



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE KINGDOM OF TONGA TO
THE UNITED NATIONS**

**Statement of Dr. Tevita Suka Mangisi
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Tonga to the United Nations
And Head of the Tonga Delegation to the 23rd Session of the International Seabed
Authority on Agenda Item 8 of the Assembly of the International Seabed Authority**

Annual Report of the Secretary General

Kingston, 15th August 2017

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Mr. President,

Good morning, and good morning to Excellencies and Colleagues alike.

Allow me at the outset to first align with previous distinguished delegations in congratulating you on your election to the Presidency of this august body for the 23rd Session of the International Seabed Authority. The African Group could not have nominated a more suitable person for election to the prestigious position that you now hold. My delegation pledges its full support of your Presidency throughout this Session.

Mr. President

Tonga would also like to take this opportunity to thank the host Country, Jamaica, for the warmth welcome which we have and continue to experience during our time here in Jamaica. We note and support the ongoing collaboration between the Authority and the host government Jamaica, in particular, the work carried out to concentrate all UN agencies in Jamaica together with the Authority at the Convention Center, which we duly support.

Mr. President,

We would like to express our gratitude to the Secretary-General for the comprehensive and holistic report that he had orally presented to us earlier and circulated in hard copy. The report clearly provides a detailed overview of the progressive work carried out by the Authority thus far and in this regard, we congratulate the Secretary-General for the progress made and wish to convey our support for the ongoing good work. In this regard, Tonga will make a number of comments and observations on certain segments of the Report.

Mr. President,

Acceding to the Part XI agreement is vital and we take note of the slow increase in State parties to UNCLOS acceding to the Agreement. We join the Secretary General in encouraging the remaining State parties to UNCLOS to accede to the Part XI Agreement. Additionally, as a party

to the Part XI agreement, contributions from member states are vital for the operation of the Authority particularly in delivering its mandate. Tonga in this regard wishes to encourage member states to ensure contributions are made in a timely manner.

Mr. President,

Tonga, at the 20th session of the Authority, iterated its support for the Article 154 Review recognizing the appropriateness of the systematic review to take place. We had envisaged the completion of the review by the 23rd session, and in so saying, we are happy to see the Final Report of the Article 154 Review Committee presented during this session. We wish to thank the Secretary General and the Secretariat for the work and resources dedicated to ensuring the completion of the mandate of the Committee by this 23rd session. The report provides concrete recommendations and as such, Tonga will make a number of observations and comments on point under the relevant Agenda Item 9.

Mr. President,

My delegation continues to recognize with appreciation the work carried out by the Authority on the ongoing supervision of contracts for exploration and the progressive development of the regulatory regime, in particular the exploitation regulations. We recognize the indicative timeline provided by the Legal and Technical Commission to the Council and wish to highlight the urgency of completing the exploitation regulations and its appropriate guidelines. We have heard in the Council several proposals which may guide the work of the Authority in ensuring the completion of the exploitation regulations in accordance with the proposed timeline. The proposals varied from matters of process particularly in the deliberations of the Council and the Legal and Technical Commission, to the continuation of stakeholder engagement in the development of the exploitation regulation, and the allocation and dedication of resources in the Secretariat to support the work of the Legal and Technical Commission. We see merit in considering these in determining the best and appropriate approach to the draft regulations.

Mr. President,

The relationship and collaboration of the Authority with the United Nations and other relevant international organizations and bodies, is becoming ever more relevant to better promote and enhance its mandate. In this regard, we recognize the work carried out by the Authority as a member of UN-Oceans, particularly when it hosted the 16th meeting at the Authority's headquarters here in Jamaica. We see this as ever more relevant in light of Sustainable Development goal 14 and paragraph 14 of the Call for Action which was adopted on 9 June 2017 on the margins of the Ocean Conference. Tonga was pleased to see the active participation of the Authority at the Ocean Conference, in particular in the partnership dialogues, and side events, on which Tonga had the privilege to co-Chair with Mexico and the Authority.

Additionally, Tonga was pleased to see the engagement of the Authority throughout the Preparatory Committees established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/292 and would like to see its engagement in the intergovernmental conference, once confirmed, due to the likely

implications the possible provisions of the new implementing agreement may have on the existing regime in the Area.

Mr. President,

Tonga wishes to acknowledge with appreciation the contributions made to the Voluntary Trust Fund which has allowed for the participation of a Tongan national who is currently a member of the Legal and Technical Commission. Tonga is also appreciative to have been one of the developing countries to benefit from the Endowment Fund for supporting marine scientific research (MSR) in the Area. Having noted the lack of contributions made towards the Endowment Fund since December 2016, Tonga as a small island developing State that suffers from the lack of financial and technological capacities, wishes to urge other States for additional contributions to the Fund, to fulfil its mandate under paragraph 2 of Assembly resolution ISBA/12/A/11 – promote and encourage the conduct of MSR in the Area for the benefit of mankind as a whole.

Mr. President,

Tonga supports the Authority's steps taken to engage a wide range of stakeholders through consultations and surveys, and continuing to interact frequently with States parties. However, Tonga would like to see more efforts to engage States parties to participate in workshops that deal with deep-seabed mining (DSM) related issues, including the DSM Payment-Regime Workshops, which we have noted, have taken place over the years without sufficient representation from States parties, particularly government officials from sponsoring States. Tonga believes it is important to approach the design of DSM mechanisms holistically and with greater transparency.

Finally, Mr. President,

On the issue of capacity building, Tonga has been very fortunate to have benefited from the Authority's on-going capacity-building and training programs. Nevertheless, we think these efforts should also be long-term and sustainable. Therefore, Tonga would like to echo the need for maintaining and additional contributions be made towards the Endowment Fund, as this is one of the principal mechanisms for enabling capacity-building in the field of MSR in the Area, particularly for small island developing countries such as Tonga. The programs should be consistent and results-oriented, addressing capacity gaps of States parties in implementing national obligations and responsibilities.

I thank you Mr. President.