



Assembly

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Report of the Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority under article 166, paragraph 4, of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction	4
II. The Area	4
III. Membership of the Authority	5
IV. Permanent missions to the authority	5
V. Protocol on the Privileges and Immunities of the International Seabed Authority	5
VI. Relations with the host country	6
VII. Administrative matters	6
A. Secretariat	6
B. Participation in the common system of the United Nations	7
VIII. Financial matters	7
A. Budget	7
B. Status of contributions	7
C. Voluntary Trust Fund for the members of the Legal and Technical Commission and the Finance Committee	8
D. Voluntary Trust Fund for the members of the Council	8
E. Voluntary Trust Fund for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Enterprise	8
F. Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area	8
G. Trust Fund for extrabudgetary support to the International Seabed Authority	9
IX. Satya N. Nandan Library	9



X.	Communications, outreach and website	10
A.	Communication and outreach.	10
B.	Website	10
XI.	Previous session of the Authority.	11
A.	Twenty-fourth session.	11
B.	First part of the twenty-fifth session of the Council.	11
XII.	Strategic plan for the Authority for the five-year period 2019–2023	12
XIII.	Ongoing supervision of contracts for exploration and award of new contracts	12
A.	Status of contracts for exploration.	12
B.	Status of annual reports submitted by the contractors	12
C.	Informal meeting of the contractors	12
XIV.	Progressive development of the regulatory regime for activities in the Area	13
A.	Prospecting and exploration.	13
B.	Exploitation.	13
C.	National laws and regulations relating to deep seabed mining	14
XV.	Promotion and encouragement of marine scientific research in the Area	14
XVI.	Regional environmental management plans	15
XVII.	Data management strategy	16
XVIII.	Capacity development and training	16
A.	Contractor training programme	16
B.	Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area	16
C.	Internship.	17
XIX.	Implementation of voluntary commitments.	18
XX.	Meeting of States Parties to the Convention	19
XXI.	Relations with the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea	20
XXII.	Relations with the United Nations and other relevant international organizations and bodies	20
A.	United Nations	20
B.	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	21
C.	International Maritime Organization and the World Maritime University	22
D.	International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds	22
E.	Pacific Islands Forum	23
F.	Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization	23
G.	Indian Ocean Rim Association.	23
H.	Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection	23

I.	International Cable Protection Committee	24
J.	Sargasso Sea Commission	24
XXIII.	Participation in global and regional conferences	24
A.	Participation in the Intergovernmental Conference on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction	24
B.	Participation in the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference	25
Annex		
	Members of the advisory panel of the International Seabed Authority Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area	26

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted to the Assembly of the International Seabed Authority pursuant to article 166, paragraph 4, of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (“the Convention”). The report provides information on the work of the Authority during the period from July 2018 to June 2019.
2. The Authority is an autonomous international organization established under the Convention and the 1994 Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (“the 1994 Agreement”). It is the organization through which States parties to the Convention, in accordance with the Convention and the 1994 Agreement, organize and control activities in the Area, in particular with a view to administering the resources of the Area.
3. The Authority has a number of other obligations under the Convention, including the obligation to distribute to States parties payments or contributions in kind derived from the exploitation of the non-living resources of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles, pursuant to article 82, paragraph 4, of the Convention.
4. Pending the approval of the first plan of work for exploitation, the Authority is to concentrate on the 11 areas of work listed in paragraph 5 of section 1 of the annex to the 1994 Agreement. In the light of the outcome of the first periodic review of the international regime of the Area pursuant to article 154 of the Convention, the Assembly adopted in 2018 the first strategic plan of the Authority for the period 2019–2023 ([ISBA/24/A/10](#)). The strategic plan embodies the vision for the implementation of Part XI and other provisions relating to the Area under the Convention and the 1994 Agreement. The plan provides direction for the development and implementation of the Authority’s mandate under the Convention and the 1994 Agreement, taking into consideration the current and projected workload, resources and capacity as well as other relevant international agreements, processes, principles and objectives, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

II. The Area

5. The Area is defined as the seabed and subsoil thereof beyond the limits of national jurisdiction. Establishing the exact geographic limits of the Area thus depends on the delineation of the limits of national jurisdiction, including the delineation of the continental shelf extending beyond 200 nautical miles from the baseline of the territorial sea. 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.
6. As at 31 May 2018, 10 members of the Authority have deposited such charts and lists with the Secretary-General, namely: Australia, Bahrain, France (with respect to Martinique, Guadeloupe, Guyana, New Caledonia and the Kerguelen islands), Ireland, Mauritius, Mexico, Niue, Pakistan, the Philippines and Tuvalu.
7. The Secretary-General urges all coastal States to deposit such charts or lists of coordinates as soon as possible after the establishment of the outer limit lines of their continental shelf, up to and beyond 200 nautical miles, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention. The secretariat circulated a note verbale on 9 April 2019 requesting the deposit of such charts or lists of coordinates.

III. Membership of the Authority

8. In accordance with article 156, paragraph 2, of the Convention, all parties to the Convention are, ipso facto, members of the Authority. As at 31 May 2018, there were 168 parties to the Convention (167 States and the European Union) and thus 168 members of the Authority. On the same date, there were 150 parties to the 1994 Agreement. There were no further ratifications of or accessions to the Convention or the 1994 Agreement during the period covered by the present report.

9. There are therefore still 18 members of the Authority that became parties to the Convention before the adoption of the 1994 Agreement and that have yet to become parties to the Agreement. These are: Bahrain, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Egypt, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Mali, Marshall Islands, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sao Tome and Principe, Somalia and Sudan.

10. As provided by General Assembly resolution [48/263](#) and the 1994 Agreement itself, the provisions of the 1994 Agreement and Part XI of the Convention are to be interpreted and applied together as a single instrument. In the event of any inconsistency between the 1994 Agreement and Part XI of the Convention, the provisions of the 1994 Agreement shall prevail. Although members of the Authority that are not parties to the 1994 Agreement necessarily participate in the work of the Authority under arrangements based on that Agreement, becoming a party to the 1994 Agreement would remove any incongruity that currently exists for those States. The Secretary-General encourages those States to become parties to the Agreement at the earliest possible opportunity. The secretariat sent a note verbale individually to those States to that effect on 9 April 2019.

IV. Permanent missions to the Authority

11. As at 31 May 2019, the following 25 States, in addition to the European Union, maintained permanent missions to the Authority: Algeria, Argentina, Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Cameroon, Chile, China, Cuba, France, Gabon, Germany, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, Panama, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, South Africa, Spain and Trinidad and Tobago. During the reporting period, new permanent representatives of Jamaica, Mexico, Germany, Chile, France and South Africa presented their credentials to the Secretary-General.

12. The Secretary-General held briefing sessions for the permanent missions to the Authority in December 2018 and February 2019 on the progress of the Authority's work and the programme of events to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Authority. A separate visit to the headquarters was made by a delegation from Brazil in April 2019.

