



**Statement delivered at the IX Ministerial Meeting of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic (ZOPACAS)**

**by Madam Secretary-General, Leticia Carvalho**

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**Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Let me begin by expressing my sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil for the invitation to participate in this important Ministerial Meeting of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic.

It is an honour for the International Seabed Authority to be present in this forum. For me personally, as a Brazilian, it is especially meaningful to take part in a gathering dedicated to the future of the South Atlantic — a space that links continents, histories and peoples, and that continues to carry profound strategic and human significance.

Having listened with great interest to the interventions delivered today, I would like to offer a few reflections from the perspective of the Authority.

This meeting has reaffirmed something of lasting importance: South Atlantic is not merely a geographic expanse. It is a shared space of responsibility — a space where peace, cooperation and mutual respect must continue to prevail.

That is the enduring relevance of ZOPACAS.

Its founding vision remains deeply significant today: that the South Atlantic should not be shaped by rivalry or fragmentation, but guided by dialogue, sovereign equality, peaceful coexistence and cooperation among States.

At a time when the international community is being called upon to protect the integrity of shared spaces and to renew confidence in cooperative approaches, initiatives such as ZOPACAS offer an important reminder: peace must be upheld through trust, engagement, institutions and fidelity to international law.

Excellencies,

Many of the themes raised in this meeting resonate strongly with the broader agenda of ocean governance: the importance of multilateral cooperation, the value of strong institutions, the role of marine scientific knowledge, the need for capacity-building and equitable participation, and

the responsibility to ensure that ocean governance remains grounded in fairness, stability and stewardship.

These are also central concerns for the International Seabed Authority.

Established under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the 1994 Agreement, the Authority has the mandate to organize and control activities in the Area on behalf of humankind as a whole.

This is a specific legal mandate, but it is also part of a larger international commitment: that common spaces should be governed collectively; that the marine environment must be protected; and that the benefits derived from shared resources should be approached in a spirit of equity and responsibility.

In this sense, the principles that guide the ISA and those that animate ZOPACAS speak closely to one another.

Allow me, therefore, to offer a few practical reflections on how this relationship may continue to evolve in a constructive and forward-looking manner.

First, there may be value in deepening dialogue between the ISA and the countries of the South Atlantic on matters of shared interest, including seabed governance, marine scientific knowledge, environmental management and institutional preparedness.

Second, there may be important opportunities to strengthen cooperation in capacity development, particularly in support of developing States from Africa and Latin America.

In this regard, I am pleased to note the recent inauguration of the Africa Deep Seabed Resources and Support Activities initiative, ADSEA, in Cameroon. The Authority is also advancing training and cooperation opportunities in partnership with institutions in the United Republic of Tanzania and in Egypt, as part of a broader effort to support developing States in building expertise for effective participation in ocean affairs.

Third, there may also be scope to broaden dialogue with countries that, while not coastal, have a legitimate interest in the governance of the common heritage of humankind. In this context, preparations for the upcoming workshop with landlocked developing countries in Bolivia may also offer a useful opportunity to explore the possible development of a Centre of Excellence in South America dedicated to ocean governance and marine scientific research.

Excellencies,

I very much hope that the members of ZOPACAS will continue to look to the International Seabed Authority as the institution entrusted with administering activities in the Area, and as a valuable space for dialogue, cooperation and shared reflection.

I also hope that ZOPACAS members will continue to regard the ISA as a partner. We have much in common: a commitment to peaceful cooperation, respect for international law, environmental responsibility, capacity development, and equitable participation in the governance of shared spaces.

This is particularly important at the present time, as the Authority continues to strengthen key elements of its governance architecture. Among these are the progressive establishment of the Economic Planning Commission and the development of the Common Heritage Fund — both of which are of particular importance to developing countries, including many members of

ZOPACAS, in view of their future relevance to the organization and distribution of benefits derived from activities in the Area.

For that reason, I would also respectfully express the hope that members of ZOPACAS will continue to support the completion of the ISA governance architecture, including, at this stage, the finalization of the exploitation regulations. This is important not only for legal certainty and environmental protection, but also because it will help create the conditions necessary for benefit-sharing mechanisms to function in a credible, equitable and properly governed manner.

And finally, this meeting has made clear, once again, that Africa and Latin America are essential to shaping the future of ocean governance.

Their perspectives matter.  
Their experience matters.  
And their cooperation matters.

The International Seabed Authority stands ready to continue engaging with ZOPACAS member States in a spirit of openness, partnership and respect.

Excellencies,

The future of the ocean will depend on our collective ability to translate vision into cooperation, cooperation into trust, and trust into institutions capable of serving the common interest.

The South Atlantic has long been a space of connection. It can also continue to be a space of example — an example of how regions, acting in partnership, can help sustain peace and contribute to a more cooperative and responsible international order.

I thank you.