



Council

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Statement by the President on the work of the Council of the International Seabed Authority during the second part of the thirtieth session

Addendum

I. Resumption of the session

1. At the 333rd meeting of the Council of the International Seabed Authority, on 7 July 2025, the President of the Council, Duncan Muhumuza Laki (Uganda), declared open the second part of the thirtieth session of the Council. During the second part of the session, held from 7 to 21 July 2025, the Council convened seven plenary meetings (333rd to 339th meetings) and 14 informal meetings.

II. Report of the Secretary-General on the credentials of members of the Council

2. At the 335th meeting of the Council, on 14 July, the Secretary-General reported that, as at that date, formal credentials had been received from 33 members of the Council, and information concerning the appointment of representatives had been communicated by means of facsimile or initialled notes verbales from ministries, embassies, permanent missions to the United Nations, permanent missions to the Authority or other government offices or authorities.

III. Election to fill a vacancy on the Legal and Technical Commission in accordance with article 163, paragraph 7, of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

3. At its 335th meeting, the Council elected Rodrigo Miguel Urquiza Caroca (Chile) to fill a vacancy on the Legal and Technical Commission resulting from the resignation of Andrés Camaño Moreno (see [ISBA/30/C/13](#)).



IV. Status of contracts for exploration and related matters

4. At its 335th meeting, the Council took note of the addenda to the report of the Secretary-General on the status of the contracts for exploration and related matters, including information on the periodic review of the implementation of approved plans of work for exploration ([ISBA/30/C/2/Add.1](#) and [ISBA/30/C/2/Add.2](#)).

5. At the same meeting, the Council took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the relinquishment of two thirds of the area allocated to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation under the contract for exploration for cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts signed between the Ministry and the Authority ([ISBA/30/C/7](#)).

V. Report of the Secretary-General on the status of national legislation relating to deep seabed mining and related matters

6. At its 335th meeting, the Council took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the laws, regulations and administrative measures adopted by sponsoring States and other members of the Authority with respect to the activities in the Area, and related matters ([ISBA/30/C/9](#)).

VI. Draft regulations on exploitation of mineral resources in the Area

7. At its 333rd meeting, on 7 July, the Council took up agenda item 11 on the consideration, with a view to adoption, of the draft regulations on exploitation of mineral resources in the Area. All subsequent discussions on the draft regulations took place in informal meetings from 7 to 18 July, with the full participation of other members of the Authority and observers, in line with the revised road map for the thirtieth session of the Council, introduced by the President of the Council on 26 July 2024 and endorsed by the Council ([ISBA/29/C/9/Add.1](#), annex III). The President of the Council introduced his briefing paper on the negotiations on the draft regulations and associated modalities of work for the second part of the twenty-ninth session of the Council, dated 4 June 2025,¹ and resumed the reading of the revised consolidated text, beginning with draft regulation 56.²

8. The plenary of the Council held 14 informal meetings on the President's revised consolidated text, from 7 to 18 July. The Council finished the reading of the second part of the text, covering draft regulations 56 to 107. This signified a noteworthy achievement for the thirtieth session of the Council in a broader context, since the Council could revise the entire revised consolidated text, which had been issued on 10 January 2025, during the first and second part of the session.

9. The Council held six focused discussions: on 8 July, by the informal working group on equalization measures, for draft regulation 64 bis and standards, facilitated by Australia; on 9 July, by the Group of Friends of the President on the review of the payment mechanism, for draft regulations 81 and 82, facilitated by Canada; on 10 July, by the informal working group on part XI and the inspection, compliance and enforcement mechanism, draft regulation 102, facilitated by Norway; on 15 July, by

¹ See www.isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Presidents-Briefing-Paper-for-2nd-part-30th-session-v20250604.pdf.

² See www.isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/10012025-Revised-Consolidated-Text-2.pdf.

the Group of Friends of the President on submarine cable protection, facilitated by Singapore, and the Group of Friends of the President on the environmental compensation fund, facilitated by Mexico; and on 17 July, by the informal working group on underwater cultural heritage, facilitated by Brazil, Greece and the Federated States of Micronesia.

