



**Marine Spatial Planning Cooperation Workshop of Maritime Silk  
Road Partner Countries**  
Beijing, China

26 September 2024  
OPENING REMARKS

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

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**Mr. LV Bin**, President of China Oceanic Development Foundation,

Distinguished representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Office of the Central Commission for Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Commerce,

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to thank the China Oceanic Development Foundation for inviting me to attend and participate to the **Marine Spatial Planning Cooperation Workshop of Maritime Silk Road Partner Countries**. Regrettably, due to other competing priorities I am not able to be with you in person today.

Effective marine spatial planning is essential if we are to achieve our common goal of managing the ocean and its resources sustainably for the benefit of all.

For marine spatial planning to be effective, there needs to be integrated collaboration amongst all relevant stakeholders, activity sectors and competent organizations. There also need to be efficient mechanisms in place to share knowledge and best practices in meeting economic needs while ensuring environmental protection.

Developing, testing and implementing such mechanisms is intrinsically part of the work and mandate of the International Seabed Authority.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea established the Authority as the international organization with exclusive responsibility for regulating access to and use of the resources of the seabed beyond national jurisdiction. The Authority is the only example of an intergovernmental organization with such a specific regulatory mandate over a shared global commons.

At the core of the Authority's mandate is a responsibility to ensure the effective protection of the marine environment, whilst at the same time promoting marine scientific research, capacity development and technology transfer.

Over the last 30 years, the Authority has fulfilled its mandate by developing and adopting regulations and other measures needed to regulate mineral resource activities in the Area while ensuring the effective protection of the marine environment.

This includes a very specific and unique mechanism for marine spatial planning through the establishment of “regional environmental management plans” or REMPS.

The first such REMP was established 12 years ago in the central Pacific Ocean. The plan was developed through a comprehensive and inclusive scientific process, managed by the Authority. One of its central features is the designation of a network of Areas of Particular Environmental Interest (APEIs) aimed at protecting ecologically coherent and representative habitats across the entire geographic range of the plan. Over the years, this plan has been tested and improved. In 2022 it was reinforced by additional measures, including expanding the network of APEIs, which now covers 2 million square kilometers of the seafloor.

Further progress has been made since then, including the preparation of a draft REMP for the northern Mid-Atlantic Ridge as well as the launch of a process for the North Western Pacific Ocean.

The contribution and leadership of China and Chinese scientific institutions to these processes has been instrumental and I wish to thank again the Chinese Oceanic Development Foundation for its support for our work.

Many of the Maritime Silk Road Partner Countries have also participated in the work of the Authority and I would encourage all of you to join us as we seek to steadily improve our general understanding of the marine environment of the international seabed Area.

I wish you a fruitful discussion, and I am sure you can benefit from ISA's experience during your discussion and dialogue during this workshop.