



## **29<sup>^</sup> Session of the International Seabed Authority**

### **Meeting of the Assembly**

#### **Statement of Italy**

Item 12 - Report and recommendations of the Finance Committee

Item 13 - Adoption of the budget

Item 14 - Adoption of the scale of assessment for the contributions

Thank you Mr President,

Italy thanks the Finance Committee for its report and the Secretary General for preparing the budget.

We also thank Germany, Costa Rica, Switzerland for their words of wisdom and moderation.

Italy supports the approval of the budget by the Assembly and the scale of assessment for the contributions.

In this regards, allow me to make some general remarks.

First. We need to recognize that over the last few years, the Secretariat was called to perform an increasing number of functions and activities to ensure that the authority fulfils its multifaceted mandate. All such new activities have come with no additional or extraordinary budgetary commitment by members of the Authority. Notwithstanding the increased workload, the budget of the authority has not recorded a corresponding increase in real terms over the year or has relatively increased compared to other budgets of sister organizations.

Second. As the sixth contributor to the regular budget of the Authority, my Country has carefully looked into the budget proposed by the Secretary-General. My delegation appreciated the zero real growth approach pursued by the Secretary-General. However, we looked with certain concern that the revised budget appears not to be fully in line with the estimated budgetary implications associated with the expected evolution of the work of the authority over the period from 2025 to 2030 discussed by the Assembly last year. Let me mention to this purpose, as an example, the decision to strike out a stakeholder consultation officer position, despite the Council has repeatedly expressed the need for enhanced consultation of all actors having an interest in the seabed resources as a common heritage of humankind. It is doubtful that such enhanced stakeholder consultations can be carried out within the very limited resources allocated to the programme on communication and outreach activities.

We also thank the Secretary General for his explanations on the budget as requested by a number of delegations and by the Finance Committee. I mention, in particular, expenses related to the library of the Authority, which we consider a crucial factor of support to the scientific research as provided by its mandate.

Third. We take note that in the implementation of the budget for 2023 some over expenditures amounting to a real growth of around 1% of the total budget were recorded. We agree with the

request of the Finance Committee to be provided with a more detailed analysis of expenditures with a view to ensure that this approved budget is not overrun. We trust that the Secretariat will make every effort to ensure that no further over expenditure takes place in the future.

We support, in particular the recommendations expressed in paragraphs 19 and 20 of the report of the Finance Committee and mentioned in paragraph 10 of the Draft Assembly Decision.

Finally, we commend the decision of the European Union to bring its contribution to the budget to 150,000 USD starting in 2026. This is a clear demonstration of the importance the European Union attaches to the work of the ISA and teams up with the high level of support EU member States are providing to the Organization.

Thank you Mr. President