

# India hosts 8th Annual Contractors Meeting 2025 of International Seabed Authority at NIO Goa

Posted On: 24 SEP 2025 3:47PM by PIB Mumbai

**Goa, 24 September 2025**

Ministry of Earth Science hosted the 8th Annual Contractors' Meeting of the International Seabed Authority (ISA) which was locally organised by CSIR-National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), Goa, during 18-20 September, 2025.

The event commenced on the 18th September bringing together leading experts and delegates from exploration contractors to discuss the future of deep-sea exploration and resource management. Representatives from 14 International Seabed Authority exploration contractors representing Russian Federation, Japan, China, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Cook Islands, Germany, France and Jamaica as well as the Interoceanmetal Joint Organisation under a consortium of sponsoring states attended the meeting.



The event was inaugurated in the august presence of Her Excellency Madam Leticia Carvalho, Secretary-General of the ISA; Dr. M. Ravichandran, Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), Government of India; Prof. Sunil Kumar Singh, Director of CSIR-NIO Goa; Dr. Erasmo Cabrera, Chair of the Legal and Technical Commission, ISA; and Dr. Vijay Kumar, Advisor to the MoES.

In her address, Her Excellency Madam Leticia Carvalho, Secretary-General of the ISA, said that the annual gathering served as an invaluable platform for the contractors of the ISA to engage in critical discussions concerning the latest advancements in deep-sea technology, address emerging environmental concerns, meticulously review compliance with contractual obligations, and collectively strategize on the sustainable development of marine mineral resources.

Dr. M. Ravichandran, Secretary, MoES, talked about the seabed mineral exploration activities by the MoES, which is the nodal agency of India. He also explained the Polymetallic nodules exploration contract in the Central Indian Ocean Basin and two Polymetallic Sulphides (PMS) exploration contracts in the Indian Ocean Ridges by the MoES.

Prof. Sunil Kumar Singh, Director of CSIR-NIO Goa, spoke about the legacy of Polymetallic nodules program being executed for the past four decades at CSIR-NIO, Goa.

The collaborative spirit essential for navigating the complex challenges and opportunities within deep-seabed exploration was the central part of the deliberations of the meeting. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Vijay Kumar, Scientist and Advisor, MoES with Ms. Livia Ermakova from Russia acting as Vice-Chair.



The discussions covered a wide array of topics, including advancements in exploration technologies, environmental impact assessments, data sharing protocols, and the implementation of the ISA's regulatory framework.

The event was held in continuation of signing of the second PMS exploration contract between MoES and ISA on the 15th September at Delhi, which brought unique recognition to India as the only country to hold two PMS exploration contracts with ISA signifying India's commitment for enhanced seabed mineral exploration under Deep Ocean Mission for the common heritage of mankind.

The ISA, established under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, is responsible for organizing, regulating, and controlling all mineral-related activities in the international seabed area beyond the limits of national jurisdiction.

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(Release ID: 2170625)