

Reception: Underwater Cultural Heritage and the Wider Cultural Dimension of the Deep Sea



**Reception Event: Underwater Cultural Heritage
and the Wider Cultural Dimension of the Deep Sea**

Remarks by

Madam Leticia Carvalho

Secretary-General, International Seabed Authority

Institute of Jamaica

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Honourable Olivia Grange, Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport of Jamaica,

Excellencies,

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Mr. Reymann, dear friends of TBA21, the Institute of Jamaica and National Museum Jamaica,

Distinguished panelists, colleagues and friends,

Good evening. What a joy it is to open this evening in your company.

We have spent today immersed in the Deep Sea Dialogues, in questions of science, of economics, and of governance. Tonight, we turn to something that influences our perspectives and decision making across them all : culture. I can think of no better place to do so than here, in Kingston, in the country that has been the home of the International Seabed Authority

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for more than thirty years; and undoubtedly a country that leads the way in arts and culture.

I first learned the word ocean in Portuguese. O mar. And the Atlantic - O mar - that I studied as a young oceanographer in Brazil is the same body of water that holds this island that is now my home. It holds the traces of those who have crossed it: for need, for opportunity, and for adventure. Crucially, and as part of my own history, it also holds traces of those who were carried across it against their will, and those whose stories, songs, traditions and cosmologies were born from it. For many, the ocean is both a legacy and a lifeline. The ocean reveals how deeply our destinies are

intertwined. When its rhythms are understood and respected, cooperation becomes possible. To deepen ocean knowledge, in all its forms; scientific, ancestral, artistic, lived, is to cultivate the conditions for a peaceful and sustainable future.

Culture and art offer a particular gift here. What data can measure, art can translate. Where law defines the rules, culture shapes the values that give those rules meaning. Knowledge alone rarely moves us. Meaning does.

This is why participation matters so deeply to me. Indigenous Peoples and coastal communities have practiced stewardship grounded in reciprocity for generations. I am hopeful that your growing engagement with the

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Authority, including the interest of many organizations with observer status, signals that the openness and inclusivity we are working to ensure are bearing fruit. I truly believe that when more, and diversified, knowledge is at the table, governance will be stronger. More legitimate. And more enduring.

Tonight, I am here to listen to diverse voices united by *one love*: a deep respect and kinship with the ocean; one that, I too, share. Mama G. Kasike Nibonrix Kaiman. Uncle Sol. Mr. Mulalap. Each of you carries a lived experience based on knowledge handed down across generations, as well

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as current relevance; knowledge that we must learn how to actively hear.
And to value.

The seabed beyond national jurisdiction is the common heritage of humankind. Tonight reminds us that heritage is not only what lies beneath the waves. It is also what we carry within us, and what we choose to pass on.

Jamaica has passed on to the world extraordinary gifts in creativity, resilience and community. Its cultural heritage is not a relic. It is a living force. In this spirit, Jamaica is the perfect place to share our thoughts and unite our voices.

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Thank you, Markus, and thank you to TBA21, the Institute of Jamaica and National Museum Jamaica for hosting this important event.

I thank you.

