



The Secretary-General

18 November 2024

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,

On 31 December 2024 I shall be ending my mandate as Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority. As this will be the last occasion on which I write to you in this capacity, I wish to take the opportunity to reflect on the work of the Authority over the past eight years.

I was elected in 2016 with the initial mandate to implement the recommendations from the first periodic review of the international regime for the Area, conducted between 2015 and 2017 under the oversight of a review committee chaired by Ambassador Helmut Tuerk (Austria).

Out of the nineteen recommendations of the review committee adopted by the Assembly in its decision [ISBA/23/A/3](#), fourteen were directed at the Secretary-General. I am pleased to say that, with your support, every one of those recommendations has been implemented. Some of the key achievements during my tenure include the following:

- The Authority adopted in 2018, for the first time in its history, a five-year Strategic Plan (which has now been extended to 2025).
- The Secretariat, the structure of which had remained unchanged since 1996, has been reformed and revitalised to respond to the current needs of the Authority, whilst ensuring maximum efficiency and accountability.
- Participation of member States, including developing States, in the work of the Authority has increased significantly and a more efficient programme of meetings introduced applying the principle of cost-effectiveness.
- The fundamental importance of the Authority's mandate to promote and coordinate marine scientific research in the Area and to disseminate related knowledge for the benefit of all States Parties has been recognized and prioritized through the Authority's Action Plan for Marine Scientific Research in support of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (MSR Action Plan).
- The way in which the Authority delivers practical and meaningful actions to support its membership in developing countries has fundamentally changed through the adoption of a Capacity Development Strategy, opening of regional and national training and research centres and dedicated actions to support and enhance the participation of women in deep sea research activities.
- Financing of the Authority has been transformed. The regular budget has been increased from \$7.8m annually in 2016 to \$13.2m in 2025. Extra-budgetary funding of \$2.2 million has been raised and cost recovery has been implemented for key services.

All Members of the International Seabed Authority  
All Observers to the International Seabed Authority



- The Enterprise has been operationalised through the establishment of the position of Interim Director-General within the Secretariat.
- In collaboration with the Finance Committee, and as recommended by the review committee, the Secretariat has produced ground-breaking economic studies and analyses on the equitable sharing of financial benefits deriving from activities in the Area, culminating in a proposal for a Common Heritage Fund.
- The Secretariat has also supported the development of critical measures for the protection of the marine environment in line with the mandate of the Authority under the Convention and the 1994 Agreement. The implementation of the environmental management plan for the Clarion Clipperton Zone (CCZ) was reviewed and further strengthened and the Secretariat has supported the scientific work for the development of Regional Environmental Management Plans in the Northern mid-Atlantic Ridge, in the Indian Ocean and in the Northwest Pacific Ocean. Over the past five years, this work has engaged over 450 experts from 55 countries, including representatives of other international organisations. The Secretariat has also increased its collaboration with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, including through the SOI.

More details of these key achievements are included in an attachment to this letter. As Secretary-General, three core principles have guided my work during the last eight years.

First, to set priorities and stay focused – on strategic planning, on advancing the regulatory framework, on capacity development, on empowering women within the Secretariat and in ocean affairs in general, on achieving reform in the Secretariat and many other issues.

Second, to never give up. To be steadfast and resilient and to take difficult decisions when necessary ... to keep believing in the Authority ... and to keep working hard until we achieve progress.

And third, to stand up for the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and the rule of law in the ocean. Not only during the last eight years, but through my entire career, and inspired by the generations that came before me and led me to this point, including my predecessors in office. I firmly believe that the Convention and its rules for the conduct of all activities in the ocean represents the best hope for humanity in our relationship with the oceans and seas.

This year, as we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Authority, the strength and importance of the Convention and its institutions in providing a rules-based order for the seas and oceans that ensure peace, security, and international cooperation has never been so strong and yet so fragile at the same time.

The 1994 Agreement created the conditions whereby developed States could join the Convention, thus assuring that the three institutions to be established under the Convention could become functional and effective. In the process, the G77 made huge sacrifices and major concessions on key elements that had been fundamental to their interests.



They did so in the interests of the common good and multilateralism. But the 1994 Agreement also created a new bargain. On the one hand, it protected the interests of those States Parties – mainly developed countries – wishing at the time to pursue activities in the Area, by allowing activities to proceed in a precautionary manner, under the supervision of the Authority. On the other hand, it embedded the evolutionary approach under which States agreed to work in good faith to put in place the complete regulatory framework for activities in the Area in line with the pace of development of those activities. The same faith in multilateralism later steered the negotiation and smooth adoption of three sets of regulations for exploration for different resources, bringing us to where we are today.

