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 of 30 December 2022, entitled "Oceans and the Law of the Sea".

14 June 2024

Twenty-eighth session in 2023 and the ongoing twenty-ninth session

1. The twenty-eighth session of the Assembly of the International Seabed Authority was held from 24 to 28 July 2023 in Kingston, Jamaica.[1] In 2024, the Assembly meetings for the twenty-ninth session will be held in Kingston from 29 July to 2 August 2024.

2. Under its twenty-eighth session, the Assembly approved eight applications for observer status; the Secretary-General presented the fourth edition of his Award for Excellence in Deep-Sea Research to Rima Browne (Cook Islands), for her contribution to mapping the seabed; the Secretary General presented his annual report ñ*Just and Equitable Management*

development of the text, especially on more technical matters such as the system for royalties and payments, underwater cultural heritage, mechanisms for stakeholder consultation, and the processes for environmental impact assessment. These groups are playing an important role in advancing the work and making efforts to find compromise solutions between the interested delegations.

15. The Authority appointed experts for the intersessional expert group to develop binding environmental threshold values, to contribute to the determination of what is required to ensure effective protection of the marine environment.[13]

16. The Finance Committee, which has the primary responsibility to draft appropriate rules and procedures on equitable benefit-sharing, during its meeting in July 2023 discussed a proposal for the establishment of the Common Heritage Fund, as an alternative or adjunct to the direct distribution of monetary benefits from activities in the Area. On the basis of a report of the Secretary-General,[14] the Committee also discussed the options for the distribution of funds received under the Convention, article 82(4).

Development of Regional Environmental Management Plans

17. In order to continue developing a regional environmental management plan (REMP) for the Northwest Pacific Ocean, the Authority, in collaboration with Japan, held a workshop from 19 to 23 February 2024.[15] It brought together 38 experts from 15 countries.[16]

18. On March 2024, the Authority issued a discussion paper 01/2024 ñDevelopment of Regional environmental management plans (REMPs) by the International Seabed Authority and their legal statusò.[17]

Implementation and Review of the Strategic Plan 2019-2025

19. The Strategic Plan of the Authority for the period 2019-2023 and its High-

extension of the Strategic Plan (2019-2025).[20]

Implementation of the Action Plan of the Authority in support of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development [21]

21. The Authority promotes and encourages the conduct of marine scientific research in the Area and coordinates and disseminates the results when available.[22] [23] It may also carry out marine scientific research concerning the Area. In addition, the Authority has the responsibility to encourage the development of appropriate programs to strengthen the capacity of developing and technologically less developed States.[24] To deliver its mandate, the Authority serves as a global driving force in fostering scientific collaborations to advance knowledge and technological innovations in deep-sea research.

22. In 2020, the Authority formalised its contribution by adopting a dedicated action plan in

of data of DeepData with global initiatives such as the Darwin Core was enhanced.[37] The second one was held from 3 to 6 June 2024, on the development of a scientific approach to identifying key deep-sea taxa in support of the protection of the marine environment.[38]

29. To raise awareness of the achievements of ôSustainable Seabed Knowledge Initiativeô (SSKI) first year, the Authority hosted a side event during the twenty-eighth session of the Authorityôs Council. Additionally, at the 50th Annual Meeting of the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP), hosted in September 2023 in Kingston, Jamaica.[39]

30. Furthermore, the Authority participated in global initiatives, including the fourth meeting of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fishery Bodies, organized by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, FAO, and UNEP, in Korea in June 2024.[40]

C. Strategic research priority 3: facilitating technology development for activities in

of the twenty-ninth session, the Commission endorsed the implementation work plan for this roadmap.[50]

41. The

Capacity development and training programme

51. The Authority launched in July 2023, DeepDive, an e-learning platform uniquely dedicated to addressing legal, technical and scientific aspects of the regime set out in the Convention

the Japanese Ocean Mining Industry Promotion Roundtable, in May 2024.