V. Protocol on the Privileges and Immunities of the International Seabed Authority

13. 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 March 2003. Romania acceded to the Protocol on 14 June 2018. This brings the total number of parties to 47: Albania, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chile, Croatia, Cuba, Czechia, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Guinea, Guyana, India,

Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Jordan, Lithuania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Uruguay. A further 11 States have signed the Protocol but have yet to ratify it: Bahamas, Côte d'Ivoire, Greece, Indonesia, Kenya, Malta, Namibia, North Macedonia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Sudan.

14. Members of the Authority that are not yet parties are strongly encouraged to take the necessary steps to become parties to the Protocol at their earliest convenience. The secretariat circulated a note verbale to that effect on 25 March 2019.

VI. Relations with the host country

15. The secretariat enjoys an excellent and cordial working relationship with the host country. A meeting was held in February 2019 between the Secretary-General and the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica, Kamina Johnson Smith, to discuss matters of common interest, including issues relating to the condition of the secretariat building, the proposed United Nations House project, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Authority, visas for interns, scheduled meetings and other activities in Kingston and other matters of mutual interest. A follow-up meeting was held in April 2019 between officials of the Ministry and the secretariat. During that meeting, it was reiterated that the annual meeting would be held at the ministerial and Secretary-General level. Both sides agreed to establish a host country committee, which would meet quarterly to further enhance cooperation over the above-mentioned matters, with ad hoc meetings as required.

VII. Administrative matters

A. Secretariat

16. The secretariat is one of the principal organs of the Authority. In accordance with article 166 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the secretariat shall comprise a Secretary-General and such staff as the Authority may require. The number of established posts in the secretariat as at 22 May 2019 was 44 (26 Professional, 2 National and 16 General Service).

17. During the reporting period, three staff members retired, five separated from service and five vacant positions were filled, in addition to changes in temporary staffing arrangements.

18. The secretariat has attached importance to gender balance, particularly within the Professional and higher categories, as well as strategies to promote greater diversity within the workforce. Of all current 42 staff members (with 2 vacancies), 25 are women. The introduction of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) and Junior Professional Officer programmes provide potential donors with alternative means to support the work of the Authority without increasing the regular budget, as well as encouraging diversity. An annual recruitment plan identifying the Junior Professional Officer requirements and strategic priorities for the respective offices of the secretariat will be developed and shared with interested members and potential donors.

19. In 2018, in the light of the growing requirements of the secretariat, the host Government allocated additional space in the headquarters building to the Authority. The area was renovated and rehabilitated to serve as a conference services area and delegates' lounge. The secretariat also refurbished the working space on the second

floor of the headquarters building to accommodate new staff arrivals and provide a better working environment.

B. Participation in the common system of the United Nations

20. The Authority applies the common system of salaries, allowances and other conditions of service of the United Nations and the specialized agencies of the United Nations system. The Authority subscribed to the statute of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) with effect from January 2013 (see [ISBA/18/A/7](#)).

21. The secretariat was represented at the eighty-eighth session of ICSC, held at United Nations Headquarters in March 2019. The agenda included activities since the previous session, a review of consultative process and working arrangements in the Commission, working groups on operational rules, a review of General Service staff salary survey methodologies, career development and relocation shipment.

VIII. Financial matters

A. Budget

22. At its twenty-fourth session, the Assembly adopted the budget for the financial period 2019–2020 in the amount of \$18,235,850 (see [ISBA/24/A/11](#) and [ISBA/24/A/6–ISBA/24/C/19](#)).

B. Status of contributions

23. In accordance with the Convention and the 1994 Agreement, the administrative expenses of the Authority shall be met by assessed contributions of its members until the Authority has sufficient funds from other sources to meet those expenses. The scale of assessments shall be based on the scale used for the regular budget of the United Nations, adjusted for differences in membership. As at 31 May 2019, 62 per cent of the value of contributions to the 2019 budget due from member States and the European Union had been received. Only 29 per cent of the membership of the Authority had fully paid their 2019 assessed contributions.

24. Contributions outstanding from member States for prior periods (1998–2018) amounted to \$805,026 as at 31 May 2019. Notices are sent on a regular basis to member States, reminding them of the arrears. In accordance with article 184 of the Convention and rule 80 of the rules of procedure of the Assembly, a member of the Authority which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contribution shall have no vote if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of financial contribution due from it for the preceding two years. As at 31 May 2019, the following 56 members of the Authority had been in arrears for two years or more: Angola, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Eswatini, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Lithuania, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mongolia, Namibia, Niger, North Macedonia, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, State of Palestine, Sudan, Suriname, Timor-Leste, Tunisia, Uganda, Vanuatu, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

25. As at 31 May 2019, the balance of the working capital fund stood at \$632,839 against an approved level of \$660,000.

C. Voluntary Trust Fund for the members of the Legal and Technical Commission and the Finance Committee

26. The Voluntary Trust Fund for the participation of members of the Legal and Technical Commission and the Finance Committee from developing countries was established in 2002. As at 31 May 2019, the total contributions to Fund over its lifetime amounted to \$886,464. During the reporting period, contributions were made by China (\$20,000), the Philippines (\$2,500) and various contractors (\$30,010, by Global Sea Mineral Resources NV; Marawa Research and Exploration Ltd., Nauru Ocean Resources Inc., UK Seabed Resources Ltd. and the Government of Poland). As at 31 May 2019, the balance of the Fund was \$69,759.

D. Voluntary Trust Fund for the members of the Council

27. At its twenty-third session, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to establish a Voluntary Trust Fund to support the participation of members of the Council from developing States (see [ISBA/23/A/13](#)). As at 31 May 2019, the total contributions to the fund amounted to \$80,000, from Global Sea Mineral Resources NV, Nauru Ocean Resources Inc., Ocean Mineral Singapore PTE Ltd. and UK Seabed Resources Ltd, (\$20,000 each). As at 31 May 2019, the balance of the Fund was \$39,541.

E. Voluntary Trust Fund for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Enterprise

28. At the first part of its twenty-fifth session, the Council requested the Secretary-General to establish a voluntary trust fund for the purpose of providing the requisite funds related to the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Enterprise (see [ISBA/25/C/16](#)). The fund was created on 1 March 2019. As at 31 May 2019, two contributions had been made totalling \$17,500, with \$10,000 from Nauru Ocean Resources Inc. and 7,500 from Global Sea Mineral Resources NV, and the balance of the fund was \$3,125.

F. Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area

29. The Assembly established the Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area in 2006 (see [ISBA/12/A/11](#)). Detailed rules and procedures for the administration and utilization of the Fund were adopted in 2007 (see [ISBA/13/A/6](#), annex).

30. As at 31 May 2019, the capital of the Fund stood at \$3,503,567. At the same date, a total amount of \$582,617 had been disbursed from the interest accrued on the capital in the form of awards for projects. During 2019, contributions to the Fund were made by the Government of China (\$20,000) and the Government of Monaco (\$5,251).