Throughout my tenure, the pace of development of activities in the Area has continued to increase. I have had the honour to sign contracts for exploration with three new contractors since 2017, all of which were concluded in the manner and form provided under the Convention and the 1994 Agreement. It is noteworthy that the level of detail, complexity and technicality in the reports submitted by contractors on their exploration work has continued to increase even beyond the expectations set out in my report to the Assembly in 2017. Many contracts for exploration have reached maturity or will become mature in the next three to five years, with contractors expected to proceed to exploitation in line with the provisions of the Convention.

The continued advancement of activities in the Area now poses a challenge for States Parties who must decide collectively how best to balance the need for protection and preservation of the marine environment and the interest in exploitation of the mineral resources of the seabed. I am pleased that the Secretariat has been able to support the work of the Council by delivering successive iterations of the text of draft regulations for this purpose in line with the road map adopted by the Council and endorsed by the Assembly, as well as numerous supporting studies, reports and discussion papers to aid the negotiations.

It is critical for the integrity of the regime for the deep seabed beyond national jurisdiction that the Council now completes the task before it. Notwithstanding discussions by States concerning the exploitation of marine mineral resources in various other intergovernmental forums, the Area and its resources are the common heritage of humankind and activities in the Area shall be organized, carried out and controlled by States Parties to the Convention through the Authority. In this regard, the jurisdiction of the Authority is an exclusive one. The responsibility of the Council is to complete the regulatory framework for the exploitation of mineral resources in the Area in a timely and responsible manner.

This is also the best guarantee for the effective protection of the marine environment and the best defence against the threat of a unilateral approach. Without the adoption of a rules-based regime for the exploitation of mineral resources of the Area, the fundamental principles of the common heritage of humankind that are so widely accepted could be undermined.

During my tenure, I am satisfied that I have tried my best to ensure that developing countries, especially the least developed among them, have been able to play a greater role in assisting the Authority to deliver its crucial mandate to ensure that activities in the Area are conducted for the benefit of humankind as a whole.



Page 4

As I leave the Authority, I express satisfaction that I leave behind an institution that is fit for purpose, and one that has been able to navigate the challenges brought on by an ever-changing international environment. Not everything I hoped for has been achieved. Regulations for exploitation of marine mineral resources are not yet complete. The Economic Planning Commission is yet to be established. Work on the implementation of Article 82(4) of the Convention, while discussed, has not been completed. The Secretariat is not yet fully equipped or adequately resourced to manage the next phase of the Authority's existence. The responsibility for taking these matters forward lies with the members of the Authority.

I have no doubt that the Authority will continue to grow in importance and stature. The adoption in March 2023 of the 2023 Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction further reinforces the mandate and functions of the Authority as a central institution for global ocean governance and will no doubt bring added responsibilities.

I wish to extend my deep appreciation to the States Parties for their constant support to the mandate and work of the Authority. The active participation and constructive engagement of numerous delegations during the sessions of the Authority, is testament to the importance States Parties attach to protecting the integrity of the Convention and its implementing agreements.

I also wish to express my most sincere gratitude and thanks to the staff of the Secretariat whose commitment, integrity and dedication to this unique organization deserve to be acknowledged and commended. Their professionalism and resilience at a time when extreme political pressure is placed on the Authority and its personnel reflects highly on the ability of these individuals to diligently discharge their duties for the common good.

Finally, I wish to express special thanks to the Government and people of Jamaica, the small island that as long ago as the 1970s dared to have the ambition and vision to take on the burden of hosting an entirely new and inherently complex new organization.

Jamaica has been a warm and generous host of the Authority and its international staff and has imbued in it and in them the same qualities of resilience, creativity, confidence and faith in multilateralism that we recognize in Jamaica itself.

With assurances of my highest consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael W. Lodge".

Michael W. Lodge

Attachment

## **Status of implementation of the recommendations of the first periodic review of the International Seabed Authority and advancement of the Strategic Plan of the Authority**

1. In its decision ISBA/21/A/9/Rev.1 of 24 July 2015, the Assembly decided to undertake, pursuant to article 154 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, a ‘general and systematic review of the manner in which the international regime of the Area established in the Convention has operated in practice’. The Assembly also decided that such a review should be carried out under the oversight of a review committee, to be chaired by the then President of the Assembly, Ambassador Helmut Tuerk (Austria). Out of the nineteen recommendations of the review committee adopted by the Assembly in its decision ISBA/23/A/3, fourteen were directed at the Secretary-General. The following note, which is organized thematically, summarizes the way in which these recommendations have been implemented. Since all recommendations have been implemented in full, the report also touches on the subsequent advancement of the Strategic Plan for the Authority, which was itself an outcome of the first periodic review.

