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Distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

1. Let me begin by thanking COMRA for its generous support for this international workshop. I also appreciate the hard work in preparation for this workshop by many colleagues from COMRA, National Deep-sea Center in Qingdao and the Second Institute of Oceanography in Hangzhou. I also extend my gratitude to each member of the Steering Committee, which has made a tremendous contribution to the organization of this workshop.

2. As all of you are aware, the International Seabed Authority is the only international organization mandated by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to administer and manage, on behalf of the States Parties to the Convention, the mineral resources in the Area. There are two aspects to this mandate: one is the exploration and exploitation of the mineral resources in the Area for the benefits of human kind as a whole, while the other is the effective protection for the marine environment from harmful effects which may arise from such exploration and exploitation activities. The environmental management objectives of the Authority may be derived from Article 145 of UNCLOS, which includes: (a) the prevention, reduction and control of pollution and other hazards to the marine environment; and (b) the protection and conservation of the natural resources of the Area and the prevention of damage to the flora and fauna of the marine environment.

3. These environmental management objectives will be achieved through several different vehicles, including regulation during the exploration and exploitation phases, and the contractor's own environmental management and monitoring plans during

exploitation. At the regional level, however, the primary vehicle for delivery of the Authority's environmental management objectives will be the REMP. As you know, the first REMP for the Area was adopted for the Clarion-Clipperton Zone in 2012. This included the designation of a network of nine areas of particular environmental interest (APEIs) through a collaborative process involving relevant stakeholders.

4. Since 2012, the Council has repeatedly called upon the Secretariat of the Authority and the Commission to progress the development of similar REMPs in other parts of the Area, in particular where contracts for exploration currently exist. These calls have also been reflected in the resolutions of the General Assembly.

5. As a consequence, in March 2018, the Council considered a preliminary strategy proposed by me for the development of REMPs under the auspices of the Authority for key provinces where exploration activities are taking place. The Council also agreed that the priority areas to be considered include the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, the Indian Ocean triple junction ridge and nodule-bearing province, as well as the North-West Pacific and South Atlantic for seamounts.

6. It is anticipated that having REMPs in place in all mineral provinces where exploration occurs will create the enabling conditions to inform better decision-making processes as well as contribute to the effective management of activities undertaken in the Area. The importance of this project is recognized in the draft strategic plan for the Authority for the five-year period 2019-2023 and we will also be proposing a specific work programme on REMPs in the budget for the financial period 2019-2020.

7. The first phase of this project will be to consider an appropriate methodology for the development of REMPs in areas where there are contracts for polymetallic sulphides and cobalt-rich crusts exploration through the organization of scientific workshops. One workshop – this workshop – will be held in partnership with COMRA in Qingdao (China) in May 2018 and the second workshop in Szczecin, Poland, in June 2018. The Szczecin workshop is aimed at setting the priorities and geographical areas for the development of REMPs for polymetallic sulphides

deposits on mid-ocean ridges. During the second half of 2018, a workshop will be held to review the status of implementation of the REMP adopted for the Clarion-Clipperton-Zone on the basis of newly available data.

8. The second phase of work will focus on the organization of follow-up workshops to finalize the recommendations that will be presented to the Legal and Technical Commission for its consideration. The Commission will then be in a position to decide on any recommendations or proposals to be submitted to the Council.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

9. The present Qingdao workshop is aimed to initiate discussions on the development of a REMP for the cobalt-rich ferromanganese crust zone in the Pacific Ocean (the so-called 'Triangle' area). The goals of the workshop are:

- To understand the national, regional and international policies and laws;
- To find a consensus on the design of the REMPs as well as the preliminary ideas for its framework;
- To produce a work plan for 2-3 years of scientific collaboration to collect and share the data needed for the design of the REMP.

10. I would like to highlight three points:

(a) First, in designing a REMP for the Triangle area, many lessons might be drawn from the existing CCZ-REMP, including the guiding principles, implementation methodology, design principles for APEIs, etc. In each case, we must keep in mind the different nature of the distribution of resources and consider how environmental management objectives will be progressed and what will go into a REMP for each mineral resource.

(b) Second, the Authority must provide guidelines on the assessment and archiving of data and information on baseline studies. Well-structured and organized information for the area where the Authority has issued contracts is of utmost priority for the design of any REMP. The Authority's new database will be a critical asset in ensuring sound and efficient data management. It will contain information collected by contractors and by independent scientific institutions worldwide. It will also host all the environmental information collected on APEIs as well as other baseline management tools defined in REMPs.

(c) Third, the designing of REMPs relies on the cooperation of stakeholders. While the prime responsibility is with the Authority, the Authority should cooperate with other competent international organizations, contractors and independent researchers, as appropriate. Actually, the REMP is largely dependent on the exploration activities by contractors. However, at present, much of these data are not available. Therefore, consideration will have to be given to identify gaps in science and to target research at appropriate scale, which will require different stakeholders to cooperate, in particular with and among the contractors.

Ladies and gentlemen,

11. I am looking forward to a successful and fruitful workshop with your contributions. I reiterate my thanks to all of you for your participation in the workshop and continued support to the work of the Authority.