

Opening Remarks

**by Her Excellency Cheryl Spencer, Under-Secretary
and Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the International
Seabed Authority during the Workshop on “*Opportunities and
Challenges of Interactions between the International Seabed
Authority and the BBNJ Processes.*”**

Permanent Mission of the Republic of Singapore

New York | 5th November 2025

Secretary-General Leticia Carvalho,

Colleague Permanent Representatives to the ISA,

Representatives of the UN and other organisations,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

I am so sorry that I am not with you there in-person today due to competing priorities, as well as the disruption caused by the recent passage of Hurricane Melissa. Nevertheless, I wish to join my colleague Permanent Representatives in welcoming you to this important discussion on the “***Opportunities and Challenges of Interactions between the International Seabed Authority and the BBNJ Processes***”. This is very timely coming on the heels of the observance of the first International Day of the Deep Seabed on November 1, 2025.

As host country to the International Seabed Authority, Jamaica is deeply invested in the evolving dialogue on the future of ocean governance. In this regard, we recognize the significance of this moment.

The international community stands at the confluence of two transformative legal and institutional frameworks. The ISA and the BBNJ Agreement have a similar purpose in seeking to protect the marine environment beyond national jurisdiction. Yet, their approach is from distinct vantage points. The ISA regulates mineral-related activities in the deep seabed, ensuring they are conducted for the benefit of humankind. The BBNJ Agreement, in the meanwhile, aims to conserve and sustainably use marine biodiversity.

Nevertheless, these two frameworks – though differing in mandates – are interrelated.

This intersection presents a unique opportunity to foster coherence, avoid fragmentation, and promote inclusive governance.

In this regard, I extend my gratitude to Secretary General Carvalho and her team, as well as my other co-organisers for putting together today's programme, including the various panel discussions.

Excellencies,

The intersection of the two frameworks also raises complex questions:

- How do we reconcile differing mandates?
- How do we ensure that environmental protection and equitable benefit-sharing are not compromised?

- And how do we build institutional synergies that reflect the best available science, legal clarity, and the voices of developing countries?

For Jamaica, these questions are not abstract.

As a small island developing state, we are acutely aware of the ocean's role in our economic resilience, environmental sustainability, and cultural identity.

Jamaica is committed to ensuring that both the ISA and BBNJ processes reflect the principles of equity, transparency, and capacity building—particularly for nations with limited resources, but with significant stakes.

We are also mindful of the role that academia and scientific research must play in informing policy. Evidence-based decision-making is the cornerstone of effective governance, and we welcome the contributions of experts in shaping the path forward.

It is our hope that today's workshop will serve as a space for rigorous exchange on areas of synergies as well as opportunities for coordination between the two frameworks, mutual understanding, and constructive collaboration.

In this vein, please be assured that the Government of Jamaica stands ready to support efforts that advance a balanced, inclusive, and forward-looking ocean governance architecture — one that truly serves the interests of present and future generations.

We wish you every success in your deliberations today.

I thank you.