### **Strategic framework**

2. The Authority adopted a five-year Strategic Plan (which has now been extended to 2025) in 2018.<sup>1</sup> The Strategic Plan forms the basis for a complete strategic framework aimed at strengthening the delivery of the Authority’s mandate in line with the priorities assigned to it under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the annex to the 1994 Implementation Agreement. That strategic framework now comprises a High-Level Action Plan, a Secretariat Business Plan, a Capacity Development Strategy and an Action Plan for Marine Scientific Research in support of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (MSR Action Plan). This strategic framework has been instrumental in ensuring sound budgetary planning, the proper allocation of resources to work programmes and has improved transparency and accountability.

2. Based on the strategic framework, the Authority has since 2017 established strategic partnerships to advance its work with 45 different entities at national, regional and global levels in the form of eight memoranda of understanding,<sup>2</sup> 17 letters of cooperation, and 20 partnership agreement, and has cooperated with more than 80 partners in the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

3. An independent review of the Strategic Plan in 2022 concluded that the Plan had *“contributed in a material way to reinforce the delivery of the unique and broad mandate and functions assigned to the Authority by UNCLOS and the 1994 Agreement, particularly at a time when the organization is transitioning from managing deep sea exploration to regulating future exploitation of seabed minerals in the Area”*.<sup>3</sup>

### **Revitalizing the Secretariat**

4. In 2017, the structure of the Secretariat had remained unchanged since 1996. Considering the Assembly’s request to me to review the required skills and available expertise within the

Secretariat as a matter of priority, I implemented widespread reforms aimed at ensuring maximum efficiency and accountability, as well as streamlining and consolidating the work of the Secretariat. These measures included the establishment for the first time of a Senior Management Group, ongoing review and standardisation of all job descriptions within the Secretariat, the establishment of a national professional officer programme for nationals of the host country, and the introduction of Junior Professional Officer and Senior Professional Officer programmes for secondments from member States.<sup>4</sup>

5. As recommended by the Assembly, the Secretary-General also added expertise in environmental policy, management and planning. Extra-budgetary (project) posts were also deployed for the first time. As of January 2025, the Secretariat will have 57 established posts, compared to 41 in 2017, with representation from every geographic region, and more than half women. Every aspect of the conditions of service of staff has been progressively analysed and reviewed to reflect best international practices, cost effectiveness and the highest standards of integrity, ethics and impartiality, as well as gender equality.<sup>5</sup> For the first time in the Authority's history, measures to support career progression have resulted in twelve promotions (including eight promotions within the General Service category and five promotions of national staff from General Service to Professional category). At all times, special emphasis was placed on ensuring that staff of the Secretariat present the required standards of integrity, impartiality, efficiency and creativity.

#### ***Improving the management and administration of contracts for activities in the Area***

6. Exploration contractors, who work under contract to the entire international community, have invested more than \$2 Bn in scientific research which is shared through the Authority for the collective benefit. The platform created by the regime has enabled international cooperation in scientific research that has opened our eyes to new knowledge, enabling better management. A revolution in ocean technology has meant that we know more about the seabed and its resources now than at any time in human history. With our capability to generate and understand huge amounts of data growing every day, this progress will continue to evolve.

7. In line with the Assembly's recommendation, the Secretary-General established in 2017 a Contract Management Unit (subsequently to become the Compliance Assurance and Regulatory Management Unit) to streamline internal processes relating to the management of contracts for exploration and act as the key interface between contractors, the Legal and Technical Commission and the Secretariat. This has proven to be essential.

8. The Secretary-General also instituted an annual consultative meeting between the Secretariat and contractors. This meeting, which has been held seven times so far, has become an essential part of the dialogue between contractors and the Secretariat. Going forward, managing the administrative workflow relating to the activities of contractors will become more of a challenge for the Secretariat. In particular, the establishment of a Seabed Minerals Register is now a critical priority and must be put in place before exploitation begins.

### ***Managing activities in the Area and protection of the marine environment***

9. Robust and reliable scientific data are fundamental to the management of activities in the Area. The most important source of data relating to the deep seabed, its mineral resources and environmental characteristics, are the exploration contractors. The rules, regulations and procedures of the Authority play a critical role in ensuring that data supplied by contractors is reliable and robust.

