



**Twentieth meeting of  
the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and Law of  
the Sea**

10-13 June 2019  
New York

First Plenary Session

*Item 3 – General Exchange of views*

**Statement by  
Mr Michael W. Lodge,  
Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished representatives,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning,

Madame la Co-Présidente, c'est un grand plaisir de vous voir présider cette réunion et je suis sûr qu'avec votre grande expérience en droit de la mer et des sciences marines en particulier, vous saurez nous guider pour faire en sorte que nos discussions contribuent de manière importante à la phase de planification de la Décennie des Nations Unies pour les Sciences Océaniques. L'Autorité se tient prête à vous soutenir ainsi que toutes les délégations dans cette démarche et est déterminée à contribuer au plein succès de cette réunion.

As you know, as well as preparing for the launch of the Decade, this year we celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the entry into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and of the establishment of the Authority, the International Tribunal of the Law of the Sea and the International Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf. I mention this because each of them, in their capacity, has significantly contributed over the past 25 years to ensuring a uniform interpretation and application of the international legal regime on marine scientific research.

Part XI of the Convention gives the Authority a unique and exclusive mandate in relation to marine scientific research in the Area. This consists of three major strategic directions. First, to promote and encourage the conduct of marine scientific research in the Area. Second, to coordinate and disseminate the results of such research and analysis when available. And third, to ensure that capacity-building programmes are developed for the benefit of developing States and technologically less developed States.

A lot is currently done to fulfill these responsibilities and I will have the opportunity to expand further on this Wednesday during the panel discussion.

For now, I want to take this opportunity to reiterate the importance of marine science in the effective implementation of the Convention and other relevant international instruments, and more generally as a critical means to achieve the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In fact, marine science and international law need each other and accordingly, should be approached as two complementary blocks. This has probably never been more essential than today as the Ocean is at the centre of an increased number of activities and usages taking place both within and beyond national jurisdictions. This requires all of us to improve international cooperation and coordination in advancing ocean science and addressing related gaps. As Secretary-General of the Authority, this is one of my priorities.

Although a lot has been achieved to advance scientific knowledge and research capacity over the last twenty-five years, more needs to be done if we are to ensure the equitable and efficient utilization of ocean resources. But by working together, we have the opportunity to deliver transformative knowledge on marine biodiversity and to create a lasting legacy of new data, tools and training that will facilitate the effective protection of the marine environment.

On behalf of the Authority, I want to express our strong commitment to the objectives of the UN Decade. We look forward to the discussions over the next three days to inform strategically the planning phase for the Decade and we pledge our full cooperation with our sister organization, IOC-UNESCO, with whom we enjoy cordial relations and the most fruitful cooperation.