

Statement by Secretary-General, International Seabed Authority, 16 February 2017

Thank you, Mr Co-Facilitator,

Greetings from Kingston, Jamaica,

The International Seabed Authority is one of the three institutions created by UNCLOS. The other two entities established by the Convention are the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea and the Commission of the Limits of the Continental Shelf.

Yesterday the UN Office of Legal Affairs and many other member States emphasized the centrality of UNCLOS in implementing the various targets associated with SDG14. The Authority, as a child of the Convention, shares that vision and considers that UNCLOS is equally the bedrock and the core from which SDG 14 needs to be understood and contextualized. That is why it is so important to achieve soon the goal of absolute universality of UNCLOS.

The Authority plays a critical role in the framework provided by UNCLOS. It has a membership of 167 member States and the European Union. The Authority has a unique mandate.

In accordance with Part XI of UNCLOS, the Authority administers the mineral resources of the seabed beyond national jurisdiction. These resources, together with the seabed, are designated by UNCLOS as the Common Heritage of Mankind. Humanity as a whole is to benefit from the activities in the Area. In particular, UNCLOS contains specific provisions to promote the participation of developing States, including LDCs, SIDS and the land-locked States.

With this mandate and through its various programmes, the Authority has the possibility to contribute significantly to sustainable growth of ocean economies of developing States, including by:

- promoting the participation of all States in deep seabed mining activities and sharing the economic benefits on the basis of equity;
- promoting and encouraging the conduct of marine scientific research in the Area and by disseminating the results of such research to all States;
- promoting capacity-building and training opportunities, in cooperation with State entities and industrial contractors carrying out deep seabed exploration and through the Authority's Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area.

With this background, the Authority stands ready to play an active role both at the conference and in implementing relevant elements of the call for action. In that sense, the Authority is also willing to contribute to the relevant partnership dialogues, in particular under items 5, 6 and 7.