally recognised auditor. The independent auditors examine all expenditures and are required to report any cases of fraud, wasteful or improper expenditure, or expenditure in breach of the rules, and no such expenditure has ever been reported. These reports are publicly available