



**PERMANENT MISSION OF JAMAICA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

STATEMENT BY

**MRS. DIEDRE MILLS
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

AT THE

**TWENTY-SEVENTH MEETING OF STATES PARTIES
TO THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION
ON THE LAW OF THE SEA**

**THURSDAY, 15TH JUNE 2017
UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK**

Madam President,

As this is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor, let me congratulate you and your Bureau on your election to preside over the 27th meeting of States Parties to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and to assure you of Jamaica's support as you guide our work during the current session.

Madam President,

Jamaica continues to attach signal importance to the full and effective implementation of UNCLOS. Like others, this Convention remains the cornerstone for regulating all activities undertaken in respect of the oceans and seas. We, therefore, take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the various reports and presentations that have been prepared to inform our deliberations and wish to highlight a few points that we believe are worth reiterating under this agenda item.

The first concerns the important link that must continue to be made to the integral role that oceans and seas play in our global existence and in our collective efforts towards sustainable development. This has been made even more evident with the recently concluded UN Conference on the implementation of SDG14, which provided the clarion call for protecting our marine environment. Jamaica is pleased to have joined other Member States in committing to playing its part in this regard, and looks forward to working with others towards this end. We congratulate, once again, the Governments of Sweden and Fiji, the President of the General Assembly, the Permanent Representatives of Singapore and Portugal, and all those who worked to make the Conference a success.

The Conference represented one of several developments that have taken place in recent months. We have witnessed, for example, the entry into force of the Paris Agreement, which I am pleased to report was ratified by the Jamaican Government in April 2017. The continued focus on preserving the ocean as a climate regulator and carbon sink, and the development of adaptation and mitigation measures to build resilience to the harmful impacts of climate change on the ocean and coastal ecosystems is essential.

It is clear, however, that much more needs to be done. The call for greater scientific research to better understand and respond to the challenges cannot be overemphasized. We, therefore, welcome the attention given to this issue by the Secretary-General in his reports and the fact that equal recognition is also given to the capacity building support that will need to be provided to developing countries, in particular SIDS.

Madam President,

International cooperation and Inter-Agency coordination will be critical to our endeavour. For this reason, we welcome the fact that this is very clearly articulated in the Secretary-General's reports as we believe that this lies at the core of meaningful progress towards the full implementation of UNCLOS and for strengthening the legal regime for ocean governance. Against this background, the ongoing consultations within the Preparatory Committee on a legally binding instrument under the UNCLOS to conserve and sustainably use marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction remain particularly important. We look to the next steps towards the convening of an intergovernmental conference to begin our negotiations of a text.

Madam President,

As host of the International Seabed Authority, we are pleased that the new Secretary-General, Mr. Michael Lodge, is able to participate in our deliberations and use this opportunity to reiterate our congratulations and commitment to working with him and with fellow States Parties in advancing the work of the Authority. The very useful updates provided on the Authority's work to date are indeed noteworthy.

We look forward, therefore, to welcoming you in Kingston for the next session of the Authority over the summer, and to our discussions, including on the regulations for exploitation in relation to deep seabed mining. We encourage States Parties to the Convention to take seriously their obligations by attending the meeting of the Assembly, especially since the opportunity will also be used to undertake for the first time the review of Article 154 and to contribute to the process. We also call on those States who have not done so to accede to the Part XI Agreement.

It would be remiss of me not to publicly acknowledge and express appreciation to Mr. Nii Oduntun, for his sterling contribution and dedication to the Authority during his tenure as Secretary-General.

We also join in recognising the invaluable work done by the other institutions created by UNCLOS, the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. We also remain indebted to the UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea for its support as the Secretariat for the Convention.

Madam President,

Let me close by reiterating Jamaica's unswerving commitment to supporting efforts aimed at ensuring that the objectives envisaged under the UNCLOS are realised.