



Statement by

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during

Part I of the 31st Session of the International Seabed Authority

Jamaica Conference Centre, Kingston

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Agenda Item 1: Opening of the Session

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Mr. President
Madame Secretary General
Excellencies, representatives of Member States
Observers
Ladies and Gentlemen

The Jamaica delegation extends appreciation to His Excellency Duncan Laki on his stewardship as outgoing President of the Council for the 30th session.

Allow me also to acknowledge the work of the Secretary-General and her team in the oversight of the Secretariat and the support provided to the Member States in the conduct of the work of the Authority.

I also extend a warm welcome to all delegates assembled here for the first part of the thirty-first session of the Council, particularly those of you who are visiting our shores for the very first time. We trust that your stay will be enriching, affording you the opportunity to appreciate the depth and distinctiveness of Jamaica's cultural heritage, especially on the heels of Reggae Month.

Mr. President,

The Council is meeting at a pivotal moment in the history of the international community, where the importance of multilateralism in ocean governance cannot be overemphasized. The deep seabed lies beyond national jurisdiction, and its resources belong to all humanity. Your presence here is a testament to our enduring commitment to the sustainable governance of the resources of the deep seabed – our common heritage. It is only through collective decision-making, grounded in international law and the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the 1994 Agreement, that we can ensure fairness, sustainability, and equity.

This is particularly important given the increasingly difficult international climate, where heightened geopolitical tensions prevail and multilateralism is under threat.

Over the next two weeks, the Council will deliberate on matters of great consequence, including our continued work to develop draft regulations on the exploitation of mineral resources of the Area, the report of the Chair of the Legal and Technical Committee, a record number of applications for extension of plans of work and the operationalization of the Economic Planning Commission.

Equally important, is the Council's consideration of the Secretary-General's Report on the potential implications and opportunities for the work of the Authority in the operation of the BBNJ Agreement; with the latter having entered into force on 17th January 2026. This discussion will be crucial as we contemplate the Authority's future engagement with this new addition to the international ocean governance framework.

With this in mind, we extend our thanks to Secretary General Carvalho and her team for the report and Briefing Note, which have highlighted the areas for focused attention at this session.

Mr. President,

We also recognize and commend the Secretariat for the work undertaken in preparing the further Revised Consolidated Text and draft indicative list of outstanding issues. We understand that the former reflects proposals received by the Secretariat during the 30th session, subsequent written proposals submitted by Member States, stakeholders, Informal Working Groups and Friends of the President initiatives. We reiterate our view that this is without prejudice to the right of any state to introduce new proposals, and remain mindful of the significant work to be undertaken within a limited timeframe.

We further recognize the complexity of the issues before us and the diversity of perspectives represented in this room. Yet, it is precisely through dialogue, cooperation and mutual respect that the Council has always advanced its work. Jamaica is proud to provide the setting for these deliberations and stands ready to support the Authority in fulfilling its mandate in this regard.

Mr. President,

As delegations begin the work of this part of the 31st session, it is our hope that we will be guided by the principles of inclusivity, transparency, and sustainability. Therefore, in our deliberations, we must remain mindful of the broader global context, including the imperative to protect marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction. Recent developments, including the growing global demand for critical minerals, highlight the risks that unilateral approaches pose to the cooperative spirit enshrined in the Authority's mandate. With this in mind, we must be intentional, purposeful, and pragmatic, and ensure that our actions today are moving the needle in the right direction, bringing us closer to the implementation of a comprehensive package of commitments which will fulfil the mandate of Part XI of the Convention, while protecting resources of the deep seabed for present and future generations.

Mr. President,

In closing, Jamaica looks forward to productive discussions during part 1 of this 31st session, and hope that we can significantly advance our work to develop a robust regulatory framework for the global ocean commons.

Welcome once again to Kingston, and I trust that your time here will be rewarding.

I thank you.