



INFORMATION NOTE ON MATTERS BEFORE THE TWENTIETH SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY

7 to 25 July 2014, Kingston, Jamaica

1. This information note has been prepared to facilitate the work of the Authority at its forthcoming twentieth session from 7 – 25 July 2014. To ensure that all recommendations of the subsidiary bodies are ready for consideration by the Council and the Assembly, the first week of meetings, from 7 to 11 July, will be devoted to meetings of the Legal and Technical Commission and the Finance Committee. The Assembly will formally convene for the first time on Tuesday 15 July 2014, followed by the Council. The Assembly will continue its work when the work of the Council has been completed.

2. Members of the Authority are reminded that it is the turn of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean States (GRULAC) to nominate a candidate for the Presidency of the Assembly in 2014.¹ It is the turn of the African Group to nominate a candidate for the Presidency of the Council. Each of the other regional groups will be entitled to nominate a Vice-President of the Assembly and a Vice-President of the Council.² There is also a Credentials Committee to be appointed. It will be very helpful to the secretariat, and will also facilitate the smooth running of the session, if regional groups can coordinate on the issue of candidatures in advance of the session in Kingston.

3. This note outlines the main issues for consideration by the Assembly, Council, Legal and Technical Commission and Finance Committee. It is important to note that, as required by the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the 1994 Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the Convention, a number of substantive matters have to be sequentially considered by different organs of the Authority before a final decision on them can be taken. The indicative programme of work for the various organs, which is attached with this note, has been designed with this consideration in mind.

I. FINANCE COMMITTEE

4. The Finance Committee will review the proposed budget of the Authority for the financial period 2015 to 2016. The proposed budget and the scale of assessment for contributions to the budget will then be considered sequentially by the Council and the Assembly, taking into account any recommendations by the Finance Committee.

5. The Finance Committee will also consider the adoption and implementation by the International Seabed Authority of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS).

II. LEGAL AND TECHNICAL COMMISSION

6. The Commission was scheduled to meet twice in 2014. The first meeting was held from 3 to 14 February 2014; the second meeting will take place during the twentieth session of the Authority from 7 to 25 July 2014.

¹ On 11 April 2014, the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the International Seabed Authority, in his capacity as Coordinator of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean States (GRULAC) in Kingston, informed the secretariat that GRULAC has endorsed the candidature of His Excellency Antonio Francisco Da Costa e Silva Neto, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the International Seabed Authority (Brazil), for Presidency of the Assembly in 2014.

² Also by the same Note of 11 April 2014, the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the International Seabed Authority, in his capacity a Coordinator of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC) in Kingston, informed the secretariat that GRULAC has endorsed the candidature of Ambassador Ariel Fernández, Permanent Representative of Argentina to the International Seabed Authority, for one of the Vice-Presidencies of the Council.

7. At its meeting in February 2014, the Commission adopted its agenda and elected its Chairman and Vice-Chairman. The Commission, as a matter of priority, considered and recommended for approval by the Council four pending applications for approval of plans of work. These were submitted by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation for exploration for cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts, by UK Seabed Resources Ltd. for exploration for polymetallic nodules, by the Government of India for exploration for polymetallic sulphides, and by Ocean Minerals Singapore Pte. Ltd. for exploration for polymetallic nodules.

8. The Commission also considered three new applications. These included one submitted by the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources of Germany (BGR) for approval of a plan of work for exploration for polymetallic sulphides in the Central Indian Ocean; by the Cook Islands Investment Corporation (CIIC), for approval of a plan of work for exploration for polymetallic nodules; and an application by the Companhia de Pesquisa de Recursos Minerais S.A of Brazil (CPRM) for exploration for cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts. In addition to the foregoing, the Commission also devoted priority time during its February session towards the preparation of the draft regulations for exploitation of polymetallic nodules in the Area including the formulation of terms of reference and questions for a stakeholder survey.

9. In the July session, the Commission will continue its consideration of applications for approval of plans of work for exploration for polymetallic sulphides (BGR), polymetallic nodules (CIIC) and cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts (CPRM). The Commission is also expected to consider matters that were referred to it by the Council, including the issues of monopolization of activities in the Area, and the issues relating to the operation of the Enterprise, in particular the legal, technical and financial implications for the Authority.

10. The Commission will also be considering the status of implementation of training programmes under plans of work for exploration and allocation of training opportunities, the annual reports of contractors and the status of implementation of the Environmental Management Plan for the Clarion-Clipperton Zone. It will continue its work on the preparation of draft regulations for exploitation of polymetallic nodules in the Area and its consideration of the data management strategy of the Authority.

III. COUNCIL

11. The first item of business for the Council will be the election of a President and vice-Presidents, followed by the adoption of the agenda. The Council will also be required to organize its work for the session. Due to resignations of certain members of the Legal and Technical Commission, the Council will be invited to elect replacement members as soon as the session opens.

12. In accordance with its usual practice, the Council will also be provided with a report on the work of the Legal and Technical Commission during the session and will take up any matters referred to it by the Commission. This will include consideration of the reports and recommendations of the Commission on any new applications for approval of plans of work for exploration in the Area, including the applications by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation, UK Seabed Resources Ltd., the Government of India, and Ocean Minerals Singapore Pte. Ltd. Other applications may also be considered by the Council following their consideration and the formulation of recommendations by the Commission. The Council will also be invited to consider, with a view to approval, proposed revisions to regulation 21 of the Regulations on the Prospecting and Exploration for Polymetallic Sulphides in the Area (ISBA/16/A/12/Rev.1).

13. The Council will also be invited to consider the report and recommendations of the Finance Committee including taking action on the proposed budget of the Authority for the financial period 2015-2016 and the scale of assessment for contributions to the budget of the International Seabed Authority.

IV. ASSEMBLY

14. The first item of business for the Assembly will be the election of a President and Vice-Presidents, followed by the adoption of the agenda for the twentieth session. In the event that there are any resignations from the Finance Committee, the Assembly will be invited to elect replacement members as soon as the session opens.

15. The matters for consideration by the Assembly during the twentieth session include consideration of the annual report of the Secretary-General, pursuant to article 166, paragraph 4, of the Convention, the adoption of the budget and the scale of assessment for contributions to the budget of the Authority and election to fill vacancies on the Council, in accordance with article 161, paragraph 3, of the Convention. In this regard, the secretariat has prepared indicative lists of States eligible for election to each of the groups in the Council. These are available on the Authority's website.

16. 2014 marks the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Authority. A special commemorative session is scheduled for Tuesday, 22 July 2014 to celebrate this event and will last the entire day. A reception will also take place on the same day, at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel.

7 May 2014
Kingston, Jamaica

This note together with a provisional schedule of meetings and the official documents referred to herein, will also be made available for download from the Authority's website at <http://www.isa.org.jm>.