G. Trust Fund for extrabudgetary support to the International Seabed Authority

31. The Authority receives extrabudgetary funds from member States and other donors, intended to support non-regular activities or activities not funded by the approved budget of the Authority. These may be one-off contributions or funds to support multi-year programmes or projects. Funds are to be used in accordance with the terms agreed with the respective donors, including reporting and audit requirements. In March 2018, the Secretary-General created a multi-donor trust fund for extrabudgetary support to the activities of the Authority. The fund is established pursuant to regulation 5.5 of the Financial Regulations of the Authority and shall be administered in accordance with the Financial Regulations.

32. As at 31 May 2019, the fund had a balance of \$630,716, being the result of \$754,569 of donations from the Pew Charitable Trusts (\$36,000), the African Development Bank (\$27,500), the Government of the Republic of Korea (\$20,000), the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (\$524,069), the National Environment Research Council of the United Kingdom (\$10,000), the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (\$90,000), the Government of Monaco (\$17,000) and the Government of China (\$30,000), less expenditures recorded in accordance with project agreements in the amount of \$123,867, bank charges and interest.

IX. Satya N. Nandan Library

33. The Satya N. Nandan Library, named after the first Secretary-General of the Authority, is the main information resource for the secretariat, member States, permanent missions and other researchers seeking specialist information on the law of the sea, ocean affairs, deep seabed mining and seabed resources.

34. During the reporting period, the secretariat continued to improve library technologies, collaborations and shared services, and online repositories, in order to strengthen infrastructure and services to help bring down the cost of the provision of scientific and legal information and to position the library as a high-quality research centre. The library management system provides the facility to explore library materials using an online public access catalogue, bringing together print and digital publications, articles and web resources. The library catalogue and the system can be accessed at computer terminals in the Library.

35. The Library is an active member of the International Association of Aquatic and Marine Science Libraries and Information Centres and the Library and Information Association of Jamaica. The Library continues to strengthen its collaboration with the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea and is a partner with the Tribunal in the United Nations System Electronic Information Acquisition Consortium. The Consortium is a system-wide libraries initiative, used through the United Nations system libraries, which generates considerable savings for participating agencies and continues to be beneficial to both the Authority and the Tribunal.

36. The Library continues its regular acquisition programme to develop the collection. During the reporting period, the holdings were further augmented by generous donations from organizations and individuals. The Secretary-General is grateful to all who supported the library, in particular: the Korean Society of Oceanography; the Polish Geological Institute; the Center for Oceans Law and Policy, the University of Virginia; the Law of the Sea Institute at the University of California, Berkeley; the Planning Institute of Jamaica; and the Ministry of Science, Energy and Technology of Jamaica. Individual donations were also received from Zhiguo Gao, International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea; Philomene Verlaan, University of

Hawai'i at Mānoa (Honolulu, United States of America); Nobuyuki Kato, Faculty of Law, Hokkaido University, Sapporo, Japan; Sebastian E. Volkmann, Faculty of Georesources and Materials Engineering, RWTH Aachen University.

X. Communications, outreach and website

A. Communication and outreach

37. The secretariat proactively engages and communicates with members of the Authority and other stakeholders to inform them of issues related to the Convention and of the priorities and activities of the Organization. The outreach activities include cooperation with other organizations in the United Nations system on matters within the mandate of the Authority, including the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in relation to the preparation phase of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

38. In order to advance the mission of the Authority by enhancing the visibility, credibility and impact of its activities and ensuring the effective dissemination of information to, and feedback from, its main target groups, the Secretary-General has established a communications unit within the secretariat. Its main function is to coordinate and initiate engagement with the media and relevant stakeholders. As part of its deliverables, the communications unit has initiated a communications campaign and outreach activities to support the goals and strategic directions of the Authority and has formulated a communications and stakeholder engagement strategy that will be submitted for public consultation in June 2019.

39. Outreach activities carried out during the reporting period included the issuance of policy briefs and technical studies summarizing legal and scientific workshops or seminars hosted by the Authority or jointly coordinated with members of the Authority, contractors or other stakeholders. In June 2019, a dedicated event was also organized by the Authority to celebrate World Oceans Day 2019, in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica and the Caribbean Maritime University.

40. The secretariat has continued to provide live video streaming for the Council and Assembly meetings.

B. Website

41. Progress has been made on the development of a new website for the Authority. The interface and session page were given priority, considering that the final phases of this initiative will be implemented progressively until the end of the year. The main objective is to better present and disseminate the various aspects of the work of the Authority in a consistent format that ensures the provision of an effective communication medium. The new website is powered by Drupal, an open-source content management platform, and is compatible with cross-browser platforms and mobile devices. A separate secure extranet will be maintained for members of the Legal and Technical Commission and the Finance Committee in order to keep them abreast of all the information that they need to perform their functions as members of those organs.

XI. Previous session of the Authority

A. Twenty-fourth session

42. The twenty-fourth session of the Assembly was held in Kingston from 23 to 27 July 2018. The Assembly held its 171st to 178th meetings and elected Mariusz Orion Jędrysek (Poland) as its President. During the session, the Assembly considered the annual report of the Secretary-General of the Authority, submitted in accordance with article 166, paragraph 4, of the Convention (see [ISBA/24/A/2](#) and a summary of the discussion in [ISBA/24/A/12](#)). The Assembly adopted a decision relating to the election to fill the vacancies on the Council (see [ISBA/24/A/9](#)) and a decision relating to the strategic plan of the Authority for the period 2019–2023 (see [ISBA/24/A/10](#)). The Assembly also adopted a decision relating to the budget of the Authority for the financial period 2019–2020 (see [ISBA/24/A/11](#) and [ISBA/24/A/12](#), para. 32). For the first time, the president of the Council gave an oral report to the Assembly on the work of the Council, and the Assembly requested that the practice should be a standing item on the agenda of the Assembly.

43. The twenty-fourth session of the Council was held in two parts, 10 meetings from 5 to 9 March and 10 meetings from 16 to 20 July 2018. Olav Myklebust (Norway) was elected as President. During the session, the Council considered the draft exploitation regulations in an informal setting (for details, see the statement of the President of the Council on the work of the Council as contained in [ISBA/24/C/8](#) and [ISBA/24/C/8/Add.1](#)). The Council also considered a report by the Secretary-General on the implementation of the decision of the Council in 2017 relating to the summary report of the Chair of the Legal and Technical Commission (see [ISBA/24/C/6](#)), the summary report of the Chair of the Commission on the work of the Commission during the twenty-fourth session (see [ISBA/24/C/9](#) and [ISBA/24/C/9/Add.1](#)) and adopted a decision relating to that report ([ISBA/24/C/22](#)). Acting on the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Council adopted a decision relating to the budget of the Authority for the financial period 2019–2020 (see [ISBA/24/C/21](#)).