10. On the sidelines of the Council meeting, the following groups held a total of seven informal meetings: the informal working group on the rights and interests of coastal States, facilitated by Portugal and Singapore, on 10 July; the informal working group on effective control, facilitated by Chile and Costa Rica, on 11 and 17 July; the Group of Friends of the President on the environmental compensation fund, draft regulations 54 to 56, facilitated by Mexico, on 11 July; the informal working group on environmental management and monitoring, section 3 of part IV, draft regulations 49 to 52 and annex VII, facilitated by Norway, also on 11 July; the Group of Friends of the President on the review of the payment mechanism, draft regulations 81 and 82, facilitated by Canada, on 15 July; and the informal working group on references to regional environmental management plans, facilitated by the Kingdom of the Netherlands, also on 15 July.

11. During the intersessional period and during the second part of the thirtieth session, seven Groups of Friends of the Presidents were created (see annex).

12. Regarding the discussion on the 13 annexes, the appendix and the schedule, the Council held a conceptual exchange, as proposed by the President, rather than proceeding line by line. The President suggested the possible establishment of a new Group of Friends of the President for some annexes to streamline their texts and prepare a version that could serve as a basis for building consensus. In addition, the Council agreed with the President's proposal to retain some annexes within the scope of existing informal working groups or Groups of Friends of the President currently reviewing them. It was also agreed to cluster certain annexes by subject matter. One delegation proposed that this approach be extended beyond the annexes to the draft regulations as a whole. There was broad agreement that limiting the proliferation of the number of Groups of Friends of the President would help to facilitate the participation of delegations, especially smaller ones during the intersessional period. The President will present a list of the annexes along with suggested corresponding working groups or Groups of Friends of the President to support the intersessional work.

13. As proposed by the President, the Council agreed to defer consideration of the schedule for the time being. It was noted that several key definitions were being addressed within the context of ongoing work by specific informal working groups. Some of these definitions are closely linked to broader, unresolved issues. Accordingly, the Council agreed that these definitions will remain with the groups currently examining them. Once those groups submit agreed language that may serve as a basis for consensus, the Council will be in a better position to consider incorporation into the schedule.

14. With regard to the informal working groups and Groups of Friends of the President, the Council agreed that the secretariat should upload the list of groups for the forthcoming intersessional period. This list should include the scheduled dates of online meetings and the relevant supporting documentation. In this context, some participants proposed reducing the number of online meetings held each week during the intersessional period, in order to facilitate the effective participation of smaller delegations.

15. At its 338th meeting, on 18 July, the Council adopted a decision on a thematic approach to the continuation of the elaboration of rules, regulations and procedures

relating to exploitation to resolve remaining key outstanding matters, for which the Council defined some lines for the intersessional work and the thematic approach for negotiations of the exploitation regulations during the thirty-first session of the Council (see [ISBA/30/C/18](#)).

16. At the same meeting, the President referred to the revised draft list of standards and guidelines associated with the draft regulations on the exploitation of mineral resources in the Area.³ The Council agreed to defer further consideration of this matter to its next session, under the agenda item relating to the draft regulations on exploitation.

17. At its 339th meeting, on 21 July, the Council took on the review of the status of advancement on draft regulations, including text proposed by the informal working groups and Groups of Friends of the President, and the next steps. The Council endorsed the proposal by the President to encourage the informal working groups and Groups of Friends of the President to continue their efforts during the intersessional period, with the aim of advancing the text as far as possible towards a version that could serve as a basis for consensus. As for the next steps on the negotiation of the regulations on exploitation, the President requested the Council to refer to its decision on a thematic approach adopted by on 18 July (*ibid.*).

18. At the same meeting, the Council took note of the various proposals regarding deadlines for the submission of comments on the revised consolidated text. Taking these proposals into account, the President suggested that the deadline for submissions from delegations be set for 15 September 2025, while inputs from the informal working groups and Groups of Friends of the President be submitted by 1 December 2025. In addition, the Council agreed to request the secretariat to prepare a further revised consolidated text reflecting the discussions held during the thirtieth session and to upload it to the Authority's website well in advance of the first meeting of the thirty-first session, in accordance with paragraph 3 of the decision on a thematic approach (*ibid.*).

