



PERMANENT MISSION
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AGENDA ITEM 9: STATEMENT DELIVERED BY H.E NATASHA MELI,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE ON BEHALF OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALTA

President,

Allow me to begin by welcoming Kyrgyzstan and Cambodia to the Assembly following their respective ratifications of UNCLOS. Their ratifications strengthen the Convention's universal status.

We also extend our deepest gratitude to Madame Secretary-General for her comprehensive presentation of the Annual Report and take note with appreciation of the progress made in implementing the Marine Scientific Research Action Plan. Taken together, these reports reflect the Authority's expanding operational capacity, strengthening of regulatory systems, and advancement of institutional maturity

Malta warmly welcomes the inaugural observance of the International Day of the Deep Seabed on 1 November 2025, and avails of the opportunity to congratulate the awardees of the Authority's One Thousand Reasons campaign.

We commend the Authority in its efforts for continued leadership in advancing scientific understanding of deep-sea ecosystems beyond national jurisdiction. We positively acknowledge the Secretary-General in her efforts in using all available assets and resources, especially by establishing partnerships to enable the development of initiatives, in particular with respect to the BBNJ Agreement.

President,



We recall with pride co-sponsoring the International Day of the Seabed last year alongside Fiji, Singapore, and Jamaica. This initiative has brought our four nations together in partnership and has strengthened our resolve to act as stewards of the Convention.

Malta remains unyielding in our obligation to uphold UNCLOS as *the* legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out. UNCLOS is a balance of rights and duties, and preserving its integrity remains fundamental to safeguarding the Convention.

On this point, allow me now a moment to reiterate my delegation's stance in light of recent and ongoing developments.

Malta's Ambassador Arvid Pardo, father of the modern law of the sea, famously declared that the seabed and ocean floor beyond national jurisdiction are the Common Heritage of Humankind; a doctrine designed to reject the consequences of a first-come, first-served, free-for-all, in favour of collective, multilateral governance.

Today, as the multilateral system faces severe geopolitical strain, how we weather this storm within the Authority will have far-reaching legal, ecological, and institutional consequences. At stake is not only the health of the ocean, but the preservation of all global commons. In this regard, Malta reaffirms its call for a precautionary pause on deep-seabed mining exploitation. For Malta, it is imperative that deep sea mining is carried out in a responsible manner. This can only be achieved if supported by the necessary data, knowledge, and scientific evidence.

President,

An indispensable pillar of the Common Heritage doctrine is that the Area shall be open to use exclusively for peaceful purposes by all States. Ambassador Pardo expended extraordinary diplomatic effort to protect the seabed and ocean floor from the kind of military



confrontations of his time. Today, the global order faces new forms of threats. Amid escalating resource competition, caution is crucial against any premature rush to commercial exploitation that threatens the stability offered by the multilateral system.

To protect this established legal order, Malta believes in upholding the principle of non-appropriation, ensuring that the Area and its resources remain immune from unilateral claims and managed exclusively for the benefit of humanity as a whole.

Full participation by all Member States within all organs is vital to the Authority's work.

Hence, Member States must cooperate and collectively support the Authority in fulfilling its global mandate of delivering equitable benefit-sharing alongside the highest environmental safeguards through the precautionary approach, the ecosystem approach, and by compliance with due diligence obligations.

I thank you.