

6th Annual Contractors' Meeting

Opening Remarks

Dr Marie Bourrel-MacKinnon
Chief of staff and Head of Strategic Planning Unit
International Seabed Authority

Assistant Minister Hon Steven Kiruswa, Minister of Minerals, Government of the United Republic of Tanzania,

Excellencies,

Representatives of exploration contractors,

Senior Government Officials, Government of the United Republic of Tanzania,

Mr Joshua Tuhumwire, Representatives of the LTC,

ISA Secretariat colleagues, Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

- I stand before you this morning on behalf of the Secretary General of the International Seabed Authority, His Excellency Mr Michael W. Lodge, who is unable to attend this meeting due to an important commitment in New York that came up in the last few days.
- The Secretary General wishes to express his most sincere apologies to the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania for being unable to be here today but will arrive the day after tomorrow, to participate in the Tanzania Mining and Investment Forum and meet with government officials. He also wishes me to convey his deep gratitude to the Government of Tanzania for hosting the 6th annual contractors' meeting, and all the preparation that went into it.
- The theme of this meeting, is on **“Strengthening Partnerships for the responsible management of seabed mineral resources in the Area”**. This goes to the heart of the mandate of the International Seabed Authority. In this regard, one of our most important partnerships is with the contractors, both through the mechanism of the contract for exploration, but also in terms of the additional value that contractors can bring to other programmes and initiatives of the Authority, including in capacity building, technology development, scientific knowledge and data management.

- I wish to acknowledge the presence of Mr Joshua Tuhumwire, a member of the Legal and Technical Commission, with us today. He will share some important reflections on the recent work of the LTC particularly in relation to the assessment of annual reports and how the Commission and contractors can work together more effectively to understand each other's needs and how the Commission can more effectively assist the contractors to apply the RRP's and the guidelines issued by the Commission.
- We will also have an opportunity to discuss the status of the ongoing work of the Council to develop the draft Exploitation Regulations. This process is reaching a critical phase. Exploration contractors are key to this process, and their views need to be considered and appropriately incorporated in the exploitation regulations and associated standards and guidelines. Of course, with so many diverse viewpoints, it will take time, patience, and reflection to ensure the regulations are robust, practical and provide the adequate balance between all interests. This is why the Council has placed so much emphasis on an inclusive and transparent process, with the active participation of all stakeholders.
- You would note from the agenda of the meeting that a wide range of topics will be discussed in the next three days. It is also an important indicator of the important contribution of contractors to the development of the Area for the benefit of humankind as well as the ties that exist between contractors and the Secretariat.
- And this is why annual contractors meetings are so valuable. They offer us the possibility to meet, in person, and exchange views on our respective obligations and explore how to further strengthen our cooperation. Apart from the annual contractors' meeting, the Secretariat has also taken steps to strengthen CARMU and to initiate an informal dialogues with contractors in the margins of the Council meeting during Part 2 of the 28th Session in July this year. Most of the contractor representatives who are here today and those joining online also participated to this dialogue.
- Many of the items on our agenda has been proposed by contractors.
- I would also like to recognise the interest shown by the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania to participate in the mineral activities in the Area. I hope this event, particularly the interactive session this afternoon, will help the government make an informed decision on its aspiration not only to participate but to also benefit from mineral activities in the Area.

- I invite you all here to take full advantage of the next few days to meet, dialogue, exchange and identify synergies.
- I am confident that this year again, this meeting will lead to very productive outcomes.

Thank you very much.