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**Annual report of the Secretary-General under article 166,
paragraph 4, of the Convention**

Restructuring of the secretariat of the International Seabed Authority

Note by the Secretary-General

1. The secretariat is one of the principal organs of the Authority. In accordance with article 166 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the secretariat shall comprise a Secretary-General and such staff as the Authority may require. In accordance with article 167 of the Convention, the staff of the secretariat shall consist of such qualified scientific and technical and other personnel as may be required to fulfil the administrative functions of the Authority. In this regard, the principle of cost-effective and evolutionary approach shall apply to the functioning of the secretariat.

2. It is recalled that a restructuring of the secretariat was conducted by the former Secretary-General, within the approved budget, after he assumed the role of the Secretary-General in 2017.¹ To ensure optimal service from the secretariat to the Council and the Assembly and their subsidiary organs in alignment with the evolving priorities in implementing the mandate of the Authority and the visions of the new Secretary-General, in particular to enhance the efficiency, transparency, accountability and cost-effectiveness of the work of the secretariat, it is necessary to restructure the secretariat, as done previously, within the approved budget.

3. It is also recalled that the Assembly, at its twenty-ninth session, approved the budget of the Authority for the years 2025 and 2026, with an attached staffing table containing 33 staff in the Professional and higher categories (including the Secretary-General), 2 National Professional Officers and 21 General Service staff, with 1 additional Professional post from 2026.² The current changes to the organization of the secretariat as reflected in Secretary-General's bulletin [ISBA/ST/SGB/2025/1](#) were made without any change to the approved number of posts and their levels, and, therefore, without any financial or budgetary implications. The main aspects of the restructuring are described below.

¹ See [ISBA/23/A/4](#).

² See [ISBA/29/A/3/Add.1-ISBA/29/C/11/Add.1](#).



Executive Office of the Secretary-General

4. The Deputy to the Secretary-General, at the D-2 level, also acts as the Chef de Cabinet to support the Secretary-General in all aspects of the secretariat mandate and represent the Secretary-General when requested. The functions of the Chef de Cabinet have also been classified at the D-2 level and will be performed by the Deputy to the Secretary-General, who coordinates the work of the secretariat and supervises the daily operation of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and of the Office of Administrative Services, with a view to further strengthening the coordination and collaboration among the substantive offices and the administrative office, mobilizing and making optimal use of the financial, human and other resources of the secretariat.

Office of Legal Affairs

5. The post of Deputy to the Secretary-General, at the D-2 level, has been transferred from the Office of Legal Affairs to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. The position of Legal Counsel will remain as Head of the Office of Legal Affairs with functions classified at the D-1 level. The post of Knowledge Management Officer, at the P-3 level, vacant since November 2024, is under review for possible reclassification as a Legal Officer at the same level. Resources are mobilized and prioritized to support the ongoing negotiation of the draft regulations on exploitation and associated standards and guidelines, including the engagement of a legal officer under the Junior Professional Officers programme.

Office of Stewardship, Environment and Resources

6. The Office of Environmental Management and Mineral Resources has been renamed the Office of Stewardship, Environment and Resources in order to better reflect its evolving functions and priorities, in particular the stewardship of the database as the knowledge bank on deep seabed science. The Office will be further strengthened with additional support from a Senior Policy Officer (Mineral Resources and Economic Development) at the P-5 level under the Senior Professional Officers programme. It is noted that the post of Senior Scientific Affairs Officer (Marine Geologist) at the P-5 level has been advertised and encumbered since 2020 at the P-4 level as a Scientific Affairs Officer (Marine Geologist). This post is retained at the P-4 level, and the P-5 post is transferred to that of Head of the Office of Administrative Services.

Office of Administrative Services

7. The post of Director, at the D-1 level, has been transferred from the Office of Administrative Services to the newly established Office of Contract Management and Capacity-building. With a view to the optimal use of the limited resources to support the substantive work of the Authority, the functions of the Head of the Office of Administrative Services are performed at the P-5 level, reporting to the Deputy to the Secretary-General/Chef de Cabinet.

8. It was noted that the secretariat had maintained one information and communications technology team under the Office of Administrative Services and one data management team under the Office of Stewardship, Environment and Resources. With increased efficiency and collaboration, the post of Information and Communications Technology Manager (P-4), vacant since May 2024, was reclassified at the P-3 level, and the P-4 post was reassigned as a Scientific Affairs Officer (Marine Geologist). The post of Associate Information and Communications Technology Officer, at the P-2 level, vacant since January 2025, was reassigned as a Training Coordinator.

Office of Contract Management and Capacity-building

9. A new office was established, headed by a Director at the D-1 level, to include the Compliance Assurance and Regulatory Management Unit and the Capacity-building Unit, both of which were transferred from the Executive Office of the Secretary-General.

