

GER Statement on Report by the Chair of the LTC

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Thank you Mr. President and good morning to all,

Germany would like to thank the Chair of the LTC as well as all members of the LTC for this report and for their hard and continuous work, including intersessional activities and late-night remote meetings, to advance the mining code, in recent times in particular the standards and guidelines as well as the Regional Environmental Management Plans.

We would also like to thank the Secretariat for the reliable and continuous support of the LTC's work.

Regarding the substance of the Report, we would like to refer to two issues raised in this report.

First, we would like to refer the Council to Section IV of the report, Paragraphs 16-18:

We welcome the progress made by the LTC in relation to the REMP for the Mid Atlantic Ridge region. In particular, we welcome that LTC used as the basis for their work the proposals by the Netherlands and Germany and co-sponsored by Costa Rica, regarding a standardized approach and a harmonized template for REMPs.

Germany looks forward to reviewing further developments of these generalized documents at the upcoming meetings in July that will hopefully allow the Council to agree upon a standard procedure for REMPs to be applied in any future REMP developments.

The Mid Atlantic Ridge REMP should, in our eyes, be finalized after agreement of these general standards.

For the Mid Atlantic Ridge REMP, Germany considers it essential that a broad stakeholder consultation is performed on the basis of the revised plan, approaching all competent international and regional organisations, including regional seas conventions, and that a timeline for this

stakeholder consultation is established soon. We look forward to actively contribute to this important process.

I will now come to my second point regarding Section V Paragraph 19 – the Guidance for contractors in relation to EIAs

We welcome the review of this important guidance, in light of the ongoing discussions on Standards and Guidelines and the draft exploitation regulations.

At this point, we would like to offer some suggestions for the further revision of the document:

- The LTC Recommendations are complex and technical and at the same time have a strong effect on the assessment and eventually the performance of exploration activities. The experts consulted for the review of the guidelines should include – apart from exploration contractors - also member States and observers. We propose to set out the new draft recommendations for broader consultation, and to include a scientific expert review.
- As recently experienced with the EIS submitted by NORI, we see several weaknesses in the current version of the Recommendations Document:
 - - the EIS, to be submitted one year before a planned mining test, has to be complete, accurate and statistically sound. It should include a comprehensive baseline investigation and the designation of representative Preservation Reference Zone and Impact Reference Zone, and a long-term monitoring programme covering the impact zone. In case of major gaps identified, the 1 year time limit should need to be postponed.
 - Also, the criteria and procedure for the review of the EIS by the LTC should be revised to be in line with the draft regulations to be agreed, including the provisions for stakeholder consultation and the option to reject an EIS.

The EIS should only be processed by the LTC after the consultations have been completed.

- The revised Recommendations should furthermore provide for a framework for the design of monitoring programmes to measure the effects of mining tests or other disturbances.
- Eventually, the LTC Recommendations should serve the ISA to "ensure the uniform application of environmental standards". In line with an outcome-based approach, the Recommendations should be designed in such a way that the quality of the EIS and Annual Contractor Reports can be verified, and that the LTC has the power to request improvements on the performed baseline investigations and applied monitoring programmes.

We thank the Commission for engaging in this important review and again the Chair of the LTC for his report.

Thank you Mr. President