VII. Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the decision of the Council in 2024 relating to the reports of the Chair of the Legal and Technical Commission

19. At its 335th meeting, the Council took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the decision of the Council in 2024 relating to the reports of the Chair of the Commission ([ISBA/30/C/10](#)).

VIII. Report of the interim Director General of the Enterprise

20. At its 335th meeting, the Council took note of the report of the interim Director General of the Enterprise, Eden Charles.

21. The interim Director General submitted his second report, on activities undertaken from July 2024 to May 2025, in accordance with the Enterprise's mandate under article 170 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and section 2 of the annex to the Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 (1994 Agreement). In his oral presentation, he emphasized the importance of the Enterprise's role as the

³ See www.isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/ISBA_30_C_CRP.5-Updated-draft-list-of-Standards-and-or-Guidelines-associated-with-the-draft-regulations-final-11072025.pdf.

Authority celebrates its thirtieth anniversary, reiterating his responsibility to act under the general policies of the Assembly and the directives of the Council.

22. In the report, he outlined progress made across several key areas, despite the continued constraints of limited resources. These included participation in Council negotiations on the draft regulations on exploitation, engagement in intersessional working groups and advancement of preparations for the eventual independent operation of the Enterprise. He also reported on efforts related to joint venture arrangements, funding options, technological cooperation and capacity-building initiatives.

23. Council members received the report favourably, with several participants congratulating the interim Director General for his continued efforts. He expressed appreciation for the feedback received and committed himself to providing further concrete information in his next report, as he continues to discharge his mandate.

IX. Report of the Chair of the Legal and Technical Commission

24. At its 334th meeting, on 9 July, the Chair of the Legal and Technical Commission, Erasmo Lara Cabrera (Mexico), delivered an oral report on the work of the Commission at the second part of its thirtieth session, from 23 June to 4 July 2025.

25. Participants expressed strong support for the Commission's work. Several participants commented on specific items. With regard to the contractors' training programmes, many participants expressed satisfaction with the number of training positions offered and, while noting that some important training programmes had been unilaterally cancelled by the secretariat, noted the continued efforts made by the secretariat to increase the number of women who qualified for training programmes. Some participants noted the progress that had been made by the Commission in addressing potential cases of non-compliance by contractors. Many participants also stressed the importance of the work of the environmental threshold value group and encouraged further progress. They expressed appreciation for the meticulous work done by the Commission and acknowledged the importance of its efforts in enhancing environmental protection measures.

26. In response to the comments raised, the Chair of the Commission noted that, in relation to the process of identification of potential cases of non-compliance by contractors, a significant amount of work had been achieved and that a balanced assessment procedure had been developed. He welcomed the number of positive reactions to the development of the different documents pertaining to regional environmental management plans. He addressed comments on annual reports by contractors, noting that significant work had been done. Positive reactions to the work on regional environmental management plans were noted. The Chair highlighted the inclusion, in the annex to the report, of a rationale for comments on the standardized procedure, which contained an explanation as to why some comments were not taken into consideration. The Secretary-General concluded the discussion by thanking the Commission for the work accomplished and called upon all members of the Authority to contribute to the voluntary trust fund, while noting that the vast majority of the Commission's members had been able to attend and participate in its meetings.

27. At its 335th meeting, the Council took note of the written report of the Chair of the Commission on the work of the Commission at the second part of its thirtieth session ([ISBA/30/C/4/Add.1](#)).

Deferral of the schedule of relinquishment of the areas allocated under contracts for exploration

28. At the 335th meeting, the Council adopted two decisions on the deferral of the schedule of relinquishment as requested by the Institut français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer (see [ISBA/C/30/14](#)) and the Government of Poland (see [ISBA/C/30/15](#)).