B. First part of the twenty-fifth session of the Council

44. The first part of the twenty-fifth session of the Council was held from 25 February to 1 March 2019. Lumka Yengeni (South Africa) was elected as President of the Council. The Council continued its consideration of the draft exploitation regulations in an informal setting and focused on pending key issues, including development regarding: the financial and payment mechanism; standards and guidelines and key concepts; delegation of functions and regulatory efficiencies; the relationship between the draft exploitation regulations and regional environmental management plans; further implementation of the precautionary approach; the mechanism and process for the independent review of environmental plans and performance assessments; and the inspection mechanism. The Council also considered matters related to the Enterprise on the basis of the report of the Special Representative for the Enterprise and adopted a decision on the Special Representative for the Enterprise (see [ISBA/25/C/16](#)). The statement of the President on the work of the Council at the first part of the twenty-fifth session is contained in document [ISBA/25/C/17](#).

45. On 21 and 22 February 2019, the first meeting of the open-ended working group of the Council in respect of the development of a financial and payment mechanism was held prior to the Council meeting. The Council agreed to the use of the voluntary trust fund to support the participation of members of the Council from the developing States in the second meeting of the working group in July 2019 (see [ISBA/25/C/17](#)).

XII. Strategic plan for the Authority for the five-year period 2019–2023

46. At its twenty-fourth session, the Assembly approved the strategic plan of the Authority for the period 2019–2023 (ISBA/24/A/10) which includes nine strategic directions to enable the Authority to realize its mission objectives. As the next step in the development of the Strategic Plan, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General, inter alia, to prepare a high-level action plan and to include key performance indicators and a list of outputs for the next five years, taking into account available financial and human resources. A draft high-level action plan identifying the actions required and providing the linkage between the Authority's strategy and the work of the various organs of the Authority has been developed and submitted for public consultation in May 2019. The draft will be revised to take into account the suggestions and comments received during the consultation period and submitted for consideration and adoption by the Assembly. A more detailed report on the implementation of the Strategic Plan is issued as a separate document.

XIII. Ongoing supervision of contracts for exploration and award of new contracts

A. Status of contracts for exploration

47. As at 31 May 2019, 29 contracts for exploration had entered into force (17 for polymetallic nodules, 7 for polymetallic sulphides and 5 for cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts).

48. On 21 December 2018, an application for approval of a plan of work for exploration for polymetallic nodules in the Area of the Western Pacific Ocean was received from Beijing Pioneer Hi-Tech Development Corporation. The Commission considered the application in March 2019, during the first part of its session and will continue to do so in July, during the second part of its session.

B. Status of annual reports submitted by the contractors

49. Each contractor is required to submit an annual report to the Secretary-General within 90 days of the end of each calendar year, covering its programme of activities in the exploration area. In this respect, 29 annual reports in relation to 29 exploration contracts have been received by the secretariat.

C. Informal meeting of the contractors

50. Starting from 2017, the Secretary-General has convened an annual meeting of contractors. The next such meeting is scheduled for October 2019. The purposes of the meeting will include: further progressing discussion on the transparency of contracts; the status of the development of the regulatory framework for the exploitation of mineral resources; the status of the development of standards and guidelines in relation to the exploitation regulations; and the holding of informal exchanges on other matters of common concern.

XIV. Progressive development of the regulatory regime for activities in the Area

A. Prospecting and exploration

51. There are currently three sets of regulations covering prospecting and exploration for polymetallic nodules ([ISBA/19/C/17](#), annex), polymetallic sulphides ([ISBA/16/A/12/Rev.1](#), annex) and cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts ([ISBA/18/A/11](#), annex).

52. The regulations are supplemented by recommendations for the guidance of contractors issued by the Legal and Technical Commission. At present, recommendations that have been issued by the Commission include:

(a) Recommendations for the guidance of contractors and sponsoring States relating to training programmes under plans of work for exploration ([ISBA/19/LTC/14](#));

(b) Recommendations for the guidance of contractors for the assessment of the possible environmental impacts arising from exploration for marine minerals in the Area ([ISBA/19/LTC/8](#)), which were revised by the Commission in March 2019 ([ISBA/25/LTC/6](#));

(c) Recommendations for the guidance of contractors for the reporting of actual and direct exploration expenditure ([ISBA/21/LTC/11](#));

(d) Recommendations for the guidance of contractors on the content, format and structure of annual reports ([ISBA/21/LTC/15](#)).

B. Exploitation

53. In July 2018, the Legal and Technical Commission issued revised draft regulations on exploitation of mineral resources in the Area (see [ISBA/24/LTC/WP.1/Rev.1](#)) for consideration by the Council of the International Seabed Authority, together with a commentary setting out matters on which the Commission sought the Council's guidance and identifying key matters that remained under consideration by the Commission (see [ISBA/24/C/20](#)). In response, the Council provided comments on the revised draft, which are annexed to the statement by the President of the Council on its work during the second part of the twenty-fourth session (see [ISBA/24/C/8/Add.1](#), annex I), and invited members of the Council to provide written comments on the revised draft by 30 September 2018. An overview of those comments, including those received from other stakeholders, and a discussion of the common themes arising in the submissions was provided to the Council (see [ISBA/25/C/2](#)). The Council continued its consideration during the first part of its 2019 session, in February/March, and provided further direction and guidance to the Commission (see [ISBA/25/C/17](#)).

54. During the first part of its 2019 session, in March, the Commission continued to consider the draft exploitation regulations as a matter of priority. On 15 March, the Commission issued a set of revised draft regulations, together with an accompanying commentary introducing changes to the text (see [ISBA/25/C/WP.1](#) and [ISBA/25/C/18](#)).

55. In May 2019, a workshop on the development of standards and guidelines for the mining code was held in Pretoria. The workshop was organized by the Authority in collaboration with the Government of South Africa and the Government of the United Kingdom. The outcome of the workshop will be issued as an International Seabed Authority technical study in due course.

C. National laws and regulations relating to deep seabed mining

56. At the seventeenth session of the Authority, in 2011, the Council requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the laws, regulations and administrative measures adopted by sponsoring States and other members of the Authority with regard to activities in the Area, and invited, for that purpose, sponsoring States and other members of the Authority, as appropriate, to provide the secretariat with information on, or the texts of, relevant national laws, regulations and administrative measures (see [ISBA/17/C/20](#), para. 3). During the eighteenth session, the Council made the matter a standing item on its agenda and requested the Secretary-General to prepare an updated report annually for consideration by the Council. Subsequently, the secretariat established an online database of the information on, or the texts of, national laws, regulations and administrative measures that had been submitted to it.

57. As at 31 May 2019, the following 33 States had provided information on, or the texts of, relevant national laws, regulations and administrative measures: Belgium, Brazil, China, Cook Islands, Cuba, Czechia, Dominican Republic, Fiji, France, Georgia, Germany, Guyana, India, Japan, Kiribati, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Montenegro, Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Niue, Oman, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Singapore, Sudan, Tonga, Tuvalu, United Kingdom, United States of America and Zambia. A submission was also received from the secretariat of the Pacific Community.

