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**Annual report of the Secretary-General under article 166,
paragraph 4, of the Convention**

Implementation of the action plan of the International Seabed Authority in support of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the Convention (1994 Agreement) entrust the International Seabed Authority with the mandate to promote and encourage the conduct of marine scientific research in the Area and to coordinate and disseminate the results when available.¹ To discharge this mandate, the Authority serves as a global catalyst for strengthening partnerships, facilitating expert workshops, commissioning topic-specific reports and delivering knowledge outputs in domains of relevance.

2. Additionally, under the Convention and the 1994 Agreement, the Authority has the responsibility to take measures to promote and encourage the transfer of scientific knowledge and technology to strengthen the capacity of developing and technologically less developed States, including by establishing appropriate programmes.² The majority of the activities it carries out to fulfil these responsibilities are focused on marine scientific research.

3. In 2017, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and mandated the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to coordinate its implementation (General Assembly resolution [72/73](#), para. 292). As a participating entity within UN-Oceans, the Authority was invited to support the implementation of the Decade. The Assembly

* [ISBA/31/A/L.1](#).

¹ United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, art. 143 (2); and Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the Convention, para. 5 (h).

² United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, art. 143 (3).



of the Authority subsequently formalized its contribution by committing to the action plan for marine scientific research in support of the Decade (ISBA/26/A/4, annex).

4. The Secretary-General of the Authority reports annually to the Assembly on the status of implementation of the action plan. This year marks the issuance of the sixth such report, covering the period from July 2025 to June 2026 (see also ISBA/30/A/4, ISBA/29/A/5, ISBA/28/A/8, ISBA/27/A/4 and ISBA/26/A/25). It presents the progress made on action and knowledge generation across the six strategic research priorities, efforts relating to stakeholder engagement and resource mobilization, and next steps.

5. During the reporting period, the secretariat focused on implementing the recommendations contained in a report taking stock of the Authority's contributions to the Decade, which was published in December 2025.³ The group of experts that authored the report advised the Secretary-General to develop flagship initiatives for those strategic research priorities that did not yet have an overarching framework, while scaling up existing programmes and fostering innovation by launching new initiatives.

6. Compared to the previous reporting period, activities have increased and diversified. The number of training workshops doubled, while the number of published knowledge outputs increased threefold.⁴ Four new donors were attracted to scale up efforts relating to biodiversity assessment.⁵ In terms of projects, implementation of the Authority's flagship Deep-sea Biobank Initiative promoting the sharing of genetic information continued, and two new projects on cumulative impacts and regional environmental monitoring were conceived. The pilot of the global mentoring programme for women from developing countries, See Her Exceed, was concluded and will now be expanded to the domain of the law of the sea. Efforts in data management and technology were further strengthened, with the DeepData website and dashboard attracting approximately 96,000 visitors, who downloaded over 200 GB of data. Enhancements focused on improving data security and system upgrades with a new partnership. In the field of technology, a report on trends in environmental monitoring and rare earth minerals was published and a new scoping initiative on patents was launched.

7. In the coming year, priority will be placed on the further implementation of ongoing initiatives and on promoting science that generates the information required to meet emerging regulatory needs, while also strengthening the Authority's expertise relevant to the pillars of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction.

³ See <https://isa.org.jm/publications/the-contribution-of-the-international-seabed-authority-to-the-scientific-objectives-of-the-un-decade-of-ocean-science-for-sustainable-development>.

⁴ A technical brief on rare earth minerals, a policy brief on environmental baselines, two reports of the See Her Exceed global mentoring programme and two workshop reports on technology and the development of a regional environmental management plan for the Indian Ocean were published. Two training workshops were held under the Authority's Joint Training Research Centres, and two training workshops under the Sustainable Seabed Knowledge Initiative.

⁵ China, India, Portugal and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland joined France, the Republic of Korea and the European Union.

II. Progress in knowledge generation across the strategic research priorities of the action plan for marine scientific research

Strategic research priority 1: advancing scientific knowledge and understanding of deep-sea ecosystems, including biodiversity and ecosystems functions, in the Area

8. Advancing the understanding of deep-sea ecosystems is fundamental to underpinning science-based decision-making based on the precautionary approach. The development of the Authority's regulatory processes is a key driver in advancing deep-sea science, while also identifying areas in which further knowledge generation is required, as illustrated below.