10. In 2019, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Authority, the Secretariat launched DeepData as the global repository for scientific and technical data relating to activities in the Area and to respond to the review committee's recommendation to ensure adequate funding and staffing to support better data management and data sharing. Thanks to the efforts of the dedicated data management team in the Secretariat, DeepData now supports a unique dataset of 759,595 samples, including 150,920 biological samples and 608,675 geological samples, as well as critical bathymetric and environmental data. It is supported by a strategic roadmap endorsed by the Legal and Technical Commission and since 2021 has become a node for the Ocean Biodiversity Information System (OBIS) of IOC-UNESCO. The existence of DeepData also ensures that non-confidential information, such as that relating to the protection and preservation of the marine environment, can be shared widely and is readily accessible, whilst confidential data is protected in accordance with the applicable rules, regulations and procedures.

11. The Authority has succeeded in perhaps its most important objective, which is to protect the marine environment from serious harm and over-exploitation of resources. Measures taken by the Authority have ensured sound environmental management of the Area, have prevented unregulated exploitation from taking place and established global standards for marine environmental protection that are a model for activities within national jurisdiction. Over the past eight years, the Authority has made remarkable progress, in line with the mandate entrusted by the Convention and the 1994 Agreement.

12. The regional environmental management plan (REMP) for the Clarion-Clipperton Zone (CCZ) has been reviewed and strengthened, through rigorous scientific processes managed by the Secretariat. Based on recommendations by the Legal and Technical Commission, the Council adopted a decision (ISBA/26/C/58) in December 2021, approving the establishment of four additional areas of particular environmental interest (APEIs) in the CCZ to enhance the effectiveness of the overall network of such areas.

13. In line with the priority areas identified by the Council, since 2018 the Secretariat has supported the scientific work for the development of REMPs in the Northern Mid- Atlantic Ridge, in the Indian Ocean and in the Northwest Pacific Ocean. Over the past five years alone this inclusive scientific process has engaged with over 450 experts from over 55 countries, including representatives of other relevant international organisations.

14. A considerable achievement in promoting of the role of the Authority in the global governance of the oceans is its participation to the discussions leading to the adoption of the

Agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (2023 Agreement). The Secretariat participated in the first, second, third and resumed fifth rounds of negotiations including through the preparation of information notes for consideration by delegations and with a series of side events. Throughout the negotiating process, the Secretariat partnered with other international organizations, including the International Maritime Organization, to deliver joint statements. The Secretariat also participated in the organizational meeting of the Preparatory Commission for the entry into force of the 2023 Agreement in New York, from 24 to 26 June 2024.

15. With a view to ensure that it can promptly start cooperating with the new bodies to be established under the 2023 Agreement, the Authority was the first intergovernmental organization that in 2024 published a report on its contribution to the objectives of the 2023 Agreement.<sup>6</sup> The report, developed by an independent group of experts in the field of the law and governance of the sea, carries out an analysis of how the provisions of the 2023 Agreement may be relevant to the mandate of the Authority and considers how its existing work can contribute to the overall objective of promoting the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.

#### ***Participation in the work of the Authority***

16. One of the key concerns of the Assembly in 2017 was the low level of participation by member States in the work of the Authority. This was reflected in recommendations relating to the pattern of meetings of the Authority, encouraging universal participation and encouraging participation by developing States. One of the first actions of the Secretary-General, therefore, was to propose a revised and streamlined meeting schedule, applying the principle of cost-effectiveness, as well as undertaking a detailed analysis of every function associated with conference management to ensure value for money. The Authority also became the first international organisation to utilise remote interpretation services, a practice which has since become widespread. In 2021, the Authority also introduced for the first time in its history live streaming of all meetings of the Council and Assembly, accessible in the six official languages of the Authority.

17. Between 2017 and 2024, the Secretariat provided meeting services for 353 days of meetings, totalling 1,989 hours. This does not include an intensive calendar of remote meetings held during 2020 and 2021.

18. In 2018, the Secretary-General established a voluntary trust fund for the participation of developing States members of the Council in meetings of the Council. Since then, the participation of developing States members of the Council has been almost 90 per cent, with 80 per cent of landlocked developing countries, least developed countries and Small Island Developing States in attendance on a regular basis. The increased interest in the work of the Authority is also evident from the large increase in the number of requests for observer status received each year. As of 2024, the number of NGO observers stands at 106.



