



**Statement by ..., Head of Delegation of the Holy See to the Second Part of the Twenty-sixth Session of the Council of the International Seabed Authority, on agenda item 12, “Draft regulations for exploitation of mineral resources in the Area (Roadmap)”, 9 December 2021**

Mr. President,

As this is the first time my Delegation is taking the floor during this second part of the Council’s twenty-sixth session, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, the Vice-Presidents, and members of the Council on your elections. The Holy See wishes to assure this Council of its support and constructive engagement.

The important work on the mining code was sadly delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Holy See, therefore, welcomes the report of the Secretary-General entitled “*Status of the draft regulations on exploitation of mineral resources in the Area and proposed road map for 2022 and 2023*”<sup>1</sup> and this discussion on future steps on the draft regulations. My Delegation takes this opportunity to make four brief points.

- 1) Both the lack of progress due to the pandemic and the notification presented by the Government of Nauru confirm the urgency to make progress on the mining code. The Holy See, therefore, encourages this Council to prioritize the negotiations on the draft regulations over the coming sessions.
- 2) While a new timeline is necessary, the Holy See wishes to reiterate that completion of the mining code cannot only be a matter of meeting a deadline. The importance of the subject matter and the real-world consequences that the regulations will have – for us and future generations – demand that sufficient time and space is found to ensure exhaustive consideration of and discussions on the text.
- 3) The Holy See supports, therefore, the Secretary-General’s proposal of dedicating time at the upcoming sessions to the informal working groups, with no parallel meetings. This will facilitate focused participation of all delegations, promote coherence among the

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<sup>1</sup> [ISBA/26/C/44](#).

work done in the various groups, and allow both broader issues and the draft text itself to be the subject of proper negotiations.

- 4) Enlarging the number of days for the upcoming sessions of the Council and Assembly also has the Holy See's support. While some work may be facilitated through a virtual format, my Delegation believes that the experience of virtual negotiations during the pandemic has proven that in-person discussions on intergovernmental documents are far superior to and more effective in achieving a truly successful outcome.

Thank you, Mr. President.