



Keynote Address: Charting a new course for ocean stewardship

12th Annual World Ocean Summit & Expo

13 March 2025

STATEMENT

by

Ms. Leticia Reis de Carvalho

Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority

.....
Excellencies, distinguished representatives, esteemed colleagues,

It is a privilege to join you at this important gathering.

I extend my sincere appreciation to Economist Impact and the Nippon Foundation for convening this vital forum.

By bringing together leaders from government, industry, finance, civil society and the scientific community, this summit serves as a crucial platform to foster partnerships, drive innovation and advance a sustainable ocean economy.

This dialogue is more important than ever.

Marine ecosystems are under increasing pressure as demand for ocean resources continues to grow.

At the same time, the urgency of climate action has made clear that governance of our ocean must be more than just reactive. It must be forward-thinking, science-driven and grounded in a collective responsibility.

Established in 1994 under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the International Seabed Authority (the Authority) regulates activities related to mineral resources in the Area—the deep seabed beyond national jurisdiction—ensuring they are conducted equitably, sustainably and in accordance with international law.

As the Authority marks its thirtieth anniversary, this milestone provides an opportunity not only to reflect on our collective achievements but also to shape the future of deep seabed governance.

The Authority's role as a trusted regulator, a convener of scientific expertise, and a platform for multilateral cooperation will be key in ensuring that ocean resources are managed for the benefit of all humankind.

At this defining moment, my vision for the Authority is guided by three fundamental priorities:

First, strengthening ocean governance through transparency, neutrality and inclusivity.

Multilateralism is essential to ensuring that the governance of the deep seabed remains inclusive, balanced and based on internationally agreed frameworks.

The Authority is committed to transparency, open dialogue and the broad participation of all Member States and relevant stakeholders in decision-making processes.

As discussions on frameworks like the BBNJ Agreement advance, it is essential to promote coherence across governance regimes, ensuring science-driven, inclusive and sustainable approaches to managing areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Deep seabed governance is a key part of this broader effort.

By working together, we can ensure that it contributes meaningfully to ocean sustainability, climate resilience and global equity.

Second, ensuring that no one is left behind.

The principle of the "common heritage of humankind" requires that all nations, including developing States, have access to knowledge, capacity-building and opportunities to participate in deep-sea governance and activities.

The Authority will continue working to expand technical cooperation, training programmes and initiatives that support equitable engagement.

Third, advancing science-based decision-making and environmental protection.

Sound science must underpin all decisions related to the deep seabed.

The Authority is committed to fostering independent research, strengthening environmental safeguards and ensuring that future activities in the deep ocean are guided by the best available scientific knowledge.

As we approach the first part of the thirtieth session of the Authority's Council, these priorities will remain at the forefront.

Member States have collectively agreed on a road map to advance negotiations on the Mining Code, a process that continues to be guided by the principles enshrined in UNCLOS.

This framework must uphold transparency, environmental responsibility, and equitable benefit-sharing, ensuring that any future activities in the Area are governed responsibly and inclusively.

The Authority remains committed to facilitating these discussions, providing technical expertise and ensuring that decisions are grounded in science and built on consensus.

As we look ahead, let us seize this moment to chart a new course for ocean stewardship—one that is rooted in science, collaboration and a shared responsibility for the deep ocean.

By enhancing governance, fostering inclusive decision-making and maintaining a strong environmental commitment, we can ensure that the seabed is managed sustainably for both present and future generations.

This summit highlights the pressing need for bold, collective action.

Let us build on these discussions, translate insights into tangible solutions, and advance a vision where deep seabed governance plays a vital role in global ocean sustainability.

Together, through cooperation, scientific rigour and a steadfast commitment to multilateralism, we can shape a future where the deep seabed is managed for the benefit of all humankind.

I encourage each of you to remain engaged, to collaborate and to continue shaping the future of ocean governance.

I wish you all productive discussions in the days ahead.

Thank you.
