



Plenary

Friday 9 June 2017, 10:00 – 13:00, GA Hall

Statement by H. E. Michael W. Lodge, Secretary-General, International Seabed Authority

In convening this Conference and in adopting its Call for Action, the international community recognizes that a healthy and productive ocean is critical to our shared future and that collective action is indispensable to the implementation of SDG14.

In jurisdictional terms, the largest part of the global ocean is the deep seabed beyond national jurisdiction. It covers more than 50 per cent of the ocean floor. In 1970, the General Assembly had the foresight to set aside the seabed and ocean floor beyond national jurisdiction as the common heritage of mankind.

Since 1994, when UNCLOS entered into force, this Area has been managed through the International Seabed Authority on the basis of equality between States under a comprehensive legal regime that is designed to achieve the sustainable use of marine mineral resources for the benefit of mankind as a whole.

The regime for the Area, including the principle of the Common Heritage of Mankind, thus underpins the legal framework for the implementation of SDG14. The regime is intended to ensure equity in access to and allocation of resources, long-term sustainability in terms of protection of the marine environment and

equitable sharing of benefits with respect to sharing of scientific knowledge of the deep seabed as well as financial and economic benefits.

The Authority is committed to playing its part in implementing this regime and in contributing to the delivery of the targets under SDG14. The Authority will also support our member States in fulfilling the various commitments under the Call for Action.

The seven voluntary commitments that have been registered by the Authority for this Conference indicate the breadth of our mandate and our ambitions.

- In the area of marine science we have pledged to work with partner organizations and institutions to increase knowledge of deep sea biodiversity and ecological processes and functions.
- We have pledged to work with UN-DESA to increase socio-economic benefits for SIDS through sustainable development of deep sea mineral resources as part of their Blue Economy.
- We have partnered with the African Mineral Development Centre to help improve governance of Africa's deep seabed and promote the development of marine mineral resources.
- And last, but not least, we have committed to concrete actions to enhance the role of women in marine scientific research, particularly in SIDS and LLDCs.

During the course of the week, we have established many more connections and invited others to join our efforts. We have also used the opportunity to indicate our support for many of the other proposals and commitments that have been made.