9. The development of regional environmental management plans – a process led by the Legal and Technical Commission with support from the secretariat and external experts – requires data assessment as well as a systematic review of the latest scientific developments. During the reporting period, the workshop report on the development of the regional environmental management plan for the Indian Ocean, held in April 2025 in Qingdao, China, was finalized. In addition, to further advance the regional environmental management plan for the North-West Pacific, a workshop will take place in Busan, Republic of Korea, from 18 to 21 May, in collaboration with the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea and the Korea Institute of Ocean Science and Technology.

10. To develop environmental thresholds for toxicity, turbidity and settling resuspended sediments and underwater noise and light pollution, the intersessional expert group assessed the state of the art in these domains, including regulatory examples from other industries. Its report will be released for public stakeholder consultation during the intersessional period of the Authority's thirty-first session. More specifically, the report demonstrates how ecological reference points can be determined from a meta-analysis of species sensitivity curves across a gradient of sediment concentrations. This provides a science-based path to define zones of impact that can inform management actions and threshold levels, taking into consideration environmental, economic and societal values.

11. To raise awareness of progress in deep-sea science, the secretariat publishes knowledge outputs. In January, a policy brief illustrated how the development of environmental baselines has been strengthened by the requirements of the Authority's comprehensive legal framework and the technical guidance of the Legal and Technical Commission.⁶ Additionally, experts from the secretariat contributed to the third *World Ocean Assessment* under the third cycle of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects. To draw attention to the chapters addressing deep-sea-related issues, an online awareness-raising event will be organized by the secretariat after the official launch of the *Assessment* in May 2026.

⁶ See https://isa.org/jm/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/ISA-Environmental-Baseline-Policy-Brief-SSKI_2025.pdf.

Strategic research priority 2: standardizing and innovating methodologies for deep-sea biodiversity assessment, including taxonomic identification and description, in the Area

12. To further advance biodiversity assessments, the secretariat continued to implement the Sustainable Seabed Knowledge Initiative. Launched in 2022, the Initiative is a multi-donor, global collaborative platform combining innovation, research and capacity-building in support of evidence-based decision-making. The current reporting period witnessed a scale-up in the Initiative's impact resulting from the support of eight donors: China, India, Ireland, Portugal, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the founding donors, France, the Republic of Korea and the European Union.⁷

13. A new initiative developed in partnership with the Republic of Korea, the Deep sea Biobank Initiative, was launched to facilitate open access to deep sea biological samples and genetic data at the third United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. Under the Initiative, the secretariat will support the development of a global repository to be hosted by the Republic of Korea. Building expertise in this area is a strategic activity for the Authority, as it contributes to global governance efforts, including under the Agreement on Marine Biodiversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction. As a next step, standard operating procedures for the sampling, processing and sharing of deep-sea biological samples and genetic data will be developed, in collaboration with an international group of experts.

14. A second new initiative was launched in collaboration with the United Kingdom, consisting of the pilot development of an image reference library for the Clarion Clipperton Zone. The use of artificial intelligence tools on these imagery data enhances understanding of the regional distribution of biological assemblages and the assessment of anthropogenic impacts in the Area.

15. Accelerating efforts to describe at least 1,000 new deep-sea species by 2030 remains the core objective of the Sustainable Seabed Knowledge Initiative. To this end, the second edition of the "One Thousand Reasons" campaign was launched in March 2025, supported by a contribution from Ireland to the International Seabed Authority Partnership Fund. In collaboration with the World Register of Marine Species, the secretariat awarded six grants to scientists from four developing countries to describe approximately 100 new species by 2026.⁸

16. Another key priority of the Sustainable Seabed Knowledge Initiative is to advance the scientific capacity of developing countries in deep-sea taxonomy. In this context, France continued its support for the joint Authority-Institut français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer (Ifremer) Meioscool workshop on deep-sea meiofauna through the Partnership Fund. This year's workshop took place from 13 to 17 April 2026 in Plouzané, France. Building on previous editions, it delivered hands-on practical classes, online courses and a training kit for future generations of practitioners. In parallel, a Meioscool postdoctoral fellowship was awarded to an Argentinian scientist to support her in becoming a trainer and hosting future workshop editions.

17. Inspired by the success of the joint Authority-Ifremer Meioscool, a workshop on macrofauna taxonomy will be held in Kochi, India, in September 2026, in collaboration with a long-standing Sustainable Seabed Knowledge Initiative partner,

⁷ See <https://isa.org/jm/sski>.

