

# Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority Calls for Gender Equality



Gender equality is a prerequisite for economies and communities to thrive. Women's equal participation promotes sustainable, inclusive development and strengthens capacity in all sectors, including deep-sea scientific research.

We know that women today account for only 38% of the world's researchers in ocean science, and the rate is even lower for women from developing countries. This must be corrected. Therefore, and recognizing the benefits of fully including women in ocean science, ISA is committed to increasing the active participation of women through targeted capacity-building initiatives, including deep-sea industry training, the Endowment Fund, secondments and internships.

But this is only the beginning. Much more needs to be done to increase women's participation in ocean science and to achieve gender parity in the workplace.

One of my first priorities as Secretary General of ISA was to bring more women into the organization, and especially into senior leadership positions. For the first time last year, we had women at the helm of three of our four governing bodies, with Senator the Honourable Kamina Johnson Smith, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica (MFAFT) as president of the Assembly, High Commissioner of South Africa to Jamaica H.E. Lumka Yengeni as president of the Council, and Ms Michelle Walker, Head of the Legal Unit of (MFAFT) of Jamaica as chair of the Legal and Technical Commission.

As we mark International Women's Day on 8 March, I am also proud to say that we have achieved gender parity in the ISA Secretariat with 65% women. It is time to redouble our efforts to increase the participation of women in ocean science and support gender equality across the board.

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Photo caption: SG & ADSR experts: ISA Secretary General Mr Michael W. Lodge with Ms Judith Owusu, geochemist at Ghana National Petroleum Corporation and Ms Tini Guitoba, legal assistant at the Directorate of Maritime Affairs, Togo, currently on secondment with ISA as part of the ISA Africa Deep-Sea Resources Project (ADSR) project.

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