



Statement

by

**Ambassador Cheryl Spencer,
Chief Technical Director and Permanent Representative
of Jamaica to the International Seabed Authority
during
31st Session of the ISA Assembly, Part II**

28th July 2026

**Agenda Item 9: Report of the Secretary-General of the International Seabed
Authority**

Thank you, Mr. President,

Honourable Ministers and Colleagues, a warm good morning.

Mr. President,

Jamaica warmly welcomes Cambodia and Kyrgyzstan as new members of the International Seabed Authority. Their accession strengthens our collective commitment to the stewardship of the Area as the common heritage of humankind, and we look forward to their active participation in advancing equity, sustainability, and cooperation.

We also welcome the appointment of new permanent representatives and the establishment of additional missions, which enhance the Authority's institutional presence and deepen member engagement.

Mr. President,

My delegation thanks the Secretary General for her comprehensive reports, which provide valuable context for our deliberations on the Authority's activities from April 2025 to March 2026.

We note the actions taken by the Secretariat to advance its mandate under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The achievements reflected in the reports are laudable.

On regulatory progress, Jamaica commends the Authority for its continued progress on the draft exploitation regulations. We reaffirm that the common heritage of humankind must be governed by clear, equitable, and environmentally

responsible rules that safeguard the marine environment while ensuring fair benefit sharing.

Therefore, the publication of the further revised consolidated text in December 2025, together with the indicative list of outstanding issues, represent a significant step forward, as well as reflect a transparent and inclusive approach to our negotiations.

On institutional strengthening and development, we note positively the advancement of the Strategic Framework 2025–2028, which has reinforced institutional resilience and organizational development. Jamaica affirms its support for this programme as a foundation for strengthening governance and deepening effectiveness.

We further welcome the conclusion of a service agreement with the United Nations System Staff College, which enhances the Authority's learning culture through access to the Blue Line platform and targeted leadership development. At the same time, we underscore the importance of ensuring that the implementation of Inspira and OneHR platforms, enabled through the new service agreement with the United Nations Office of Information and Communications Technology, remains aligned with the Assembly's decisions on issues pertaining to human resources.

We appreciate the Authority's strengthened engagement with the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations, which enhances coherence in ocean governance and contributes meaningfully to the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

We support the work on a framework for the establishment of the Common Heritage Fund for the equitable distribution of proceeds from activities in the Area, without prejudice to other options for the distribution of such benefits.

Further, we welcome enhanced capacity building for developing States and SIDS demonstrate a commitment to inclusivity and equity.

Yesterday's side event on the SEE HER EXCEED (SHE) programme, along with the testimonies of current beneficiaries, was a prime example of the positive impact of capacity building on member states through greater inclusivity and expansion of expertise on ocean science.

Jamaica emphasizes that small island developing States must be empowered to participate fully and benefit meaningfully from activities in the Area.

Consistent with our obligations as Host Country, Jamaica welcomes the Building Bridges initiative and strengthened coordination with national stakeholders, including through dialogue with our Host Country Committee, to ensure an enabling environment for the Authority's expanding responsibilities.

Mr. President,

My delegation notes the deliberations of the Assembly and Council during the thirtieth and thirty first sessions, including progress in the negotiation of draft exploitation regulations, the consideration of observer status applications, and the operationalization of the Economic Planning Commission.

We acknowledge the Council's review of exploration contracts, its decisions on relinquishment schedules and regional environmental management plans, and its ongoing work on standards and guidelines.

Jamaica commends the previous President of the Assembly, His Excellency Dwight Gardiner, Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda, for his sterling leadership and promotion of constructive dialogue and advancing our work towards consensus.

We also commend the respective Presidents of the Council for their stewardship and to the current President, His Excellency Mayank Joshi, thank you for your excellent leadership, which has reinforced the importance of inclusive participation, transparency, and constructive dialogue as the Authority.

We note the Secretary General's report on developments concerning the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction. Jamaica recognizes the significance of this instrument in complementing UNCLOS, and underscores the importance of continued coordination between the Authority and relevant international processes. We, therefore, support the Authority's active collaboration in BBNJ related processes, including preparations for the forthcoming first Conference of States Parties.

On financial stewardship, Jamaica notes the adoption of the 2025–2026 budget, the status of assessed contributions, and the operation of trust funds.

While financial management remains sound, longstanding arrears in assessed contributions and under resourced trust funds constrain inclusive participation of developing States in technical bodies and Council deliberations.

We underscore the importance of maintaining sound financial management, transparency, and sustainability to ensure the effective delivery of the Authority's mandate. We, therefore, encourage members with outstanding contributions to honour their obligations and extend appreciation to those who have contributed to the various Funds.

On collaboration and outreach, my delegation commends the Secretariat's active engagement with UN-Oceans, the IMO, FAO, UNESCO-IOC, and other partners. Such collaboration strengthens the Authority's ability to deliver on its mandate and enhances opportunities for the Authority to access scientific knowledge and technical expertise. We particularly welcome the Authority's participation in the 2025 UN Ocean Conference in Nice, which highlighted the centrality of science-based governance. We encourage the Secretariat to continue building partnerships that expand opportunities for capacity building and exchange of knowledge.

In closing, Mr. President, Jamaica affirms its strong support for the work of the Secretariat. We commend the dedication of the Secretary-General and her team in advancing the Authority's mandate. We stand ready to work constructively with the Secretariat and all delegations, as the Authority seeks to fulfil its very ambitious mandate.

Thank you.