⁸ See www.isa.org/jm/news/call-for-taxonomy-projects-to-describe-deep-sea-species.

the National Marine Biodiversity Institute of Korea, and co-financed by France and Portugal. The objectives are to build technical capacity in macrofauna taxonomy, data management and sample curation – areas that remain limited in many developing States.

Strategic research priority 3: facilitating technology development for activities in the Area, including ocean observation and monitoring

18. The Authority is mandated to facilitate and promote the transfer of technology in a manner that benefits all member States. The use of the best available technology, together with their effective and appropriate transfer, constitute key pillars, alongside sound marine spatial planning, in achieving environmental protection.

19. To facilitate technology development, the secretariat evaluates and disseminates developments across five priority domains: monitoring; autonomy, automation and robotics; machine learning and artificial intelligence; mining, energy and metal processing; and ocean observation and communication.

20. To fulfil its platform role and catalyse innovation, the secretariat engages with stakeholders at conferences, meetings and workshops while facilitating the formulation of projects in the priority domains. During the reporting period, four activities were undertaken.

21. The secretariat participated in the Underwater Minerals Conference in St. Pete Beach, Florida, in the United States of America from 9 to 14 November 2025.⁹ This annual conference is the largest global forum for ocean mineral stakeholders, exposing participants to the latest technological innovation for monitoring. The secretariat convened a session on trends in technology development during which beneficiaries of the Authority's capacity development initiatives, including a mentee from the Authority's global mentoring programme See Her Exceed, provided testimonials on technology transfer. The interim Director General of the Enterprise also gave a presentation on the legal framework for technology transfer and highlighted opportunities for developing States to engage in this process.

22. To disseminate information on emerging technology trends, two knowledge outputs were produced during the reporting period. First, the report on the Authority's annual technology workshop held in collaboration with Kobe University and its Kobe Ocean Bottom Exploration Centre in Japan in June 2025 was finalized. It provides an overview of emerging monitoring technologies and assesses the opportunities of technological innovation for regional monitoring and threshold development. Once participants have reviewed the final draft, the report will be made available on the Authority's website. Second, a technical highlight focused on marine metalliferous sediments, which are widely distributed across the ocean floor and represent a potentially valuable geological resource. Technologies for their exploration are well established, and it is recommended that further technological advancements in this field be encouraged.¹⁰

23. The secretariat also formulated an "adaptive observing programme" framework targeting areas of particular environmental interest in the Clarion Clipperton Zone. The framework will integrate best available technologies and apply machine learning models to optimize data acquisition and refine sampling strategies. The first step,

⁹ See www.underwaterminerals.org.

¹⁰ See https://isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Technical-highlight-01_2025-_MARINE-METALLIFEROUS-SEDIMENTS_Final.pdf.

funded by the United Kingdom, will validate the habitat map that formed the basis for the development of the regional environmental management plan for the region. In addition, the secretariat commissioned a scoping exercise on patents issued for deep-sea technology to examine innovation trends to further inform its work under this strategic research priority.

Strategic research priority 4: enhancing scientific knowledge and understanding of potential impacts of activities in the Area

24. Environmental impact assessments are an integral part of the implementation of the precautionary approach and ensure sustainable use while protecting the marine environment.¹¹ They enable the Authority to discharge its mandate to take measures to prevent potential harm to the marine ecosystem resulting from activities in the Area.

25. During the reporting period, a new project proposal was developed to strengthen the scientific basis for assessing potential cumulative impacts arising from the interaction of multiple anthropogenic activities within a given area. This field is of increasing scientific and strategic importance due to its relevance for effective marine environmental management across global governance processes. As an initial step, the secretariat commissioned a literature review of existing methodologies in collaboration with the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection. This activity is co-sponsored by the International Maritime Organization, the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the United Nations Secretariat, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). In the fourth quarter of 2026, the secretariat will organize an inception workshop to formally launch the project.

26. Fisheries are among the impacts to be considered in areas beyond national jurisdiction. During the reporting period, the secretariat continued its collaboration with FAO and participated in a workshop held at FAO headquarters in Rome from 24 to 26 September 2025 under the deep-sea fisheries project. The participants examined potential interactions between deep-sea fisheries, exploration activities and potential mining. The workshop marked the first activity towards implementing the memorandum of understanding with FAO, signed on the margins of the United Nations Ocean Conference in Nice in June 2025. Further activities will focus on advancing scientific approaches for the sustainable management of activities in areas beyond national jurisdiction and on the exchange of non-confidential data on deep-sea biodiversity, with a strong emphasis on capacity-building, awareness-raising and the promotion of gender equality.