58. A comparative study on existing national legislation with a view to deriving common elements was conducted by the secretariat and posted on the website of the Authority. The study will be issued as an International Seabed Authority technical study.

XV. Promotion and encouragement of marine scientific research in the Area

59. The promotion of marine scientific research with respect to activities in the Area, with particular emphasis on research related to the environmental impact of activities in the Area, is a key focus area for the Authority. The Authority has engaged in several international initiatives as a partner in support of marine scientific research.

60. A workshop on processing technologies, metal recoveries and their impact on the economic feasibility of deep-sea mining was held by the Authority in Warsaw from 3 to 6 September 2018, in collaboration with Interoceanmetal Joint Organization and the Polish Ministry of Environment.

61. In February 2019, the secretariat initiated its collaboration with scientific groups and stakeholders to operationalize the Authority's existing work on developing a taxonomic atlas for the Clarion-Clipperton Zone and to standardize methodologies for taxonomic identification in support of deep sea observations and environmental monitoring and management. This initiative forms the core of two voluntary commitments of the Authority with respect to the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, on improving the assessment of essential ecological functions of the deep sea oceans through long-term underwater oceanographic observatories in the Area; and enhancing deep sea marine biodiversity assessment through the creation of online taxonomic atlases linked to deep mining activities in the Area. A small group of experts met to identify potential areas of collaboration in an informal meeting

convened jointly by the secretariat and the Natural History Museum, London, in London in June 2019.

XVI. Regional environmental management plans

62. The Council adopted the first-ever environmental management plan for the Area in the Clarion-Clipperton Zone in 2012 (see [ISBA/17/LTC/7](#), [ISBA/17/C/19](#) and [ISBA/18/C/22](#)). The process included the designation of a network of nine areas of particular environmental interest through a collaborative process involving relevant stakeholders. Since 2012, the Council has repeatedly called upon the secretariat and the Legal and Technical Commission to make progress on the development of similar regional environmental management plans in other parts of the Area, in particular where those currently covered by contracts for exploration (see, *inter alia*, [ISBA/20/C/31](#), [ISBA/21/C/20](#), [ISBA/22/C/28](#) and [ISBA/23/C/18](#)). These calls have been reflected in the resolutions of the General Assembly.

63. In March 2019, a note was prepared by the secretariat to assist the Council in its consideration of the relationship between the draft regulations on exploitation of mineral resources in the Area and regional environmental management plans (see [ISBA/25/C/4](#)). Noting that such plans are not legal instruments but rather instruments of environmental policy, comments were articulated on the status of such plans and on their compliance scope vis-à-vis environmental requirements to applicants and contractors in the draft regulations. The Council also took note of a report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Authority's strategy for the development of regional environmental management plans for the Area (see [ISBA/25/C/13](#)), including a draft programme of work of the secretariat to implement the preliminary strategy for the development of regional environmental management plans for the period 2019–2020.

64. Several workshops have been planned for 2019 and 2020 to facilitate the development and review of regional environmental management plans. In May 2019, an expert meeting to explore the feasibility of applying various management approaches to regional environmental management plans, building on experiences and lessons learned from other ocean industries, was convened in Paris by the Atlantic regional environmental management plan project (sponsored by the European Union) in collaboration with the Authority. In October 2019, an expert workshop on deep Clarion-Clipperton Zone biodiversity synthesis will be convened by the secretariat and the Deep Clarion-Clipperton Zone (CCZ) Project of the University of Hawaii to review and analyse recent seafloor ecosystem data from the Clarion-Clipperton Zone to synthesize patterns of biodiversity, community structure, species ranges, genetic connectivity, ecosystem function and habitat heterogeneity along and across the Clarion-Clipperton Zone, and to assess the representativity of the areas of particular environmental interest relative to exploration contract areas.

65. In November 2019, a workshop on regional environmental assessment in support of the development of a regional environmental management plan for the northern Mid-Atlantic Ridge will be held in Portugal (subject to final confirmation), in collaboration with the Atlantic regional environmental management plan project and the Government of Portugal. In November 2019, a workshop will be held in Germany to discuss strategic approaches for developing regional environmental management plans, in collaboration with the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety of Germany. In February 2020, the second workshop on developing a regional environmental management plan in the cobalt-crust area of the north-west Pacific will be held in the Republic of Korea, in collaboration with the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea and

the Korea Institute of Ocean Science and Technology, building on the work of the workshop held in Qingdao, China, in May 2018. In June 2020, a workshop on developing a regional environmental management plan for the northern Mid-Atlantic Ridge will be held in the Russian Federation, in collaboration with the Atlantic regional environmental management plan project and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation.

XVII. Data management strategy

66. The data management programme has completed all nine phases of the initial implementation plan outlined in [ISBA/22/LTC/15](#), which saw the delivery of a fit-for-purpose database and application interface to store the Authority's digital data. Beta version releases of the database and application were initiated in October 2018, the first of which was conducted with representatives of the contractors. The second beta version release was conducted with members of the Commission in March 2019. Feedback received from both groups has been incorporated into subsequent versions. The environmental data of the Authority's database will be made available to the public during the final launch of the Authority's database management system in July 2019. The draft data management strategy report is to be submitted to the Commission for consideration during its July 2019 session. A series of training courses and workshops are to be conducted with the various stakeholders to address issues related to data management and effective use of the database and website interface.

XVIII. Capacity development and training

67. The Authority carries out its mandate of promoting marine scientific research in the Area and building the capacity of developing States in deep-sea research and technology through the contractor training programme, the Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area and the internship programme.

A. Contractor training programme

68. The Authority's contractors have a legal obligation to provide and fund training opportunities for trainees from developing States and the Authority. From 2013 to 2018, a total of 98 training places were provided by 19 contractors. The types of training included at-sea training, engineering training, fellowship training (including master's and PhD programmes), internships, workshops and seminars. Among the selected trainees, 34 were from the African group, 31 from the Asia-Pacific group, 3 from the Eastern European group and 30 from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States. A total of 39 of the 98 trainees were women.

69. As at 31 May 2019, 36 candidates had been selected for training placements in 2019 pursuant to 11 exploration contracts (15 from the African group, 11 from the Asia-Pacific group, and 10 from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States). A total of 18 of the successful candidates were women. All training opportunities are advertised on the Authority's website and social media platforms and are circulated to members of the Authority.

70. If all existing contracts and approved plans of work are implemented according to the recommendations made by the Legal and Technical Commission with respect to training programmes, approximately 270 additional training places will be made available by contractors between 2019 and 2023.

B. Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area

71. The Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area aims to promote and encourage the conduct of marine scientific research in the Area for the benefit of mankind as a whole, in particular by supporting the participation of qualified scientists and technical personnel from developing countries in marine scientific research programmes and offering them opportunities to participate in training, technical assistance and scientific cooperation programmes. In 2017, pursuant to the agreed procedures, an advisory panel was appointed by the Secretary-General to evaluate applications for assistance from the Fund and make recommendations to the Secretary-General. The names of the current members are listed in the annex to the present report. The panel will serve for a three-year period ending in November 2020.

