



Nigeria's Statement at the 29th Session of the Assembly of the International Seabed Authority (ISA) holding from 29th July to 2nd August, 2024 in Kingston, Jamaica

Agenda Item 8

The President of Palau

The Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands

The President of the Assembly

Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority, Mr. Michael Lodge,

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Mr. President,

At the outset, my delegation wishes to join other delegations in congratulating the Acting President and Members of the Bureau on their successful stewardship and coordination of the 29th Session of the Assembly thus far. I assure you of the full support and cooperation of the Nigerian delegation during this session. My delegation aligns with the

statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Ghana on behalf of the African Group and wish to make these additional comments in a national capacity.

Mr. President, let me at the outset express my delegation's profound gratitude to the Government and good people of Jamaica for the hospitality extended to delegations since arrival in the beautiful Island of Jamaica.

My delegation felicitates with the International Seabed Authority (ISA) on its 30th year anniversary, considering the milestone achievements in the regulation of activities in the "AREA" for the common heritage of humankind. **Nigeria also commends ISA for its lofty programmes aimed at enhancing member States capacity building which were highlighted by the Secretary-General in this Assembly. We welcome several initiatives by the Secretariat to protect the precious natural resources of the oceans and seas for all. We urge Members to renew their commitment to the principles and values of multilateralism, as well as strengthen our commitments to the protection of oceans and seas.**

The Nigerian delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General of the Authority for his comprehensive and outstanding Annual Report for the period June 2023 to July 2024 pursuant to article 166, paragraph 4, of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea as well as the Report on Implementation of the action plan of the International Seabed Authority in support of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

In the same vein, the Secretariat is commended for the excellent annual report publication titled **"Leading precautionary and responsible governance of the ocean global commons based on science,**

solidarity and transparency,” which presents an interactive document to assist delegations like mine in better appreciating the outstanding work undertaken by the Authority and the constructive engagement since its establishment over the last 30 years.

2. On the Membership of the Authority, My delegation notes and welcomes the accession by San Marino to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea bringing the membership of the Authority to 170, which is highly commendable. We further appreciate the concerted efforts by the Secretary-General in this regard and joins in the call for States that are yet to become parties to the 1994 Agreement to do so in line with General Assembly resolution 48/263 and part XI of the Convention.

3. Similarly, Nigeria welcomes the Permanent Representative of nine new States that presented their credentials to the Secretary-General during the period under review bringing the total number as of today to about 47 States. We also welcome the increase in the number of Members that have acceded to the Protocol on the Privileges and Immunities of the International Seabed Authority.

4. Concerning the Area, my delegation notes with appreciation that 13 members of the Authority, and with the addition of Panama which have deposited charts or lists of coordinates with the Secretary-General. Nigeria intends to do so in the near future and urges other coastal States to deposit charts or lists of coordinates considering its significance in recognizing the precise delineation of all areas of continental shelf up to and beyond 200 nautical miles, to allow certainty of the geographical limits of the Area to be established.

5. My delegation appreciate progress recorded by ISA in the year under review, in line with discharging the mandate and competencies assigned to it by UNCLOS, particularly in relation to the various activities implemented to achieve the objectives set out by the strategic directions agreed upon by the ISA Member States in the ISA Strategic Plan and High-Level Action Plan.

6. Similarly, Nigeria welcomes the decision by the Council and Assembly initiation of full operationalization of the Enterprise, which is in line with the evolutionary approach outlined in the 1994 Agreement. The institutional development represents a significant step towards achieving the active participation of developing States in activities carried out in the Area.

Mr. President,

7. Concerning the draft exploitation regulations, my delegation acknowledges with appreciation the substantial progress made in developing the draft exploitation regulations for seabed minerals in the Area, reflecting the Council's renewed commitment to completing the adoption of rules, regulations and procedures as per UNCLOS and the 1994 Agreement.

Mr. President,

8. My delegation notes and welcome the advancements in the implementation of the regional environmental management plan for the Area in the Clarion-Clipperton Zone as well as ongoing development of similar Regional Environmental Management plans for other regions with

exploration activities and initiatives under the **Action Plan in support of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development**, such as the **Sustainable Seabed Knowledge Initiative** aiming to describe over 1,000 new deep-sea species.

9. We also recognize and appreciate ISA for the successful implementation of the 2022 Capacity Development Strategy, the expansion of the Contractors' Training Programme and the establishment of the ISA-China and ISA-Egypt Joint Training and Research Centers, demonstrating ISA's commitment to enhancing the capabilities of developing Member States.

In this vein, Nigeria commends the Authority's global mentoring programme See Her Exceed (also known as "S.H. E") which is primarily aimed at accelerating the personal and professional development of women scientist from developing States. Nigeria has two enthusiastic mentees enrolled in the programme: Ms. Oluyemisi Oluwadare and Ms. Ijeoma Eunice Orji. We are pleased that since joining the mentoring programme, these women have been introduced to deep-sea technology by their respective mentors. Women empowerment is a topic dear to Nigeria's heart, and their involvement testifies to the broader interest of Nigeria's desire to continue to contribute to deep-sea research.

We equally welcome the establishment of the JRTC centre in Alexandria, Egypt and the African Academy to Deep Sea diplomacy in Cameroun which will further strengthen the capacity of experts from our region.

Mr. President,

10. My delegation also takes note of detailed account of exploration activities in the Area for the existing 30 active contracts with updated information on the latest extension agreement signed, the relinquished areas that have been reverted to the Area, outcomes of supervisory inspections and progress achieved through the review of annual reports submitted by contractors are equally welcomed.

11. In the year under review, my delegation applauded ISA for remarkable progress in the development of the draft exploitation regulations. We also note ISA's commitment to transparency, inclusivity and scientific rigour throughout the process as it demonstrates the dedication of its Member States to a balanced approach that respects both the imperatives for environmental protection and equitable economic development that will, ultimately, ensure that the resources of the Area can be used sustainably for the benefit of all humanity. My delegation thanks the Secretariat for fully committed to supporting Member States in this endeavour.

Mr. President,

12. Concerning financial matters, such as the status of contributions, my delegation observes that the outstanding contributions from member States for the period 1998 to 2023 amounted to US\$578,019.11. In this regard, Nigeria appeals to member States with outstanding contributions to the Authority to fulfill their obligations so as to allow for the smooth running of the Authority.

13. On the status of the respective voluntary trust funds and progress made in the development of the ISA Partnership Fund as well as the multi-donor trust fund for extraordinary support. My delegation equally expresses appreciation for donations made to the respective funds to promote the important work undertaken by Authority.

Mr. President,

14. My delegation acknowledges progress recorded at the previous sessions of the Authority. I wish to commend the respective organs on the achievements made during the reporting period.

Excellency,

15. In closing, my delegation welcomes the increased number of staff members from the African region from last year in the Secretariat for further diversification of the workforce based on the principle of equitable geographical distribution.

16. From the report, we also note the extensive engagement between the Authority in its participation in the United Nations General meetings, meetings of States Parties to the Convention and other international meetings which is commendable.

Mr. President,

17. In conclusion, we commend the Secretariat for living up to expectation and delivering on its assigned responsibilities under the Convention and the 1994 Agreement for the period under consideration.

I thank you for your kind attention.