

Italy – Statement 7 th December 2021
26 th Session of the International Seabed Authority

Item 12
ISBA/26/C/44

Sorry for taking the floor again, Mr President. Allow me to make two additional considerations in the light of what the distinguished delegates have said so far.

First of all, Italy agrees with the UK delegation that, although relevant, the topic of what would happen in case the regulation is not ready by 2023 should be considered at the end of 2022, when we will have a clearer picture of where we are. We should not take precious time away from what we are primarily expected to do, that is concluding comprehensive regulations for exploitation.

Wise people always have a plan B, but wiser people wisely stick to their plan A.

Italy is not a sponsoring state, has no contractors, but we think that adopting a sound, robust regulations on exploitation will guaranteed the most appropriate protection to the deep sea environment.

Having said so, no one has so far objected the need to continue negotiating towards the adoption of a complete and robust text for the exploitation of mineral resources in line with what is required under the 1994 Agreement. Italy therefore thinks that starting from this session we should move to set the specific goals we expect to achieve in next session and elaborate in more details in which way we are willing to progress our work. This would also allow to fully understand the extent and the content of the intersessional work which, although not a substitute for in person negotiations, will certainly provide a platform to speed up negotiations. As we are in December and the next session will take place on February/ March 2022, we should use the time we have to get ready to substantially improve the DR text by that date.

With respect to the proposed task force, Italy is of the view that it should not duplicate the work conducted within the Council. Its eventual creation should be linked to a clear mandate, limited in time, and it shall make practical and concrete proposals to be presented before the next session of the Council. Otherwise, this would only result in slowing down the entire negotiating process, a result which is clearly in contrast with what the 1994 Implementation agreement requires from us.