72. Since receiving the award of \$10,000 in 2018, the Second Institute of Oceanography, China, has conducted preparatory work for the international cooperative study of seafloor sulphides on slow and ultra-slow spreading ridges, an international scientific collaboration to be conducted under the framework of InterRidge. In January 2019, two young scientists from developing countries (Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sri Lanka) were selected by the advisory panel of the Fund to receive training under the two-year project.

73. Also in 2018, an award of \$12,000 to the Deep-Ocean Stewardship Initiative supported five postgraduate students and researchers (from Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and South Africa) to attend the fifteenth International Deep-Sea Biology Symposium and a Deep-Ocean Stewardship Initiative workshop from 9 to 14 September 2018 in Monterey, United States; \$7,500 awarded to Xiamen University, China, enabled seven candidates (from Bangladesh and China) to participate in the 2018 summer session of the Marco Polo-Zheng He Academy of Oceans Law and Policy; and \$13,000 to Shanghai Jiao Tong University which supported the participation of five candidates (from Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Ghana, Kenya, Pakistan and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)) in the 2018 summer academy on deep sea mining: deep seabed mining: an era towards exploitation.

74. As at 31 May 2019, a total of 145 young scientists or government officials from 50 countries had benefited from the Fund. The beneficiaries include representatives of all regional groups: 52 from the African group (Angola, Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Tunisia); 56 from the Asia-Pacific group (Bangladesh, China, the Cook Islands, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Micronesia (Federated States of), Pakistan, Palau, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tonga and Viet Nam); four from the Eastern European group (Bulgaria and the Russian Federation); 24 from the group of Latin American and Caribbean States (Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Guyana, Jamaica, Mexico, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago); three from the Western European and other States group (Greece, Malta and Norway); and six from observer States (Colombia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Peru, Turkey and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)). Of the 145 beneficiaries to date, a total of 57 (or 39 per cent) were women.

75. The Fund is one of the principal mechanisms for enabling capacity-building in the field of marine scientific research in the Area, and the Secretary-General encourages members of the Authority, other States, relevant international organizations, academic, scientific and technical institutions, philanthropic organizations, corporations and private persons to contribute to it. The secretariat will continue to take steps to generate interest in the Endowment Fund on the part of potential donors and institutional partners.

C. Internship

76. The Authority accepts interns on a limited basis, depending on the specific needs of respective offices and their capacity to effectively support, accommodate and supervise the interns.

77. As at 31 May 2019, a total of 29 university graduates or government officials from Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, the Cook Islands, Ecuador, Fiji, France, Germany, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, the United Kingdom and the United States have participated in the internship programme.

78. One consistent and major constraint in providing internships, especially to individuals from developing countries, is that the Authority has no funding to support interns, who must therefore find their own financial support for travel and subsistence. On 14 February 2019, a donation of \$10,000 was received from the National Oceanography Centre, Southampton, United Kingdom, to support the participation of up to two interns from developing countries between 2019 and 2020. More details will be made available to member States in the form of a call for nominations in the coming months. The Secretary-General would welcome any additional extrabudgetary support for the internship programme for the benefit of individuals from developing countries.

XIX. Implementation of voluntary commitments

79. The Authority actively contributed to the work and discussions of the United Nations Ocean Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, held in New York from 5 to 9 June 2017. On that occasion, the Authority registered a series of voluntary commitments with a view to (a) enhancing the role of women in marine scientific research through capacity-building; (b) encouraging the dissemination of research results through the Authority Secretary-General's Award for Excellence in Deep-Sea Research; (c) improving the assessment of essential ecological functions of the deep sea oceans through long-term underwater oceanographic observatories in the Area; and (d) enhancing deep sea marine biodiversity assessment through the creation of online taxonomic atlases linked to deep mining activities in the Area. Additional voluntary commitments were registered in partnership with other agencies, notably with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat (on the Abyssal Initiative for Blue Growth: advancing Sustainable Development Goal 14 and the quest for a Blue Economy through the promotion of socioeconomic benefits for developing countries, including small island developing States, and increasing scientific knowledge and research capacity) and with the African Minerals Development Centre (on fostering cooperation to promote the sustainable development of Africa's deep seabed resources in support to Africa's Blue Economy and mapping the Blue Economy of Africa to support decision-making, investment and governance of activities undertaken on the extended continental shelf and in adjacent international seabed areas).

80. Progress has been made in the implementation of the voluntary commitment dedicated to enhancing the role of women in marine scientific research through capacity-building. Further initiatives are currently under consideration in partnership with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and the World Maritime University.

81. The inaugural event of the Secretary-General's Award for Excellence in Deep-Sea Research was held during the twenty-fourth session of the Assembly of the

Authority, in July 2018. Diva Amon (Trinidad and Tobago), a deep-sea biologist, received an award for her extensive research and exploration experience at sea, which have contributed to advancing understanding of abyssal ecosystems and the environmental impacts of human industrial activities in the deep sea. In February 2019, the Government of Monaco informed the Secretary-General of its decision to support the Award with a grant of \$15,000 that will be used to award a prize to the 2018 and 2019 awardees, cover the cost of the tickets for the attendance of the 2019 awardee, as well as the publication fees of her/his research in a relevant scientific (open-access) journal.

82. The implementation of the Abyssal Initiative for Blue Growth project started with the organization by the Authority of a workshop in Nuku'alofa, Kingdom of Tonga, from 12 to 14 February 2019. This workshop has been organized in cooperation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, the Pacific Community and the Kingdom of Tonga. Representatives of Pacific Small Islands Developing States from the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, and Tonga were in attendance. International and regional organizations including the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Pacific Community, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, the Pacific Islands Development Forum and the Pacific Islands Association of Non-governmental Organizations were also represented as well as representatives of two contractors: Nauru Ocean Resources Inc. and Tonga Offshore Mining Limited. The workshop issued an outcomes statement, which covers national legislation, regional cooperation, engagement with the Authority and identifies priority areas for cooperation among Pacific Small Islands Developing States and with the organizations involved in the implementation of the Abyssal Initiative project.

83. In October 2018, the Authority launched implementation of the Africa Deep Seabed Resources project in partnership with the African Minerals Development Centre of the Economic Commission for Africa (since transferred to the African Union), and the support of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation. A workshop was organized in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, in October 2018, which brought together representatives of francophone African countries, as well as international and regional organizations, the scientific community and academia. The Authority also organized a high-level side event in partnership with the African Minerals Development Centre on the sidelines of the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference, held in Nairobi in November 2018. A second workshop was organized in partnership with the Government of South Africa and the African Union in Pretoria in May 2019. In both cases, consultations with participants contributed to the identification of critical capacity-building needs for participating countries.