Revised standardized procedure for the development, establishment and review of regional environmental management plans

29. At its 334th meeting, the Council discussed the draft revised standardized procedure for the development, establishment and review of regional environmental management plans ([ISBA/30/C/3](#)). Participants expressed the hope that these tools could be developed and implemented as soon as possible. Some participants proposed specific amendments concerning the purpose and binding nature of regional environmental management plans, with a view to ensuring their effective integration into the regulatory framework and to providing clear and enforceable guidelines for environmental management. Participants also underscored the importance of enhanced collaboration with contractors in both the development and implementation of such plans. It was emphasized that strengthened cooperation between the Authority, contractors and other relevant stakeholders would contribute to more comprehensive and effective environmental management outcomes. Following consultations among participants, the Council agreed to incorporate a number of adjustments to the draft revised standardized procedure, which ultimately led to its adoption.

30. At its 338th meeting, the Council adopted the standardized procedure for the development, establishment and review of regional environmental management plans ([ISBA/30/C/20](#)). The decision is a significant step forward in the Authority's environmental governance, as it formalizes a process started in 2020, providing a formalized, predictable and science-driven framework for regional environmental planning, upholding the Authority's obligation to protect the marine environment in the Area for the benefit of humankind. In the decision, the Council requested the Commission and the secretariat to apply the revised standardized procedure and associated templates and recommendations in future regional environmental management plans. The Commission is requested to prioritize the development and review of regional environmental management plans for areas with existing exploration contracts, based on the best available science and ongoing or planned activities. Likewise, the Council encouraged member States, contractors, sponsoring States, international organizations and stakeholders to actively contribute data, expertise and knowledge to the regional environmental management plan process, in accordance with the new procedure.

Decision relating to the reports of the Chair of the Commission

31. At its 339th meeting, the Council adopted a decision relating to the reports of the Chair of the Commission ([ISBA/30/C/19](#)).

X. Report of the Secretary-General concerning the operationalization of the Economic Planning Commission

32. At its 335th meeting, the Council took note of the report of the Secretary-General concerning the operationalization of the Economic Planning Commission ([ISBA/30/C/11](#)), which included a proposed draft decision for its operationalization.

33. While delegations agreed on the importance of the Commission and generally expressed support for its operationalization, some delegations asked questions on modalities, timing, financial implications and procedural readiness for its establishment and full operation. There is broad agreement that the Commission must be operational before any plan of work is approved, in accordance with the Convention and the 1994 Agreement. Participants highlighted the importance of balanced geographical representation, especially from affected developing States. Emphasis was also placed on cost implications and the need for input from the Finance Committee, as well as the development of a clear election mechanism.

34. At its 338th meeting, the Council adopted a decision on the operationalization of the Commission ([ISBA/30/C/17](#)). The Council decided to initiate the necessary steps to operationalize the Commission as a subsidiary organ of the Council, in line with articles 151, 163 and 164 of the Convention and the relevant sections of the 1994 Agreement. To that end, the secretariat was requested to prepare a proposal on the mechanism for electing the members of the Commission, with technical input from the Legal and Technical Commission. This proposal is to be considered by the Council during the first part of its thirty-first session. Furthermore, the Finance Committee was tasked with assessing the financial implications of establishing the Economic Planning Commission and to provide a report during the second part of the thirty-first session on the most practical timeline for when the Commission can commence its work. In addition, the Council decided to keep the matter under review, indicating ongoing oversight and flexibility in implementation.

XI. Report of the Finance Committee

35. At its 337th meeting, on 17 July, the Chair of the Finance Committee Kenneth Wong, presented the report of the Committee on its work during the thirtieth session ([ISBA/30/A/8-ISBA/30/C/12](#)). The Council took note of the report.

36. The Secretary-General, in her statement, reaffirmed her commitment to organizational excellence, transparency, accountability and delivering on the Authority's mandate and the trust she had received from member States when she was elected.