Strategic research priority 5: promoting dissemination, exchange and sharing of scientific data and deep-sea research outputs and increasing deep-sea literacy

27. This research priority covers both data and deep-sea literacy. The latter constitutes a fundamental element in enhancing understanding of the deep sea. A key milestone in this regard was the launch of the first-ever International Day of the Deep Seabed, accompanied by promotional videos highlighting the work of the Authority. Further details are provided in the Secretary-General's annual report (ISBA/31/A/2). The paragraphs below focus on the sharing of scientific data through the Authority's DeepData global online repository.

¹¹ United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, arts. 144 and 145.

28. As contractors advance their exploration, increasing amounts of data are collected and submitted to the secretariat using templates. The secretariat uploads all the environmental and oceanographic data to DeepData following the findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable principle. The secretariat thus maintains and expands DeepData while ensuring its security, data quality and user-friendliness. Additionally, the secretariat establishes partnerships to leverage external expertise; it also undertakes capacity development activities to ensure that all humankind participates in and benefits from these resources. The progress made in these domains is described below.

29. During the reporting period, the DeepData website and dashboard attracted approximately 96,000 visitors, who downloaded over 200 GB of data.

30. DeepData was expanded by over 80 GB from contractors' annual submissions. In addition, data sets collected during earlier phases of exploration, often provided in heterogeneous formats, were also added. Integrating these historic data sets requires additional processing prior to upload; however, this work is essential as it enables the analysis of long-term trends across parameters. In recognition of this, the structuring of historical data was prioritized in internal workflows and further supported through the launch of a dedicated research project call in January 2026 under the International Seabed Authority-China Joint Training and Research Centre (see para. 37).

31. In preparation for Hurricane Melissa, DeepData's hardware was upgraded, including with the development of a high-availability geo-redundant site to support disaster recovery, as well as additional security measures to ensure a safer operating environment.

32. To increase the use of data for scientific research, the secretariat continued to share environmental and oceanographic data through other global networks and interconnected platforms. Biodiversity data are made available through the Ocean Biodiversity Information System, while oceanographic data are accessible through the Ocean Data and Information System coordinated by the International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission. Ensuring the interoperability of these data sets requires significant technical effort.

33. In addition, the secretariat collaborated during the reporting period with DHI, an organization specialized in digital environmental solutions, with which a letter of support was signed in 2025.¹² Following a gap analysis, DHI developed a demonstration of potential system upgrades and submitted a proposal for their implementation.

34. Finally, the secretariat commissioned a consultancy to assess gaps in expertise and infrastructure among Caribbean small islands developing States to develop strategic recommendations for capacity enhancement in their DeepData data use and management. This activity also contributes to the implementation of the Authority's capacity development strategy (see [ISBA/27/A/5](#), annex).

Strategic research priority 6: strengthening deep-sea scientific capacity of Authority members, in particular developing States

35. Advancing marine scientific research is closely linked with training and capacity-building activities, notably through the Authority's mandate of promoting international cooperation for the benefit of developing member States. In this context, the secretariat facilitates courses, organizes knowledge exchange workshops and

¹² See www.dhigroup.com/technologies/digital-solutions.

implements a range of other programmes in order to fulfil this mandate, in line with the Authority's capacity development strategy (*ibid.*).

36. The longest-lasting training of experts from developing States in the Authority's history is achieved through the legally binding obligation of contractors under contractors' training programmes. Additionally, the International Seabed Authority Partnership Fund, a multi-donor trust fund, has provided financing for projects that advance marine scientific research while providing capacity development opportunities since 2022 (see [ISBA/27/A/10](#)). One example is a knowledge transfer workshop to be organized later this year on the regional environmental management process, with a special emphasis on biological assessments. Further details on the milestones of both the contractors' training programmes and the Partnership Fund are provided in the Secretary-General's annual report. To complement that analysis, the following paragraphs focus on the milestones achieved in the reporting period through two additional mechanisms of expert training.