59. From 3 to 5 April 2024, in Portugal, the first international expert workshop was held on the best approaches to harness advanced technologies for the protection and sustainable use of the international seabed area, in collaboration with the INESC TEC. The event was attended by over 120 participants, including 31 government representatives from 29 different countries, among them 13 developing States from Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

60. On 17 May 2024, the Authority opened the first ever African Academy for Deep Sea Diplomacy, hosted by Cameroon at its Diplomatic Academy in Yaounde. The launch of the Academy for Deep Sea Diplomacy followed the approval by the Assembly, in July 2023, of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Authority and the International Relations Institute of Cameroon (IRIC),[67] a governmental entity established to deliver diplomatic courses for African diplomats. This African Academy is intended to provide training to diplomats from English and French-speaking African countries in the field of the law of the sea, with particular reference to the regime of the Area under Part XI of the Convention.

61. In May 2024, the Authority launched a new partnership in the Caribbean Region in the margins of the Fourth International Conference on SIDS, hosted by the Centre of Excellence for the Blue Economy at the University of the West Indies Five Islands campus in Antigua and Barbuda. Through this cooperation, the Authority is planning to organize two workshops in the Caribbean region with a focus on capacity development in the field of marine scientific research. In particular, the Authority will assess the immediate capacity needs of Caribbean countries in the field of marine scientific research in the Area and identify, together with experts nominated by each Caribbean country, a roadmap dedicated to advance marine scientific research in the region.

The 1994 Agreement

62. In accordance with article 156, paragraph 2, of the Convention, all States Parties are, ipso facto, members of the Authority. As of 14 June 2024, there are 169 parties to the Convention (168 States and the European Union), and thus there were 169 members of the Authority. The membership has remained unchanged since Rwanda became a party to the Convention on 18 May 2023. As of 14 June 2024, there are 152 parties to the Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 (1994 Agreement). This almost universal membership has strengthened the Part XI regime over the past 30 years. There are 17 members of the Authority that became parties to the Convention before the adoption of the 1994 Agreement and have yet to become parties to it, namely Bahrain, the Comoros, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Egypt, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Mali,

[67] See ISBA/28/A/12.

the Marshall Islands, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sao Tome and Principe, Somalia and the Sudan.

Permanent missions to the Authority

63. As of 14 June 2024, 39 members maintained permanent missions to the Authority: Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Dominican Republic, France, Gabon, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Namibia, Nauru, Nigeria, Panama, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, Zimbabwe and the European Union. During the reporting period, the new permanent representatives of six States presented their credentials to the Secretary-General, namely Burkina Faso, India, Indonesia, Mauritania, the Philippines and Sierra Leone.

The Protocol on the Privileges and Immunities of the International Seabed Authority

64. The Protocol on the Privileges and Immunities of the International Seabed Authority was adopted by the Assembly on 27 March 1998 and entered into force on 31 May 2003. The total number of parties to the Protocol remains at 48. Members of the Authority that are not yet parties to the Protocol have been strongly encouraged to take the steps necessary to become parties at their earliest convenience. The Secretariat sent out a note verbale to that effect on 15 February 2024.

Implementation of article 84, paragraph 2 of the Convention

65. Pursuant to article 84, paragraph 2, of the Convention, coastal States are obliged to give due publicity to charts or lists of geographical coordinates and, in the case of those showing the outer limit lines of the continental shelf, to deposit a copy of each such chart or list with the Secretary-General of the Authority. 16 members of the Authority had deposited such charts and lists with the Secretary-General, namely Australia, Cabo Verde, the Cook Islands, C¹ te dôIvoire, France (with respect to Guadeloupe, Guyana, the Kerguelen islands, Martinique, New Caledonia, Reunion and the Saint-Paul et Amsterdam islands), Ghana,

assessments for this purpose is based on the scale used for the regular budget of the United Nations, adjusted for differences in membership, with a ceiling assessment rate of 22 per cent and a floor assessment rate of 0.01 per cent.

67. Since 2013, the Authority has also applied a system of cost recovery whereby contractors are required to pay an annual overhead charge representing the cost of services provided to them by the Authority. For the financial period 2023ï 2024, overhead charges are anticipated to account for approximately 22 per cent of the revenues of the Authority.

68. As of 31 May 2024, 61 per cent of the value of contributions to the 2024 budget due from

establishment of the position of an interim Director-General of the Enterprise.[69]

73. With regard to