

STATEMENT

By the Delegation of Viet Nam

At the 31st Session of the International Seabed Authority

Assembly Session

Agenda Item 9

**Annual Report of the Secretary-General under Article 166, paragraph 4,
of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea**

Mr. President,

As this is the first time Viet Nam has taken the floor, allow us to congratulate on your election as the President of the 31st Assembly of the International Seabed Authority, and to express our sincere gratitude for Jamaica for their hospitality. On this occasion, we also welcome Kyrgyzstan and Cambodia to become the newest members of the Authority.

Mr. President,

Distinguished delegates,

At the outset, my delegation wishes to express our sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General for the comprehensive report submitted in accordance with Article 166, paragraph 4 of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). This report offers a valuable overview of the Authority's activities from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, shedding lights on the notable ongoing issues at the Authority.

Mr. President,

Along with the adoption of UNCLOS, the ISA has been entrusted with profound responsibility of ensuring the good stewardship of the resources in the Area placed under the principle of common heritage of mankind. Since then, it has played the pivotal role in regulating activities within the Area, facilitating deep-sea research and promoting international cooperation, achieving significant results in the management of the seabed and contributing effectively to the implementation of UNCLOS.

The works and contribution of the Authority to the regulation of the Area are comprehensively reflected throughout the Annual Report by the Secretary-General. We highly commend the work of the Authority in the past year, particularly its enormous effort to implement the roadmap for the conclusion of the Regulation on Exploitation of Mineral Resources in the Area, as a part of the Mining Code. We also applaud the Authority's effort to coordinate the works between its organs and other international organisations to ensure the protection of marine environment and conservation of ecosystem, including its participation in the BBNJ processes. In this regard, allow us to express sincere gratitude to the experts contributing to the work of ISA, including Vietnamese member of the Legal and Technical Commission (LTC), Dr. Dao Viet Ha, a proactive member of the Commission. Last but not least, we thank the Authority for the capacity-building programs made available for the member states and encourage the Authority to provide further opportunities for developing countries in all regions.

Mr. President,

As a developing coastal State, Viet Nam places utmost importance on the governance of the sea, including the deep seabed along with its resources. We shall

reiterate that UNCLOS remains the “Constitution for the Ocean”, the comprehensive legal framework governing all activities in the ocean and the sea, and that peace, security, development, and environmental sustainability at sea hinge on full compliance with UNCLOS.

Viet Nam maintains our firm commitment to upholding UNCLOS and the 1994 Agreement on the Implementation of Part XI of UNCLOS, which serves as the legal basis for activities in the Area. Under UNCLOS, the Area and its resources are the common heritage of mankind, which must be sustainably used and properly conserved for the sake of humankind and our future generation, irrespective of the geographical location of States. Faced with enormous challenges, this process requires a comprehensive effort from the international community with the Authority playing a central role as the coordinator.

Mr. President,

As our knowledge about the deep seabed and its ecosystems remains limited and exploitation risks leaving immense impact on the marine environment, we advocate for a balanced approach between the protection of marine environment and exploitation for sustainable economic growth, harmonising the rights and interests of every state. Timely adoption of the Mining Code will provide the necessary legal framework that is based on science for any exploitation application. That being said, the principle of the 'common heritage of mankind,' enshrined in Part XI of the Convention, should serve as a guiding beacon for the Authority in fulfilling its responsibilities of sustainable resource management, environmental protection, equitable benefit-sharing, and the promotion of marine scientific research. By adhering to this principle, the Authority can ensure that seabed resources are

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managed in a manner that is not only responsible and equitable but also aligned with the highest scientific and environmental standards.

Mr. President,

The deep seabed in areas beyond national jurisdiction, often referred to as the Area, covers over 54 percent of the ocean floor and has never been of greater significance. As rapid advancements in high technology empower humanity to delve deeper into these uncharted depths, the responsibility placed on the Authority for effective governance intensifies. Activities in the Area, therefore, must be treated with utmost precaution to safeguard the marine environment against irreversible impacts, and not initiated without a comprehensive, consistent and robust legal framework achieved by consensus. In order to foster sustainable development while ensure equitable benefit sharing, states shall uphold principles enshrined in UNCLOS and participate in negotiation of the Mining Code with good will and constructive manner.

To conclude, *Mr. President*, Viet Nam wishes to reaffirm our support for the mandate of the International Seabed Authority in overseeing activities within the Area in accordance with the comprehensive legal framework established by UNCLOS.

I thank you, Mr President./.