



**Statement by**

**Mr. Andre Coore, Deputy Permanent Representative of**

**Jamaica to the International Seabed Authority during**

**Part I, 31<sup>st</sup> Session of the ISA Council**

**Jamaica Conference Centre | Kingston**

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Agenda Item 19: Report of the Secretary General on the engagement and cooperation with BBNJ bodies and processes

**Please check against delivery**

Mr. President,

My delegation extends our thanks to the Secretary General for her report and the attendant draft decision of the Council on engagement and cooperation with bodies and processes under the *Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement)*. The entry into force of that Agreement on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2026, marks a pivotal moment for the governance of the global ocean and for States, particularly small island developing states (SIDS) whose economies, cultures and security are intimately tied to a healthy ocean.

This new Agreement – the third implementing agreement to the *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea* - establishes a comprehensive framework addressing: (i) marine genetic resources (MGRs), (ii) area-based management tools (ABMTs), (iii) environmental impact assessments (EIAs), and (iv) capacity-building and transfer of marine technology. These four pillars are fundamental to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction. Jamaica, therefore, acknowledges that there may be an overlap between the objectives of the Agreement and the mandate of the Authority to protect the marine environment from harmful effects arising from activities in the Area.

For Jamaica and other SIDs, this overlap must be understood within the context of our dependence on the integrity of marine ecosystems. We recognize that the effective operation of the BBNJ Agreement and constructive engagement with the Authority presents both challenges and opportunities for SIDS. Therefore, in line with Article 5 of the BBNJ Agreement, we must ensure that cooperation between

the bodies of the BBNJ and the Authority strengthens, rather than fragments, global ocean governance.

Mr. President,

As it concerns the BBNJ Agreement's provisions on marine genetic resources, Jamaica stresses that any regime for access and benefit sharing must be fair, transparent and sensitive to the needs of developing States, including SIDS, which often lack the technical capacity to participate on equal footing. The Authority's role in clarifying how Contractor sampling of biological communities intersects with the Agreement is therefore essential.

It must be recognized that decisions on ABMTs and marine protected areas under the BBNJ Agreement will require timely, technical input from the Authority. Jamaica supports robust, science-based processes that respect the competences of existing bodies while ensuring that SIDS have meaningful participation in the design and implementation of measures that may affect adjacent high seas and the Area. In this vein, we believe that the Authority must be equipped to evaluate proposals and provide input in a timely and effective manner.

It is further acknowledged that duplication can be avoided where environmental assessments conducted by Contractors under the Authority's rules are considered equivalent to those required by the BBNJ Agreement. However, determinations of the equivalence of assessments must be transparent and informed by technical expertise so that environmental protection is not compromised and SIDS can trust that the standards are consistent and robust. Jamaica, therefore, supports active engagement of the Authority in the development of clear, cooperative procedures for such actions.

My delegation believes that capacity-building and technology transfer are central to enabling developing States to participate in decision-making and to benefit from the marine scientific research. As highlighted in the Secretary-General's report, the Authority is expected to engage in such processes under the BBNJ Agreement. Jamaica urges that such programmes are designed to build on existing initiatives, avoid duplication, and prioritise the needs of SIDS for training, access to data and technology that supports monitoring, enforcement and sustainable development.

Mr. President,

Jamaica expresses its support for the Secretary-General in undertaking appropriate arrangements to facilitate consultation and cooperation with the BBNJ mechanism, including both the Preparatory Commission and the Conference of the Parties. We emphasize the value of establishing both formal and informal channels of engagement, so that the Authority may provide timely and relevant scientific and legal expertise.

To fulfil its consultative role, Jamaica encourages the development of internal procedures and rules that would enable the Authority to carefully evaluate proposals and to provide clear, evidence-based advice within the timeframes established under the BBNJ Agreement. We believe that such measures will strengthen the Authority's capacity to contribute meaningfully to the process and ensure that its expertise is reflected in the outcomes.

In closing, Jamaica wishes to underscore that the stakes before us are truly fundamental. We therefore call for approaches that are coordinated, adequately resourced, and inclusive. Such approaches further must respect the Authority's

mandate, uphold the highest environmental standards, and deliver tangible capacity-building and benefits to developing States, especially SIDs.

I thank you.