

International Seabed Authority's Contribution to the United Nations Secretary-General's
Report pursuant to the United Nations General Assembly's Resolution A/RES/69/245
(11 February 2015)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The International Seabed Authority is now embarking on a major and historical exercise of formulating a regulatory framework to administer and regulate the conduct of exploitation of resources in the Area. This marks yet another significant milestone in its evolution towards the effective discharge of its mandate and responsibilities at the various stages of the development of activities in the Area.

Mandated by the Convention *inter alia* to promote the carrying out of activities in the Area such as a manner as to foster healthy development of the world economy and balanced growth of international trade, and to promote international cooperation for the overall development of all countries, especially developing States, and to “adopt rules, regulations and procedures that ensure effective protection of the marine environment from harmful effects which may arise from such activities”, the Authority has, during the 20 years of its existence, demonstrated commendable progress. It has cemented its place as the central authority for the organization and control of activities in the Area. It has adopted and implemented three sets of regulations for exploration for, respectively, polymetallic nodules, polymetallic sulphides and cobalt ferromanganese crusts, and has entered into contracts for exploration of all three resources.

As at 11 February 2015, a total of 20 (twenty) - 15 (fifteen) year term contracts for exploration have been signed between the Authority and its contractors (14 for exploration for polymetallic nodules, 4 for exploration for polymetallic sulphides and 2 for exploration for cobalt ferromanganese crusts). With 7 of these contracts coming to an end in 2016 and 2017, the focus of the Authority is now shifting to the development of urgently needed rules, regulations and procedures relating to exploitation of resources in the Area and the protection of the marine environment. A new phase in the life of the Authority is steadily approaching. This new phase involves the reality of deep seabed mining and the prescribed role of the Authority in organizing and monitoring such activities where they pertain to the Area.

For further information regarding the relevant activities of the International Seabed Authority in fostering integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development,

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well as the coordination of such research and the dissemination of its results¹⁵ and a few more of those fundamental responsibilities bestowed upon the Authority by the Convention. In addition, the Convention also tasked the Authority with the responsibility of taking measures to acquire technology and scientific knowledge relating to seabed mining and to promote, encourage and facilitate its transfer to developing countries¹⁶ and to promote the effective participation of developing countries in activities in the Area

the Area, especially those relating to protection of the marine environment²¹ in view of the limited resources available to the Authority, the relatively²² given to each of these areas of work has until now been entirely dependent on the pace of development of commercial interest in deep seabed mining

7. As at 28 January 2015, 20 contracts for exploration had entered into force (14 for exploration of polymetallic nodules, 4 for exploration for polymetallic sulphides and 2 for exploration for ~~cobalt~~ ferromanganese crusts²²) With 7 of the 20 current 15 year term contracts for exploration coming to an end in 2016 and 2017²³ the focus of the Authority is shifting to the development of urgently needed rules, regulations and procedures relating to exploitation of resources in the Area and the protection of the marine environment. This is encouraging for the Authority as an institution and for member States, who will be the ultimate beneficiaries from seabed mining in the future. However, it also means that the Authority is under increased pressure to develop fair and equitable policies and regulations for the exploitation of marine minerals, as well as to deliver an appropriate level of environmental protection for the Area. The Authority continues to effectively supervise and administer exploration contracts²³ to progress the development of rules, regulations and procedures for the conduct of activities in the Area, including regulations for exploitation of seabed minerals, and continue the ban

	<p>the area and difficulties of access and from it. (UNCLOS, Art. 148)</p>	<p>contributions from members of the Authority and others has been used since to assist developing countries committee and commission members' participation.</p> <p>The Authority's Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research in the Area was established in 2007. The Fund aims to promote and encourage the conduct of marine scientific research in the Area for the benefit of humankind as a whole, in particular by supporting the participation of qualified scientists and technical personnel from developing countries in marine scientific research programmes, including through training, technical assistance and scientific cooperation programmes. Members of the Authority, other States, relevant international organizations, academic, scientific and technical institutions, philanthropic organizations and private persons may make contributions to the Fund.</p>
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3. Provide for the equitable sharing of financial and other economic benefits derived from activities in the Area through appropriate mechanism, on non-discriminatory basis. (UNCLOS, Art. 140)
- The drafting of the Authority's Exploitation regulation that is currently underway is expected to devise the appropriate mechanism for the non-g gV

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x If a contractor, through its activities in the Area, causes or is likely to cause serious harm to the marine environment, must immediately warn other contractors and shipping operating in the vicinity. In addition, the contractor must notify the Secretary General of the incident. The notification must include the coordinates of the area affected and a description of any action being taken by

		technology consistent with the effective protection of intellectual property rights ⁴⁵ . x In 2014, the Secretary General of the Authority was invited to visit the manufacturing plant of what is envisaged to be the first seabed mining tool
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(ii) challenges and opportunities in integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development in that regard, including matters which may require further consideration with a view to fostering integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development with regard to oceans, with an emphasis on areas where coordination and cooperation at the intergovernmental and interagency levels could be enhanced.

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