



**Breakfast meeting with the contractors of the  
International Seabed Authority**

**Kingston, Jamaica**

**25 March 2025**

STATEMENT

by

Madam Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority,  
Leticia Carvalho

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Good morning, esteemed representatives of contractors, distinguished guests, and colleagues.

I am pleased to be here today and appreciate this opportunity to engage with you —both in this room and online.

Your role as contractors is vital to the work of the Authority, and I look forward to hearing your perspectives as we continue our collective efforts in the Area.

Since assuming my role as Secretary-General in January, I have been actively listening, observing and learning.

As part of this commitment, I am meeting with various stakeholders this week—contractors today, sponsoring States tomorrow and observers later in the week.

These discussions are central to my broader vision of fostering meaningful engagement with all sectors involved in the work of the International Seabed Authority.

I want to assure you that my approach will always be one of transparency dialogue, and neutrality.

At the same time, I am acutely aware of the need for legal certainty, particularly as we navigate this critical phase in the development of the Mining Code.

***The role of contractors in advancing the Authority's mandate***

Contractors play a crucial role in advancing deep-sea exploration and ensuring that activities in the Area align with the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

The Area and its resources are the common heritage of (hu)mankind, and the Authority has the responsibility to regulate activities in accordance with the rule of law, equity and environmental sustainability.

Your efforts in conducting deep-sea research, enhancing environmental understanding and developing innovative exploration techniques have contributed immensely to the global knowledge base.

The Authority values these contributions, particularly as we work toward establishing a regulatory framework that ensures predictability and legal stability for all stakeholders.

### ***Progress on the exploitation regulations***

As you are aware, discussions on the draft Exploitation Regulations, which will constitute a key part of the broader Mining Code, have been intensifying.

The 29th session of the Council in 2024 marked a key milestone, with Member States engaging in structured negotiations.

The consolidated text released last November reflects the collective efforts of many stakeholders, and I encourage continued engagement as we work toward finalizing a robust, fair and science-driven regulatory framework.

The 30th session presents another critical opportunity to advance discussions on the Mining Code.

The need for legal certainty cannot be overstated.

A clear, science-driven, and enforceable regulatory framework is essential to ensuring responsible seabed activities that balance economic potential with environmental protection and equitable benefit-sharing.

I want to reiterate that I have expressed to Member States the Secretariat's readiness to support intersessional work.

In collaboration with the President of the Council and the Bureau, I have explored alternative modalities to advance negotiations in a more effective and structured manner.

We remain committed to assisting Member States in finalizing a strong, credible and legally sound Mining Code.

### ***LTC feedback on contractors***

During the first part of the 30th session, the Legal and Technical Commission (LTC) completed its assessment of contractors identified to be at risk of non-compliance in accordance with the established criteria.

The Commission assessed 8 contractors and the process is still ongoing. The Secretariat will follow up with the contractors as needed.

### ***A collaborative path forward***

I want to thank Korea, and particularly the Ministry of Fisheries and the Korea Institute of Ocean Science and Technology (KIOST), for hosting the 7th Contractors meeting.

Looking ahead, I wish to highlight that the 8th Annual Contractors' Meeting will be hosted by the Government of India at the National Institute of Oceanography in Goa.

This meeting will serve as an important platform for exchanging insights, discussing technological advancements and strengthening cooperation.

I encourage all contractors to maintain open engagement with the Secretariat, not only during formal meetings but also through continuous dialogue.

Your contributions have been instrumental in supporting key initiatives —whether in developing environmental thresholds, defining REMPs, expanding our knowledge about deep-sea taxonomy through the SSKI project or ensuring more women scientists benefit from your training programmes.

We also appreciate your engagement in our ongoing efforts, particularly as we refine the concept notes for the initiatives presented in the previous contractors' meeting, such as the deep-sea biobank.

### *Closing remarks*

In conclusion, I want to reaffirm my commitment to transparency, neutrality and the rule of law in my role as Secretary-General.

Contractors are essential partners in this journey.

I look forward to continuing our collaboration and to hearing your insights today as we work together to ensure that deep-sea activities are governed in a way that benefits all of humankind while upholding the principles of equity, sustainability, and the common heritage of (hu)mankind.

Thank you.