10. With this change, the functions of monitoring the performance of the contractors and communication with the contractors and their sponsoring States will be further improved. The regulatory management functions will be substantially strengthened, in collaboration with the Office of Legal Affairs, to provide more effective support to the Legal and Technical Commission in developing the associated standards and guidelines to support the regulatory framework for exploitation and the standard operating procedures relating to activities of the contractors.

11. Capacity-building for the developing States has been one key pillar of the work of the Authority. With the establishment of the new office, a centralized approach will be implemented to enhance coordination and collaboration in developing and implementing all training and capacity-building programmes and projects managed by the secretariat, including the contractors' training programmes, training programmes developed by the joint training and research centres and projects funded by the International Seabed Authority Partnership Fund. The post of Training Coordinator is maintained, at the P-2 level, and the post of Policy and Planning Officer (Capacity-building), at the P-3 level, is reassigned as an Information and Communications Technology Manager.

Financial and budgetary implications

12. In making these changes, the Secretary-General has been guided by the need to improve the efficiency and quality of services provided by the secretariat and has sought to utilize the talents available in the best possible manner and to the maximum extent. It is noted that further reorganization may be required in the light of the Assembly's consideration and the outcome of the periodic review of the international regime of the Area pursuant to article 154 of the Convention.

13. The restructuring of the secretariat outlined by the Secretary-General in the present note has been accomplished within the approved budget for the financial period 2025–2026 and has no financial or budgetary implications. A revised staffing table is shown in the annex to the present document.

Annex

Staffing table

<i>Functional title</i>	<i>Professional and higher</i>	<i>National Professional Officer</i>	<i>General Service</i>
Executive Office of the Secretary-General			
Secretary-General	1 (USG)		
Deputy to the Secretary-General/Chef de Cabinet	1 (D-2)		
Communications Specialist	1 (P-4)		
Associate Copy Editor	1 (P-2)		
Office Manager	1 (P-2)		
Senior Liaison Assistant, Office of the Permanent Observer for the International Seabed Authority to the United Nations in New York			1
Senior Communications Assistant			1
Administrative Assistant			1
Staff Assistant			1
Office of Legal Affairs			
Director/Legal Counsel	1 (D-1)		
Senior Legal Officer	1 (P-5)		
Legal Officer	1 (P-4)		
Legal Officer (Regulatory Affairs)	1 (P-4)		
Legal Officer	1 (P-3)		
Knowledge Management Officer	1 (P-3)		
Associate Legal Officer	1 (P-2)		
Documentation and Conference Management Officer		1	
Administrative Assistant			1
Administrative/Library Assistant			1
Office of Stewardship, Environment and Resources			
Director	1 (D-1)		
Scientific Affairs Officer (Marine Geologist)	1 (P-4)		
Environmental Coordinator	1 (P-4)		
Programme Coordinator (Marine Scientific Research)	1 (P-4)		
Programme Manager (Marine Environment)	1 (P-4)		
Scientific Officer (Geographic Information System)	1 (P-3)		
Database Manager	1 (P-3)		
Associate Programme Officer	1 (P-2)		
Senior Information Management Assistant			1
Administrative Assistant			1
Office of Contract Management and Capacity-building			
Director	1 (D-1)		
Chief, Compliance Assurance and Regulatory Management Unit	1 (P-5)		
Quality Assurance and Compliance Officer	1 (P-4)		
Environmental Audit Officer (from 2026)	1 (P-4)		
Contract Management Officer	1 (P-3)		

<i>Functional title</i>	<i>Professional and higher</i>	<i>National Professional Officer</i>	<i>General Service</i>
Programme Management Officer (Capacity-building)	1 (P-3)		
Training Coordinator	1 (P-2)		
Administrative Assistant			1
Office of Administrative Services			
Head of Office	1 (P-5)		
Budget/Internal Oversight Officer	1 (P-4)		
Finance Officer	1 (P-4)		
Human Resources Officer	1 (P-4)		
Information and Communications Technology Manager	1 (P-3)		
Associate Procurement Officer	1 (P-2)		
Associate Security and Facilities Officer		1	
Senior Budget and Treasury Assistant			1
Senior Finance Assistant			1
Administrative Assistant			1
Budget Assistant			1
Information and Communications Technology Assistant			1
Travel and Human Resources Assistant			1
Human Resources Assistant			1
Finance Assistant			1
Procurement Assistant			1
Driver/General Services Assistant			2
The Enterprise			
Interim Director General	1 (P-5)		
Research Assistant			1
Total	34	2	21

Abbreviation: USG, Under-Secretary-General.