37. The Authority's impact in capacity development was scaled up through its two joint national and regional research and training centres.¹³ The International Seabed Authority-China Joint Training and Research Centre, established in 2020, has trained 121 experts from developing countries in data assessment, regional environmental planning and technology development in three knowledge transfer workshops in Qingdao.¹⁴ From 25 May to 5 June 2026, the Centre's fourth workshop in Sanya will provide training in cumulative impact assessments. In addition, the Centre has funded its first research project with its research partners: researchers from the Seabed Minerals Authority of the Cook Islands are advancing biodiversity assessments of the North-West Pacific in collaboration with the Second Institute of Oceanography of China. Furthermore, the Centre launched its second call for research proposals in March 2026, focusing on historical data. Under the International Seabed Authority-Egypt Joint Training and Research Centre established in 2024 and affiliated with the National Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries in Alexandria, Egypt, two knowledge transfer workshops on environmental impacts and offshore exploration were conducted. In 2026, the Centre's training will focus on technology development.

38. In the domain of women's empowerment, the first phase of the Authority's global mentoring programme *See Her Exceed* was concluded in December 2025. Launched in 2023, the programme is a flagship initiative advancing women's empowerment in deep-sea-related affairs. The secretariat, in collaboration with and sponsored by France, organized two events and presented an award to the most outstanding mentee, from Kenya. During the second part of the Authority's thirtieth session, the six African mentees presented their results to member States and graduated. On 3 December 2025, the *See Her Exceed* community launched two knowledge outputs in a webinar attended by more than 160 participants representing over 35 countries. The outputs included an expert analysis of recent trends in marine scientific research and innovation and a study examining the drivers of women's participation in at-sea activities.^{15,16} The findings of the latter informed the development of the *See Her Exceed* gender charter, which sets out seven commitments that entities organizing at-sea activities can undertake to promote gender equality and increase women's participation offshore. The Secretary-General launched a stakeholder consultation to

¹³ United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, arts. 276 and 277.

¹⁴ See <https://isa.org.jm/capacity-development-training-and-technical-assistance/isa-china-joint-training-and-research-centre-2>.

¹⁵ See <https://isa.org.jm/publications/progress-in-marine-scientific-research-and-innovation-2020-2024-an-expert-analysis-by-the-s-h-e-community-isas-global-mentoring-programme-see-her-exceed>.

¹⁶ See <https://isa.org.jm/publications/advancing-gender-equity-in-deep-sea-research-activities-addressing-the-barriers-to-womens-participation-in-at-sea-missions>.

enhance the charter's legitimacy in preparation for its official launch during the Authority's thirty-first session. Building on the success of the pilot cohort, the second phase of See Her Exceed will establish a community of practice for women experts on cumulative impact assessment. Additionally, the Secretary-General will launch a See Her Exceed track for female policymakers aimed at strengthening the capacity of developing countries to engage in law of the sea processes.

III. Global engagement to leverage the implementation of the action plan for marine scientific research

39. Missions undertaken by the Secretary-General are a central pillar of the global engagement strategy aimed at securing political support and mobilizing resources for the implementation of the action plan. During the reporting period, the Secretary-General conducted missions to eight countries and engaged with the European Commission and other intergovernmental bodies. These engagements included high-level ministerial meetings on strategic priorities, as well as scientific and technical exchanges on key issues such as biodiversity and data management.

40. The knowledge, tools and methodologies developed under the action plan require extrabudgetary funding and in-kind support. In this context, global engagement through partnerships, interaction with other global processes and resource mobilization efforts are central to the secretariat's work.

41. Contributing to other multilateral processes and engaging with intergovernmental organizations are essential for the Authority's global engagement. The following paragraphs highlight the main achievements during the reporting period in this domain.

42. Two key platforms for engagement are UN-Oceans and the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development:

(a) The secretariat participated in regular meetings of UN-Oceans, providing updates on its activities. In addition, on 15 January, the Deputy to the Secretary-General participated in the UN-Oceans meeting of principals on enhancing coordination, collaboration and effectiveness in capacity-building through UN-Oceans. He underscored the importance of upholding multilateralism in a synergistic manner and encouraged all UN-Oceans members to capitalize on complementarities and synergies;

(b) Since January 2026, the secretariat has served on the Decade advisory board. It participated remotely in the board's first meeting from 10 to 12 February, emphasizing the importance of the action plan as the global framework for advancing deep-sea research.

43. Another priority is the Authority's engagement with the Agreement on Marine Biodiversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction. The secretariat organized a side event during the first session of the Preparatory Commission for the Entry into Force of the Agreement, in August 2025, and a high-level workshop in November 2025 in New York, and participated in the second session of the Preparatory Commission in March 2026. The Secretary-General continues to call for constructive engagement between the two ocean governance regimes, building on the Authority's ample experience in key elements of the Agreement process.

