

Contribution to the Report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, as mandated by United Nations General Assembly resolution 77/248

16 June 2023

Twenty-seventh session in 2022 and the ongoing twenty-eighth session

1. The twenty-seventh session of the Assembly of the International Seabed Authority was held from 1 to 4 August 2022 in Kingston, Jamaica.¹ In 2023, the Assembly meetings for the twenty-eighth session will be held in Kingston from 24-28 July 2023.

2. The twenty-seventh session of the Council was held in three parts, Part I was held from

by 64 representatives of exploration contractors. The next consultative meeting is projected to be held in October 2023.

Consideration of the Draft Exploitation Regulations

6. During its twenty-seventh session in 2022, the Council endorsed a roadmap for the twenty-eighth session of the Council.⁴ The roadmap will be reviewed at the end of the last Council meeting of 2023 to take stock of advances in the formulation of the regulatory framework for exploitation.

7. In Part I of the twenty-eighth session in 2023, the Council met mainly in an informal setting to further elaborate consensus text and to address pending conceptual questions in its working groups. The Council received oral reports concerning the progress made within each informal working group, including proposed inter-sessional work, from the Chair of the Open-Ended Working Group in respect of the Development and Negotiation of the Financial Terms of a Contract, as well as the facilitators of the various informal working groups of the Council (i.e., on the protection and preservation of the marine environment, inspection, compliance and enforcement and institutional matters).

8. The Finance Committee, which has the primary responsibility to draft appropriate rules and procedures on equitable benefit-sharing, has developed formulae for equitable sharing of financial and other economic benefits in the ISA Technical Study 315, following the discussions held during May 2022 and the summary report provided by the Secretary-General on the outcomes of discussions on the matter during the last meetings of the Council and Assembly (ISBA/27/FC/2). The Finance Committee also discussed the elaboration of a draft framework for financial regulations on the treatment of funds received from activities in the Area. To this end, it requested the Secretariat to proceed and prepare draft proposals for the establishment of a seabed sustainability fund, as well as a study on options for the distribution of funds received under UNCLOS, Article 82(4).

Development of Regional Environmental Management Plans

9. During the period under review, progress has been made in relation to the collection of background scientific information in support of the development of the Regional Environmental Management Plans (REMPs) for the Area of the Indian Ocean. The scientific information compiled was discussed at the first REMP workshop for this region, organised in May 2023 in Chennai, India, in collaboration with the Ministry of Earth Sciences and the National Institute of Ocean Technology of India. This event was attended by 32 experts from 15 countries nominated by member States of the Authority, observers, contractors, and academic institutions. The workshop led to identifying parameters for defining an appropriate geographical boundary for the development of the REMP. It enabled the review of the

⁴ See ISBA/27/C/21/Add. 2.

⁵ ISA. 2022. Technical Study 31: Equitable sharing of financial and other economic benefits from deep-seabed mining. Available at: <https://www.isa.org.jm/publications/technical-study-31-equitable-sharing-of-financial-and-other-economic-benefits-from-deep-seabed-mining>.

environmental and geological/geophysical data as well as the scientific knowledge available for the Indian Ocean. The regional environmental assessment will be completed based on the feedback and further input received during the workshop. In February 2024, the Secretariat plans to organise a workshop to continue developing a REMP for the Area of the Northwest Pacific Ocean, in collaboration with Japan, building on the results of previous workshops for the region held in 2018 and 2020.

adopted by Member States in 2020

members of the Authority. After a thorough selection process, the project selected Dr Ranju Radhakrishnan from India, who joined Ifremer in September 2022. The 18-

of Korea (\$125,809), Monaco (\$21,468), the European Union-SSKI Project \$208,024 and \$123,000 towards the Deep-Dive initiative.

Relationship with the United Nations and other relevant international organizations and bodies

United Nations

39. On 9 December 2022, the Secretary-General made a statement to the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly under agenda item 72 (a) Oceans and the Law of the Sea.¹² Statements were also made by the Secretary-General in the 5th United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5) High-level Thematic Round Table 1¹³ and 2¹⁴.

40. During the thirty-second Meeting of States parties to the Convention, on 13 June 2022, the Secretary-General provided information on the activities carried out by the Authority since the last Meeting of States Parties.¹⁵

African Union

41. In the twenty-seventh session, the Council approved the memorandum of understanding between the Authority and the African Union.

Indian Ocean Rim Association

42. Following the signature of the MoU with the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) in March 2022¹⁶, the Secretariat engaged in a joint project for strengthening deep-sea science and technology in the Indian Ocean region (SDIOR) to build and develop institutional, organisational and individual capacities of members of both organisations, particularly LDCs and SIDS.

43. Finally, an updated and completed account of the activities of the Authority can be found in the Illustrated Secretary-General Annual Report 2022-2023 “*Just and Equitable Management of the Common Heritage of Humankind*”

End

¹² The written statement is available at [SG_Statement_77th_Session_of_UNGA.pdf \(isa.org.im\)](#).

¹³ The written statement is available at [SG_Statement_5th_UN_Conference_on_LDCs_high-level_thematic_round_table_1.pdf \(isa.org.im\)](#).

¹⁴ The written statement is available at [SG_Statement_5th_UN_Conference_on_LDCs.pdf \(isa.org.im\)](#).

¹⁵ The written statement is available at https://isa.org.im/files/documents/EN/SG-Stats/Statement_ISA_SPLOS32.pdf

¹⁶ See [ISBA/26/C/13/Add.1](#)