

Remarks by Michael W. Lodge, Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority at a reception for Permanent Representatives to the ISA and the Diplomatic Community in Jamaica, 3 February 2017

Honourable Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica, Senator the Hon. Kamina Johnson-Smith, President of the Assembly of the International Seabed Authority, Rear Admiral Kurshed Alam of Bangladesh, Chairman of the International Seabed Authority Review Committee, Ambassador Helmut Tuerk of Austria, Distinguished Permanent Representatives to the International Seabed Authority, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Excellencies, colleagues and friends,

Welcome to this inaugural reception at the official residence of the International Seabed Authority,

I am, of course, no stranger to Jamaica having spent many years here in a different capacity, but it is indeed a great pleasure and privilege to return in the capacity of the third Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority.

I must say that Jamaica, and Kingston, looks even more green and pleasant from this elevated position.

Tonight is not the occasion for long speeches, but I want to take this opportunity to say two things.

First, I want to acknowledge and to express my appreciation for, the hard work of the Review Committee that has been taking place this week, and to all the members of the Review Committee who came to Kingston for their meeting. For those of you who may not be aware, this is the culmination of an 18-month process to undertake the first in-depth comprehensive review in the past 20 years of the operation of the International Seabed Authority and the associated provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Today, the Chairman of the Review Committee, Ambassador Helmut Tuerk, handed me the Final Report of the Committee containing 19 recommendations for consideration by the Assembly this year. I believe these recommendations are comprehensive, forward-looking and constructive, and will go a long way towards strengthening the position of the Authority over the next five years. I thank him personally for his long-standing commitment, over more than 30 years, to the Law of the Sea, and for his astute leadership of the Review process.

Second, as I assume the leadership of this organization, I want to take a moment to reflect in very simple terms on the mandate of the Authority and its importance amongst other international institutions.

The deep seabed covers more than 50% of the world's oceans. It is also a vast treasure house of mineral resources. It is no exaggeration to say that these resources are capable of providing humanity with a sustainable source of minerals for many hundreds, if not thousands, of years into the future. It is true that they are hard to get, presenting tremendous technological and financial challenges, but the fact that the resources exist is indisputable. It is also true that we are fast approaching the time when those technological and financial challenges can be resolved.

Yet more than 30 years ago, the international community had the foresight to put these resources beyond the reach of any individual State, but instead to put them under international governance through the International Seabed Authority. In this way, access to the resources is not to be limited only to the most technologically

advanced States, but is to be available to all, and, most importantly, the economic benefits are to be shared equitably between all States.

This is the mission of the International Seabed Authority.

The international community also had the foresight to decide that the Authority be established here in Jamaica, a clear signal that the purpose of the organization is to bring together developed and developing States with the objective of bringing benefits to all. Along with UNEP in Nairobi, it is indeed one of the very few international organizations with a truly global mandate that is hosted in a developing State, and certainly the only such organization to be hosted by a small island developing State with such a rich maritime history as Jamaica.

For this, I believe Jamaica should rightly be very proud.

So against this background it is indeed a great privilege and honour to be assuming the mandate of the Secretary-General. I have spent the past 25 years of my career working in the Law of the Sea and I look forward to using the skills and experience I have gained to further the objectives of the organization and to reinforce its position in Jamaica.

I truly believe that the next four years will be a time of great change and great potential for the future of the Authority. The fact is that seabed mining is closer to commercial reality now than at any time over the past 25 years.

Goal 14 of the SDGs, Agenda 2030, calls for the sustainable use of ocean-based resources through international law. We owe it to future generations to ensure that we do not squander this opportunity to sustainably utilize the resources of the deep seabed in the way envisaged by the framers of the Law of the Sea Convention.

In conclusion, to the Government of Jamaica, I look forward to working with you to strengthen the Authority's presence in Jamaica and to encourage more active participation by member States in the work of the Authority, as well as to make the Authority's activities more widely known within Jamaica. In particular I would like to find ways to cooperate with Jamaican educational and scientific institutions.

To the Permanent Representatives, I thank you for your support of the Authority and I look forward to working with you to encourage more member States to establish permanent missions in Jamaica.

I would now like to propose a dual toast to the success of the International Seabed Authority and to the Government of Jamaica as our host State.