## ***A Global Deep Sea Research Agenda***

19. The work and mandate of the Authority extend far beyond the formulation of rules, regulations and procedures to ensure the responsible and sustainable use of deep-sea mineral resources as permitted by the Convention and the 1994 Agreement. In 2017, the Assembly emphasized the fundamental importance of the Authority's mandate to promote and coordinate marine scientific research in the Area and to disseminate related knowledge for the benefit of all States Parties. For this reason, the Secretary-General placed the highest priority on the development in 2020, of the Authority's Action Plan for Marine Scientific Research in support of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (MSR Action Plan).<sup>7</sup> The MSR Action Plan identifies six strategic research priorities and serves as the global deep sea research agenda. It has enabled the establishment of 44 strategic partnerships and the Secretariat has organized 29 events to promote scientific deep-sea research, encompassing online and in-person workshops, webinars, information series and side events in global forums involving over 1,000 experts.

## ***Prioritizing Capacity Development***

20. In line with the Strategic Plan, the Secretariat conducted in 2020 a comprehensive review of all capacity-building programmes and initiatives implemented by the Authority between 1994 and 2019. In parallel, the Secretariat conducted the first ever survey through which members of the Authority, and in particular developing States, were able to identify their priority capacity development needs as they relate to the role and mandate given to the Authority under the Convention and the 1994 Agreement. In 2022, reflecting the outcomes of these processes, the Assembly adopted the first ever Capacity Development Strategy of the Authority, which has fundamentally changed the way the Authority delivers practical and meaningful actions to support its membership in developing countries.<sup>8</sup>

21. Specific activities that have been implemented include the Africa Deep Sea Resources Project (the Authority's first ever project to support Africa) and the Abyssal Initiative for Blue Growth, as well as collaborations with the Indian Ocean Rim Organisation (IORA) and the UN Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries. The establishment of a network of National Focal Points for Capacity Development (NAFOPs) in 2021 consolidated our efforts by ensuring an effective exchange of information and direct inputs.<sup>9</sup>

22. In just three years, since 2021, the Secretariat has been able to establish the ISA-China Joint Training and Research Centre in Qingdao, China, the ISA-Egypt Joint Training and Research Centre in Alexandria, Egypt, the Africa Deep Sea Diplomacy Academy in Yaoundé, Cameroon, and the centre in Antigua and Barbuda. Combined with the Deep Dive e-learning platform, these centres will provide abundant opportunities for scientific, technical and legal training on deep sea-related matters in partnership with members and relevant national and regional organizations.

23. One of the core priorities of the Secretary-General was to support women's empowerment and leadership in ocean affairs including in marine scientific research and law of the sea. In 2017, at the UN Ocean Conference, the Authority was the only entity to register a voluntary commitment

directed at enhancing the inclusion of women in marine scientific research. The Women in Deep-Sea Research Project<sup>10</sup> currently counts more than 20 international partners and in 2022 the Secretariat released the first ever gender mapping of deep-sea research and related disciplines and activities in LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.<sup>11</sup> In 2023, the Secretariat launched the ‘SHE’ mentoring programme for women scientists from developing countries.

24. Thanks to the efforts of the Secretariat, there has also been an increase in the number of qualified women having participated in capacity development activities implemented under the auspices of the Authority. All capacity development projects implemented by the Authority contain a mandatory element pertaining to gender representation. One such example is the Contractors’ Training Programme, where contractors have been urged to reserve at least 50 per cent of places for qualified women. As of November 2024, more than 180 women had benefited from such activities through the CPT.

25. Perhaps the most important development, and a significant legacy, has been the establishment since 2022 of the ISA Partnership Fund as the main future platform through which the Authority will be able to finance and support capacity development activities in a more strategic and targeted way. In its first full year of operation, the Partnership Fund invested US\$1.2 m in twelve different projects to accelerate the implementation of the scientific research priorities of the MSR Action Plan and to support practical and meaningful training and capacity development programmes.

### ***Financing the Authority***

26. The principle of cost-effectiveness has been a guiding principle for the Authority since it was established in 1994. At the same time, the evolutionary approach reflected in the 1994 Agreement and the significantly increased demands placed upon the Secretariat as the work of the Authority increases, means that the budget of the Authority has grown by more than 80 per cent since 2017. Recognizing the financial constraints on member States, the Secretary-General is highly appreciative of the fact that the Authority collects between 90 and 97 per cent of assessed contributions from member States, with total arrears (including historical arrears) of less than US\$1 million. This is an important sign of confidence in the institution.