44. The Authority's work on biodiversity assessment under, for example, the Sustainable Seabed Knowledge Initiative and the Deep-sea Biobank Initiative is also relevant to developments under the Convention on Biological Diversity, including the implementation of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The

secretariat participated in the expert workshop on scientific and technical work relevant to marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction in the context of the Convention, held from 2 to 5 December 2025 in Bergen, Norway.

45. The Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea remains a strategic partner with which the secretariat maintains close engagement. During the reporting period, the secretariat provided feedback on the first draft of the third *World Ocean Assessment* under the third cycle of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects, which will be published on 8 June 2026. In addition, on 6 November 2025, the secretariat provided a lecture on the activities of the Authority on marine scientific research to two cohorts of United Nations-Nippon Foundation Fellows, comprising 21 government officials.

46. The secretariat monitors other relevant developments under the auspices of the United Nations and has become a member of the United Nations Environment Management Group. In this context, it participated in the seventh session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, where it presented its activities under the action plan for marine scientific research and progress on regional environmental management plans at a side event entitled “Race to the bottom? Fostering evidence-based dialogue and action on deep-sea minerals and metals”.

47. During the reporting period, the secretariat intensified efforts to enhance the engagement of landlocked developing countries in the Authority’s activities. First, a seminar was organized in New York in August 2025 on the margins of the first session of the Preparatory Commission for the Entry into Force of the Agreement on Marine Biodiversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction, at which the activities of the secretariat in promoting marine scientific research were presented to the Permanent Representatives to the United Nations. Second, a workshop is planned for September 2026 in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, which is Chair of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries. This workshop will focus, inter alia, on benefit-sharing, in collaboration with the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. These efforts aim to enhance understanding of the rights and opportunities of landlocked developing countries under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the 1994 Agreement, including opportunities in marine scientific research.

48. Finally, the continued participation of the secretariat in advisory committees of research and technology projects maximizes synergies with initiatives under the action plan. During the reporting period, the secretariat participated in three side events organized by managers of projects on whose advisory boards it serves. These included: (a) the European Union-funded technology-based impact assessment tool for sustainable transparent deep sea mining, which develops and tests innovative tools for environmental monitoring; (b) the Mining Impact 3 project, launched in June 2025 under the Joint Programming Initiative Healthy and Productive Seas and Oceans, focusing on the environmental impacts of deep-sea mining; and (c) the United Kingdom-funded SMARTEX project, which examines deep-sea ecosystem resilience, with a particular focus on recovery dynamics in the Clarion-Clipperton Zone.¹⁷

¹⁷ See <https://deepseatrident.eu>; www.jpi-oceans.eu/en/ecological-aspects-deep-sea-mining; <https://smartexccz.org>; and Daniel Jones and others, “Long-term impact and biological recovery in a deep-sea mining track”, *Nature*, vol. 642 (2025), available at <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-025-08921-3>.

IV. Next steps

49. Drawing on more than 30 years of experience, the Authority's front-line role within international ocean governance provides a solid foundation to navigate the evolving global landscape, contribute to the implementation of ocean global agendas and swiftly identify emerging scientific opportunities.

50. In the next reporting period, the secretariat will aim to prioritize: first, the continued expansion of the flagship initiatives that are ongoing or were launched during this reporting period; second, the identification and advancement of research topics that feed the science-policy interface; and third, the advancement of scientific domains of global relevance that further deepen its engagement with the Agreement on Marine Biodiversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction.

51. Knowledge generation and the facilitation of its transfer will be pursued in a cross-continental manner, with the empowerment of women and young people and the priorities of small island developing States, the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries addressed in a cross-cutting manner.

52. All of these efforts will be carried out through international partnerships.

V. Recommendations

53. **The Assembly is invited to:**

(a) **Take note of the progress made in the implementation of the action plan for marine scientific research in support of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development;**

(b) **Request the Secretary-General to continue her efforts to develop initiatives to advance research and mobilize knowledge and resources through partnerships, in line with the next steps outlined above;**

(c) **Encourage all members of the Authority, other States, relevant international organizations, academic, scientific and technical institutions, philanthropic organizations, corporations and private persons to take an active role in advancing these efforts.**