84. The Secretary-General, and the Legal Counsel of the United Nations, as the two focal points for the Community of Ocean Action on the implementation of international law as reflected in the Convention for the implementation of the voluntary commitments, identified three topics of focus for the Community of Ocean Action during 2018, hosted three thematic webinars in August, October and December 2018, respectively on each of the three topics, and attended a meeting of co-focal points and sherpas for the Communities of Ocean Action held in Nairobi in November 2018. Furthermore, a midterm assessment for the Community of Ocean Action on the implementation of international law as reflected in the Convention was submitted to the Department of Economics and Social Affairs in January 2019.

XX. Meeting of States Parties to the Convention

85. The Secretary-General participated in the twenty-ninth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, held from 17 to 19 June 2019, and provided information on the activities of the Authority to the meeting.

XXI. Relations with the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea

86. In September 2018, the Secretary-General met with members of the Tribunal and of the Seabed Disputes Chamber at the Tribunal's headquarters in Hamburg, Germany. The purpose of the visit to the Tribunal was to brief their members on the work of the Authority, in particular on the developments relating to draft exploitation regulations. During the visit, the Secretary-General also had a meeting with the President and the Registrar of the Tribunal to exchange views on administrative matters, including budgetary and financial issues, human resources, staff regulations and rules, implementation of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) and library collaboration.

87. In addition, the Secretary-General and the Legal Counsel of the Authority held a meeting with the President and the Registrar of the Tribunal on 10 December 2018 in New York. At the invitation of both sides, officials from the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea also participated in this meeting. Discussions were also held on budgetary and cost-saving measures, IPSAS implementation, human resources and staff rules, UNV and Junior Professional Officer programmes, as well as on the possibility to cooperate to join the Inspira system.

XXII. Relations with the United Nations and other relevant international organizations and bodies

88. Activities undertaken in the ocean are closely intertwined, making cooperation and coordination essential among intergovernmental organizations with mandates over activities in the ocean. That fact is emphasized in articles 138 and 169 of the Convention itself, and is a critical element to ensuring a consistent approach to the protection and preservation of the marine environment and the sustainable development of ocean activities. To that end, the secretariat has participated in a number of initiatives with other relevant organizations aimed at facilitating the exchange of information and dialogue among users of the Area.

A. United Nations

89. The Authority has a close and productive working relationship with the United Nations, in particular the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs at the United Nations. An informal meeting was held in March 2019 between the secretariat and the Division to exchange information and promote cooperation, in particular in respect of updating a joint technical study on deep seabed minerals, geographic information systems and implementation of article 84 of the Convention.

90. The Secretary-General participated in the seventy-third session of the General Assembly, addressing the agenda item on Oceans and the Law of the Sea on 11 December 2018. The secretariat also contributed information, in June 2019, to the report of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea, pursuant to United

Nations General Assembly resolution [73/124](#) of 11 December 2018, entitled “Oceans and the law of the sea”.

91. The Secretary-General also participated as a panellist in the twentieth meeting of the United Nations Open-Ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea from 10 to 14 June 2019.

92. UN-Oceans is a United Nations inter-agency mechanism mandated to strengthen and promote the coordination and coherence of United Nations systems and activities related to ocean and coastal areas. The Authority is a member of UN-Oceans and the secretariat participates in its meetings, as appropriate, and in accordance with its mandate. During the reporting period, the secretariat participated remotely in the nineteenth face-to-face meeting of UN-Oceans held at the World Meteorological Organization headquarters in Geneva and contributed to discussions on the indicators of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (c) on enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and as recalled in paragraph 158 of General Assembly resolution [66/288](#), entitled “The future we want”.

93. The United Nations Global Compact is a strategic initiative led by the United Nations that aims at engaging global companies to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through alignment of their own strategies and operations. It is the world’s largest corporate sustainability initiative, with stakeholders from 170 countries. The Global Compact Action Platform for Sustainable Ocean Business is designed to drive decision-making processes and catalyse partnerships to advance shared ocean priorities across all the Sustainable Development Goals, leading up to the 2020 Ocean Conference. A high-level Global Compact team visited the secretariat in April 2019, with a view to enabling the Global Compact Sustainable Ocean Business Platform to learn more about deep seabed mining and the governance arrangements within the Authority. The secretariat has been invited to contribute to the development of the report entitled *Global Goals, Ocean Opportunities*, which is aimed at providing an understanding of how ocean industries can deliver on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. At the invitation, the Secretary-General attended the High-Level Meeting on Ocean/NOR-Shipping conference held by the Global Compact Action Platform in cooperation with the Government of Norway in June 2019 in Oslo.

B. Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

94. During the reporting period, the secretariats of the Authority and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission have worked in close collaboration to advance implementation of the existing memorandum of understanding between the two organizations. A series of working briefings and meetings were held in order to maintain an ongoing dialogue between the two organizations and coordinate activities of common interest.

95. The Authority, represented by the Deputy to the Secretary-General and Legal Counsel, participated at the first Global Planning Meeting in preparation for the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, held from 13 to 15 May 2019 in Copenhagen. The secretariat highlighted that the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and the Authority have joined forces to achieve shared objectives, such as improved mapping of the seabed through the Seabed 2030 project, exchange of data and information between the Ocean Biogeographic Information System and the database of the Authority, and promotion of a standardized approach for taxonomic identification, including the organization

of intercalibration workshops. The communications unit of the secretariat will be representing the Authority in the Communications Advisory Group for the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

C. International Maritime Organization and the World Maritime University

96. The Authority and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) concluded a Cooperation Agreement. Under the framework of that Agreement both organizations are actively and frequently cooperating on a number of issues, for instance, frequent meetings of the Secretaries-General of both organizations, as well as frequent exchanges and meetings of legal and technical teams. The most recent meeting between both Secretaries-General was on 26 November 2018 during the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference, held in Nairobi. The Authority is also cooperating with the Convention on the Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter (London Convention) of 1972 and the 1996 Protocol thereto, in particular on waste assessment frameworks for the protection of the marine environment. Another important joint initiative with IMO is the work to clarify the respective regulatory competences of IMO and the Authority on aspects related to ships and installations engaged in activities in the Area and related maritime transportation in the high seas, including the transportation of minerals for processing on land. One critical aspect that was explored under the initiative was that of the respective functions in the protection of the marine environment from pollution in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

97. In November 2018, the Authority and the World Maritime University signed a memorandum of understanding to strengthen their cooperation with a view, among other things, to advance achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 14, with a focus on improving education and capacity-building initiatives in marine science. In signing the memorandum of understanding, the Secretary-General highlighted the commitment of the Authority to strengthening the research and analytical capacities of developing countries, in particular small island developing States, landlocked developing countries and least developed countries to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

98. Under the memorandum of understanding, both organizations have agreed to develop collaborative research in the fields of ocean sustainability, ocean governance, Sustainable Development Goal implementation for the oceans, deepening understanding of the ecosystem functions and services of the international deep seabed area and the science-law-policy interface. Both parties will also foster research, training opportunities and other capacity-building initiatives and cooperate in the conduct of studies and in the delivery of conferences, seminars, workshops and joint publications on matters of common interest.