37. A number of participants welcomed the Committee's progress on the issue of equitable sharing of financial and other economic benefits arising from activities in the Area. Several participants underscored the importance of developing a fair and inclusive benefit-sharing mechanism, in line with articles 140, 148 and 160 (2) (g) of the Convention. Participants noted the progress made by the Committee in its discussions on the establishment of a common heritage fund as an alternative to complement the direct distribution of monetary benefits. The Committee recommended to the Council and Assembly that the secretariat develop the concept of the common heritage fund as a way for income from activities in the Area to be distributed in accordance with the Convention, indicating that the concept should be accompanied by a comprehensive report describing and explaining the concept and detailing the legal rules applicable to the fund and the rules, regulations and procedures of the Authority, which may regulate, limit or restrict the usage or application of the fund's resources. While several participants expressed support for the proposed common heritage fund as a way to distribute income from activities in the Area, some requested the Committee to continue working on other options, including direct distribution, and to submit all options for the consideration of member States. Some participants suggested that the issue be included as an agenda item for future Council and Assembly sessions to enable further in-depth discussions.

38. The Chair of the Committee underlined the Committee's request to the secretariat to take appropriate measures to avoid budget overruns during the financial

period 2025–2026. The Committee requested the secretariat to provide an update on the staffing tables and a detailed breakdown of consultants recruited in 2025. The Chair of the Committee noted that the report on standards of accommodation for air travel requested at the twenty-ninth session showed that the secretariat had followed the travel policies in a manner consistent with United Nations standards for the financial period 2023–2024. The Committee requested the Secretary-General to keep the matter as a standing item on its agenda.

39. The Chair also noted that, after considering the audited financial statements of the Authority for 2024, no adverse observations had been made by the auditor. A number of participants welcomed the opinion of the auditor and commended the secretariat for the prudent financial management of the resources of the Authority for the period 2023–2024. Participants also echoed the request by the Committee for a breakdown of the use of miscellaneous and interest income.

40. Delegations took note of the implementation of the budget for the financial period 2023–2024 and encouraged continued cost-saving measures and sound financial management to avoid overruns during the financial period 2025–2026. Several delegations supported the proposed increase of an annual overhead charge per contract from 1 January 2027, highlighting the necessity of providing contractors with sufficient time in advance to prepare for the increase.

41. The Chair informed the Council that, following a review of the bids received for the appointment of an independent auditor for the financial period 2025–2026, the Committee recommended the reappointment of Calvert Gordon Associates. Some participants suggested that the Authority consider the possibility of engaging the United Nations Board of Auditors, even if that would be at a higher cost and would need to be financed.

42. Many participants expressed concern about the number of member States in arrears, particularly those with outstanding contributions exceeding two years, and encouraged the Secretary-General to continue her efforts to recover those arrears, including through bilateral efforts. With respect to voluntary trust funds, many participants acknowledged their importance and expressed appreciation to the donors for supporting the participation of member States from developing countries in the work of the Council and the Legal and Technical Commission, and encouraged timely and increased contributions. The President of the Council encouraged private individuals to contribute, citing his own example of a personal donation of \$555. He underscored that no effort was too small to make a meaningful difference.

43. The Chair also noted in his report that the Committee had conducted a robust debate on the note by the Secretary-General regarding the restructuring of the Secretariat ([ISBA/30/A/7](#)) and had exchanged views on the legal framework and condition of the restructuring situation, without coming to a conclusion. The Committee discussed paragraph 19 of its report submitted at the twenty-ninth session ([ISBA/29/A/9-ISBA/29/C/20](#)) regarding the reclassification of posts within the secretariat. The Committee reiterated its recommendation that, in future, no reclassification decision be implemented without prior approval of the Assembly on the recommendation of the Committee. Some members expressed concern about the ongoing legal proceedings before the Joint Appeals Board and the United Nations Appeals Tribunal. Members requested the secretariat to provide an update and an overview of potential financial scenarios, while noting the confidential nature of the proceedings. Members requested to be kept informed of the progress of the legal proceedings.

44. A delegation noted that the Joint Appeals Board had been temporarily dismantled without explanation at a time that coincided with complaints from former staff members of unfair human resources actions, and highlighted that such structures

were put in place to ensure the integrity of the Authority. Some participants underscored the need to ensure that the treatment and well-being of the staff be accorded the highest priority to support the work and mandate of the Authority.