27. Considering the wide range of activities, it is required to support, and its global mandate, the Authority remains seriously under-funded. Serious efforts have been made to diversify funding sources for the Authority, including securing extra-budgetary funding of \$2,2 million since 2017 (from a base of zero in 2016), as well as taking measures to introduce cost recovery elements into financial management, for example, through annual administration fees for contractors. Contractor overhead charges currently account for 22 per cent of the total budget, thus ensuring that member States do not bear the full burden of these costs.

28. In 2020, the Secretary-General introduced to the Finance Committee a biennial report on the future financing of the Authority, including a forecast of future budgetary requirements,

consistent with the evolutionary approach, indicating how the Authority must evolve to effectively discharge its responsibilities at the various stages of development of activities in the Area.

### ***Operationalising the Enterprise***

29. Whilst the periodic review committee recommended that the appointment of an interim director general for the Enterprise would not be advisable in 2017, it nevertheless recommended that the Legal and Technical Commission be requested to continue to address the question of the operationalisation of the Enterprise as an important matter. The Commission considered the matter based on a report commissioned by the Secretary-General and, as a result of the discussion on this matter in the Council, the Secretary-General in 2018 appointed a Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Enterprise, whose work was supported by a voluntary trust fund established by the Council in 2019. The work of the Special Representative was pivotal in creating the conditions for the Commission and the Council to continue to study the issue of the operationalisation of the Enterprise.

30. In 2023 the Council, on the recommendation of the Commission, requested the Secretary-General to establish the position of interim director general of the Enterprise within the Secretariat and approved a supplementary budget proposal for that purpose. After a thorough and transparent international selection process, Mr. Eden Charles (Trinidad and Tobago) was appointed to this position.

### ***Concluding remarks***

31. Over the past eight years, all the recommendations of the first periodic review of the Authority that were directed at the Secretary-General have been implemented in full. Most aspects of the work of the Authority and its Secretariat have been transformed for the better. One of the key outcomes of the periodic review, namely the Strategic Plan, initially adopted for the period 2019-2023, and subsequently extended to 2025, has formed the foundation for the Authority's work since its adoption and progress has been made against all key performance indicators in the Strategic Plan. Core elements of the Authority's mandate under the Convention and the 1994 Agreement, such as capacity development and the advancement of marine scientific research in the Area, have been prioritized. The delivery of all parts of the Authority's mandate has been substantially strengthened through a process of modernization and judicious reform.

## Endnotes

---

<sup>1</sup> ISBA/23/A/13

<sup>2</sup> MOUs have been concluded with FAO, ILO, the Asian African Legal Consultative Organization, the Indian Ocean Rim Association, the Ministry of Natural Resources of the People's Republic of China, the African Union, the National Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries of Egypt, and the International Relations Institute of Cameroon.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Review-of-implementation-of-ISA-SP-2019-2023-12July2023.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> As of 2024, the Secretariat has benefited from the provision of one JPO from Italy and SPOs from China and Russia.

<sup>5</sup> Measures implemented since 2017 include a performance management and development system, the establishment of a programme for advancing the substantive and technical skills of staff members, a learning and development policy and associated staff learning and development programmes, a Code of Conduct for Staff members of the Authority as well as measures in relation to reporting, retaining and disposing of honours, decorations, favours, gifts or remuneration from governmental and non-governmental sources, provision for financial disclosure statements by staff members in senior management positions, education assistance programmes for general service staff members and national professional officers, a policy on breastfeeding and the establishment of a policy to support nursing mothers with an infant under 1 year of age to enable the infant to travel with them on official business travel.

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/The\\_contribution\\_of\\_ISA\\_to\\_the\\_BBNJ\\_objectives.pdf](https://www.isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/The_contribution_of_ISA_to_the_BBNJ_objectives.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> ISBA/26/A/17, annex.

<sup>8</sup> ISBA/27/A/11.

<sup>9</sup> As of 2024, 60 NAFOPS have been nominated.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.isa.org.jm/capacity-development-training-and-technical-assistance/widsr-project/>. Project partners include Argentina, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Madagascar, Malta, Nauru, Nigeria, South Africa), scientific entities (MABIK-Korea, National Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries of Egypt, the National Oceanography Centre, UK, the Italian National Research Council), UNDESA, IGF, IORA, SPC, and contractors (Blue Minerals Jamaica, BGR, DORD, GSR, IFREMER, MARAWA, NORI, TOML, UK Seabed Resources).

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/WIDSR\\_Executive\\_Summary.pdf](https://www.isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/WIDSR_Executive_Summary.pdf)