



**Statement by Her Excellency Rabab Fatima, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations in New York at the High-level virtual Meeting to present the Draft ISA Marine Scientific Research Action Plan in support of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, 17 November 2020, 08:00am-10:00am**

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Mr. President

Mr. Secretary-General

Excellencies, Distinguished Colleagues,

Good Morning. I thank you, Mr. Secretary General, for organizing today's Meeting and for inviting me to share a few thoughts. Excellent discussions so far and I would like to especially thank Under Secretary General Fekita for very eloquently highlighting the situation of the most vulnerable countries such as LDCs and LLDCs.

The draft Action Plan on Marine Scientific Research by ISA is a good starting point towards supporting the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. This is expected to institutionalize scientific research in the deep sea and responsible management of ocean resources. Going forward, it would be crucial to forge strategic partnerships among relevant stakeholders for putting the Action Plan to practice.

Bangladesh is currently standing at a critical juncture of its development journey. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has set a target of achieving developed country status by 2041. However, with scarce land-based resources, ocean is our best hope. In recognition of the value of oceanic resources, we are investing in building our capacities on maritime issues for harnessing its full potentials. Now, the Blue Economy is our new frontier.

To maximize the full potentials of the Blue Economy, we need an equitable share of marine resources, especially in areas beyond national jurisdiction and in ISA controlled areas. And for that, Bangladesh attaches high importance on strategic partnership with other entities to advance research in the deep seabed. We would be happy to partner with ISA and other stakeholders in conducting joint research in the deep sea as part of the implementation of the Action Plan.

As an intergovernmental body with a large membership, as well as, engagement with various non-government stakeholders from industry and research organizations, we believe that ISA has an important convening and coordinating role in facilitating multi-stakeholder strategic partnership in conducting scientific research in the deep sea. We welcome the initiatives already undertaken by the ISA including its strategic partnership with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, creation of the Endowment Fund for Marine Scientific Research, Internship Program, launch of Deep Data and the Secretary-General's Award for Excellence, with a view to advancing deep seabed research. Yet there is scope to do more.

In this regard, I wish to make few points:

**First**, the future strategic partnership of ISA with other entities should focus on the capacity building of and technical assistance, to developing countries in advancing the marine scientific research in the deep sea.

**Second**, inclusivity in advancing deep seabed research should be maintained to ensure that no one is left behind, especially those with limited or no access to the deep-sea resources.

**Third**, multi-stakeholder strategic alliances and partnerships with relevant subregional, regional, and global organizations could play important role in generating productive outcome in the field of marine scientific research.

**Fourth**, special emphasis needs to be given to ensure gender parity in the field of marine scientific research. We are happy to know that 133 women have been trained from developing States so far.

**Fifth**, adequate, predictable and innovative financing for conducting research will remain critical for realization of the Action Plan.

**Finally**, UNCLOS stipulates that the marine scientific research in the deep sea is to be carried out for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of humankind as a whole. Therefore, the integrity of the marine environment and its biodiversity should be protected while conducting research in the deep sea.

**In conclusion,** I would like to reiterate the unwavering commitment of Bangladesh to the International Seabed Authority in fostering strategic partnership in advancing scientific research in the deep seabed to implement the ISA Action Plan. Bangladesh remains committed to do its part.

I thank you all.