99. The Deputy to the Secretary-General and Legal Counsel participated in the forty-third Annual Center for Oceans Law and Policy Conference on “Biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction: intractable challenges and potential solutions” from 14 to 17 May 2019 in Malmö, Sweden, organized by the World Maritime University, the Center for Oceans Law and Policy of the University of Virginia and the Nippon Foundation.

D. International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds

100. On 11 March 2019, the Director and Legal Counsel of the International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds paid a courtesy visit to the Secretary-General in Kingston. Both sides exchanged general views on the mandate of each organization

and on the draft exploitation regulations and agreed to explore possibilities for the promotion of mutual cooperation.

E. Pacific Islands Forum

101. At the invitation of the Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum, the Secretary-General attended the forty-ninth annual meeting of the Pacific Island Forum Leaders, held in Yaren, Nauru from 3 to 6 September 2018. It was the first time that the Authority had been represented at the forum. The Authority was also invited, on the margins of the meeting, to participate in a side event organized jointly by the Government of Nauru and Nauru Ocean Resources Inc. to discuss further the engagement of Pacific Island States in the work of the Authority and how increased participation in activities carried out in the Area could support national and regional Blue Economy objectives.

F. Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization

102. During the annual session of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization in Tokyo, from 8 to 12 October 2018, the memorandum of understanding between the Authority and the Consultative Organization was signed. The implementation of the memorandum of understanding will raise awareness of the activities of the Authority and identify opportunities for collaboration and cooperation on matters such as training and capacity-building for qualified candidates from Consultative Organization member States through initiatives such as fellowships, workshops and seminars.

G. Indian Ocean Rim Association

103. The Indian Ocean Rim Association is an intergovernmental organization which was established on 7 March 1997 with the aim of strengthening regional cooperation and sustainable development within the Indian Ocean region through its 22 member States and 9 dialogue partners.

104. During the reporting period, an exchange of views took place at the secretariat level between the Indian Ocean Rim Association and the Authority, which resulted in the preparation of a memorandum of understanding to encourage collaboration and cooperation in areas of mutual interest such as joint capacity-building programmes, the sharing of information relating to seabed activities and the promotion and encouragement of marine scientific research.

H. Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection

105. Currently, a working group of the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection is studying the impacts of wastes and other matter in the marine environment from mining operations, a subject of relevance to the work of the Authority in the Area. The objective of the working group is to provide independent advice on the environmental impacts that could arise from both land-based tailings and marine minerals mining wastes. The outcomes will be made public by the Joint Group in the form of a report. The secretariat continues to enhance collaboration and cooperation with the Joint Group.

I. International Cable Protection Committee

106. On 29 and 30 October 2018, under the framework of the memorandum of understanding between the International Cable Protection Committee and the Authority, the Authority and the Committee, in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Thailand, organized a second workshop on submarine cables and activities in the Area, on “Developing practical options for the implementation of the ‘due regard and reasonable regard’ obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea”. The outcome of the workshop has been published as an International Seabed Authority technical study.

J. Sargasso Sea Commission

107. During the reporting period, the Sargasso Sea Commission and the Authority have continued to exchange views at the secretariat level to maximize opportunities for the sharing of research, expertise and practical experience. Both organizations have a strong interest in the protection of the marine environment, including the assessments of potential environmental impacts from activities in the Area. The secretariats of both organizations are working towards the conclusion of a memorandum of understanding to strengthen cooperation on marine scientific research, data-sharing and other matters of mutual interest.

XXIII. Participation in global and regional conferences

A. Participation in the intergovernmental conference on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction

108. The secretariat participated in the first and second substantive sessions of the intergovernmental conference on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. During the first session, held in September 2018, the secretariat made five statements, respectively with regard to exchange of views; marine genetic resources, including questions on the sharing of benefits; measures such as area-based management tools, including marine protected areas; environmental impact assessment; and capacity-building and transfer of marine technology. In addition, the secretariat organized, with other partners, three side events, respectively on “Enhancing deep sea marine biodiversity assessment through the creation of taxonomic atlases and the ISA Open Deep-Sea Database”, “Promoting increased participation of developing States in marine scientific research programmes and transfer of technology through capacity-building: the role of the International Seabed Authority” and “Towards the development of regional environmental management plans in the Northwest Pacific, Atlantic and Indian Oceans”.

109. During the second session, in March and April 2019, the secretariat delivered a statement under general exchange of views and delivered a joint statement with IMO under cross-cutting issues. In the joint statement, both organizations highlighted that they favoured all those options reflected in the President’s aid to negotiations which facilitate mutual cooperation and which do not undermine it and that are fully consistent with rights and obligations established in the Convention, in particular in

those areas where there are well developed and detailed frameworks, such as shipping and navigation and the Part XI regime. Two side events were also organized, in collaboration with other partners. The first was entitled “Twenty-five years of ISA’s contribution to applying holistic approach to the protection of the marine environment in the Area” with the Marine Biodiversity Institute of Korea, and the other entitled “Twenty-five years of ISA’s contribution to deep-sea marine scientific research and the UN Decade of Ocean Science for sustainable development (2021–2030)”, which was organized in collaboration with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission.

110. In response to a suggestion of the President of the Conference, the secretariat created a specific section on the Authority’s website on participation in the intergovernmental conference on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction to showcase the Authority’s participation and activities in the process.

B. Participation in the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference

111. The Authority was invited to participate in the first global high-level conference on the sustainable blue economy in Nairobi in November 2018, organized jointly by the Governments of Kenya, Canada and Japan. In addition to its participation in the plenary discussion, the business forum and the side event organized by the African Union, the Authority organized a side event in partnership with the Government of Norway and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) with a view to launching officially the Africa Deep Seabed Resources project, which concretizes the voluntary commitment registered in partnership with ECA. The side event was chaired by a high-level panel composed of the Secretary-General; Minister of International Development of Norway, Nikolai Astrup; the Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for the Ocean, Peter Thomson; and the Executive Secretary of ECA, Vera Songwe.

Annex

Members of the advisory panel of the International Seabed Authority Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area

(2017–2020)

Georgy Cherkashov (reappointed)

Deputy Director

Institute for Geology and Mineral Resources of the Ocean, Russian Federation

Tian Qi

Permanent Representative to the International Seabed Authority and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to Jamaica

Josep María Bosch Bessa

Permanent Representative to the International Seabed Authority and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Spain to Jamaica

Inés Fors Fernández

Permanent Representative to the International Seabed Authority and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Cuba to Jamaica

Janet Omoleegho Olisa

Permanent Representative to the International Seabed Authority and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to Jamaica

Siosiuva Utoikamanu

Economic policy and public financial management specialist, Tonga

Alan Evans

Marine Science Policy Adviser

National Oceanography Centre, Southampton, United Kingdom
