

Day 1 Monday afternoon Standards and guidelines

Deep Sea Conservation Coalition

Thank you Mr President

In the Deep sea Conservation Coalition's (DSCC's) view, all of the Standards and Guidelines are premature for three reasons.

The first reason is that before the standards and guidelines can be negotiated and adopted, the member States of the ISA must agree to a fundamental approach to the protection of the environment to guide the development of any standards and guidelines, as well as environmental regulations.

First among these is to adopt a clear requirement that biodiversity loss should not be permitted. Almost 80 heads of State have signed the Leaders Pledge for Nature to Reverse Biodiversity Loss by 2030 for Sustainable Development and to mainstream this commitment into extractive industries. Most of the Heads of State which signed the pledge are from countries that are members of the ISA.

Secondly, the standards and guidelines, as well as the regulations under negotiation by the ISA, must align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including, in particular, SDG 14 and its Target 14.2 to "by 2020, sustainably manage, and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience and take action for their restoration, to achieve healthy and productive oceans." States should ensure that the ISA standards, guidelines and regulations should not permit deep-sea mining unless significant adverse impacts on marine ecosystems; degradation of the resilience of marine ecosystems; and impacts from which recovery will be difficult or impossible over meaningful timeframes can all be prevented.

Third, any standards and guidelines, as well as the regulations themselves, should require a comprehensive catalogue and assessment of the species and ecosystems, their characteristics and dynamics, and the ecosystem services such species and ecosystems provide, in both benthic and pelagic areas potentially impacted by deep-sea mining. This should be a basic requirement of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) and regional environmental management plan (REMP) processes and any associated standards and guidelines. We do not agree, for example, that 'adaptive management' is an appropriate means of managing the risks of large-scale, long-term and irreversible damage to marine ecosystems, loss of biodiversity and loss of ecosystem services, much less the risk of extinction before species have even been discovered, as a result of, or to compensate for, lack of scientific information or ignorance.

Critically, the standards and guidelines cannot be developed before the exploitation regulations are finalized. This is very clear from the three documents under review. To cite one clear example, the current draft Regulation 26, the Environmental Performance Guarantee, so far only applies to mine closure, so has no applicability during the entire period of actual mining. The resulting standard and guideline follows the Regulation, as is to be expected. As a result, the draft standard and guideline would only apply to mine closures, perpetuating the gap.

As other Parties have said, it is our view that Standards and Guidelines aiming at supporting the implementation of the regulations, should be developed after the finalisation of the regulations themselves. The current drafts S&G are developed based on the version of the

draft regulations on exploitation (ISBA/25/C/WP.1) dated March 2019, which cannot be considered finalized, nor adopted.

The DSCC has highlighted a number of additional issues of concern regarding the potential impacts of deep-sea mining as well as structural and operational concerns in regard to the ISA as a regulatory body. These can be found on the website of the DSCC at www.savethehighseas.org

Thank you Mr President