45. During the discussion in the Council, many participants expressed concerns regarding the restructuring undertaken by Secretary-General since January 2025, including by asking questions on the reclassification of posts within the secretariat, which should be done with the approval of the Assembly on the recommendation of the Finance Committee, as requested in the decision of the Assembly relating to the budget of the Authority for the financial period 2025–2026 ([ISBA/29/A/11](#)), on the recommendation of the Committee in paragraph 19 of its report submitted at the twenty-ninth session. Some participants underscored the need for the Authority to abide by the principles of transparency, accountability and good governance at a time when it faces significant challenges to protect the credibility of the organization. Some also requested that the Committee share their considerations in assessing the legal framework and condition of the recent restructuring of the secretariat. It was further noted that the previous restructuring of the secretariat had been carried out following a periodic review pursuant to article 154 of the Convention. Some participants expressed further concern at the adoption of an administrative instruction on 6 January 2025 ([ISBA/ST/AI/2023/3/Amend.2](#)), in which the Secretary-General had authorized herself to directly reclassify positions as a result of restructuring without requiring prior submission in accordance with standard classification procedures. Some participants requested that the administrative instruction be revoked without further delay. In response, the secretariat confirmed that administrative instruction [ISBA/ST/AI/2023/3/Amend.2](#) had been withdrawn with immediate effect.

46. Participants noted that this matter should be kept under review and reiterated the request made by the Committee to the secretariat to provide an update on the staffing table as well as a breakdown of consultants hired since January 2025 to ensure full oversight, transparency and accountability to member States. One delegation suggested considering the diversification of control and evaluation instruments, including, where appropriate, through dialogue with internal mechanisms of the United Nations system such as the Office of Internal Oversight Services, with the view to ensuring independent oversight and further strengthening the audit mechanisms already in place.

47. Several participants requested that, given the Committee's increasing workload and the need for enhanced oversight of the Authority's financial and administrative matters, additional time should be allocated to its meetings. It was further suggested that the Committee be enabled to advance its work through online intersessional meetings starting in 2026, in line with the practice established in recent years.

48. At the 337th meeting, the Council adopted a decision relating to financial and budgetary matters ([ISBA/30/C/16](#)).

XII. Dates of the next session

49. At its 339th meeting, the Council took note of the indicative dates of the thirty-first session of the Council that the secretariat had arranged three years in advance, in close coordination with the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management of the United Nations:

Part I, 16–27 March 2026 (10 days)

Part II, 13 July–24 July 2026 (10 days)

Part III, 28 October–6 November 2026 (8 days, to be confirmed)

50. Some participants highlighted the potential conflict with the dates of the third session of the Preparatory Commission for the Entry into Force of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction, scheduled for 23 March to 2 April 2026. The secretariat clarified that it had not been informed of any potential conflict with the dates of the third session of the Preparatory Commission announced on 30 April 2025.

51. The President, noting that many delegates would be involved in both part I of the thirty-first session of the Council and the third session of the Preparatory Commission, requested the secretariat to promptly undertake consultations with the relevant offices of the United Nations to explore the possibility of adjusting the dates of part I of the thirty-first session of the Legal and Technical Commission and the Council, currently scheduled for 2 to 13 March and 16 to 27 March 2026, respectively, with a view to avoiding a conflict in the meetings of the Authority and Preparatory Commission.

52. Should such an adjustment be deemed necessary, it would be implemented in accordance with rule 4 of the rules of procedure of the Council, which provides for the alteration of the dates of a regular session.

Annex

Council of the International Seabed Authority

List of Groups of Friends of the President

<i>Group number</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Convening delegation</i>
1.	Submarine cable protection (Draft regulations 31 and 31 bis)	Singapore
2.	Review of the payment mechanism (Draft regulations 81 and 82, and relevant standards)	Canada
3.	Modification of a plan of work by a contractor (Draft regulation 57)	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
4.	Environmental compensation fund (Draft regulations 54, 55 and 56)	Mexico
5.	Seabed mining register (Draft regulation 92)	India
6.	Prevention of corruption (Draft regulation 40)	Netherlands (Kingdom of the)
7.	Environmental goals and objectives (Draft regulation 44 ter)	Germany
8.	Non-compliance notice, suspension and termination of exploitation contract (Draft regulation 103)	Netherlands (Kingdom of the)