



Webinar: Celebrating Women in Deep-Sea Science and Technological Innovation

Opening Remarks

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Madam Secretary-General

International Seabed Authority

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8:am Kingston time, on Teams platform

Excellencies, distinguished guests, colleagues, mentors and mentees of the S.H.E. community, good morning.

It is a pleasure to welcome you to this closing event for the pilot cohort of the See Her Exceed Global Mentorship Programme. We at the Secretariat of the International Seabed Authority are extremely proud of what S.H.E. has achieved. The programme is truly shaping the way we think about our work *for women and with women* across all aspects of deep-sea scientific research and capacity development.

Let me begin by expressing my sincere appreciation to the Government of France for co-hosting this webinar and for its unwavering commitment to women's empowerment in ocean science. France's leadership has been central to transforming S.H.E. from an ambitious idea into a global programme with measurable impact. And it is with great pleasure that we welcome H.E. Marianne Ziss, who presented her credentials to ISA on Monday, and is the Permanent Representative of France to the ISA to our family. I wish to acknowledge Her Excellency's distinguished expertise in negotiating groundbreaking gender-sensitive resolutions at the highest level of the General Assembly. I am confident that her leadership will help the ISA to rapidly accelerate *progress* in a domain very close to my heart.

I would also like to extend a special thank you to Ms. Carline Krakja, Head of the Law of the Sea, River Law and polar Law Department, Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs whose diplomatic talents have enabled France to double its support to the ISA's women-empowerment initiative — a contribution I sincerely appreciate.

I also recognise many familiar colleagues from the scientific community who have supported the SHE journey, contributed to the research outputs and helped guide our mentees. Thank you for your dedication and partnership.

Over the past year, the S.H.E. community has shown what is possible when opportunity aligns with talent. Our mentors and mentees—representing six developing States and multiple deep-sea disciplines—have worked together, tirelessly, to advance scientific understanding, strengthen the careers of the mentees and introduce new approaches to gender-responsive research and innovation.

Today I invite you to join me in celebrating the launch of two SHE knowledge outputs:

- **An expert analysis of recent deep-sea research across geology, biology, engineering and oceanography, and**
- **A study on the barriers and facilitators affecting women's participation in at-sea activities that will soon result in a Charter paving the way forward for greater inclusion of women at sea and on board.**

These publications are far more than technical reports—they are genuine deep dives. They reflect the leadership, curiosity, and commitment of our mentees, supported by world-class mentors. They also reaffirm the ISA's dedication to ensuring that the deep sea remains a space where all States—and all people—can contribute meaningfully. This is a priority particularly close to my heart, as you may recall from my statement to the Assembly in which I announced that I would take further action to promote the safe participation of women in offshore activities.

The findings are clear.

Women continue to encounter structural and cultural obstacles that restrict their participation in offshore research. They face logistical, safety and social challenges that affect their readiness to work at sea. Yet, when provided with mentorship, supportive institutions and inclusive operational frameworks, they excel. Their contributions strengthen science, improve our collective understanding of deep-sea ecosystems and enhance responsible stewardship of the Area.

Ladies and gentlemen, S.H.E. is not simply a mentoring programme. It is an investment in the next generation of ocean leaders. It is a driver of scientific excellence. And it is a core part of ISA's mandate

to advance marine scientific research, technology transfer and capacity development for the benefit of humankind.

To our mentors—from the bottom of my heart - thank you for your dedication and generosity in guiding this cohort.

To our mentees—you have demonstrated resilience, creativity and leadership. Your achievements set a strong foundation for future cohorts.

To all partners—thank you for championing a vision of ocean science that is inclusive, collaborative and forward-looking.

As we begin today's discussions, I invite you to reflect on the momentum we have built and the opportunity before us to scale S.H.E., deepen its reach and expand participation globally.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are at the right place and the right time. Together, let us accelerate the exchange of ideas, strengthen the pipeline of women scientists and advance the good practices that will carry this programme into the future.

I wish you all a productive and inspiring session.

Thank you.