

**ISA Assembly**

**Item 9**

**Tuesday 14 December**

**OceanCare intervention Assembly**

Thank you Mr. President,

Let me first congratulate you for your election and Secretary General Michael Lodge for his re-election.

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to the Assembly for granting observer status to OceanCare. Particularly, I would like to thank the delegations of Spain and Costa Rica for their warm support and high esteem of our previous work.

I would also like to congratulate Costa Rica for its clear words on the lack of legal basis for an alleged balance between environmental protection and economic benefits. Art. 145 UNCLOS speaks a clear language here.

Another important issue was raised by the Federated States of Micronesia and Fiji regarding SDG 13: The oceans are a major carbon sink. And to disturb this crucial ecosystem service could seriously backfire on our efforts to halt climate change.

Let me also echo the concerns raised by the delegates of Greenpeace and the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition, including on the restrictions for delegations to participate in this meeting due to the Covid pandemic.

OceanCare has been working on underwater noise in various international fora for almost two decades. Noise pollution will be a major issue of deep-sea mining, as has been acknowledged by the Authority on previous occasions. The issue starts at the explorational phase with acoustic measures used to detect mineral deposits and would considerably increase at the exploitational stage with major noise sources reaching from the surface (for example from the vessels involved) along the water column (for example the riser systems) down to the deep seafloor where the mining machinery will emit various loud noises. As a consequence, the detrimental impacts on marine life are very likely to be significant.

This major pollutant deserves our attention and diligence when considering deep-sea mining. OceanCare recently published a report on noise emissions from deep-sea mining activities and their impact on marine life to give an overview on the issue and provide some recommendations on how to address it. We are looking very much forward to contribute our knowledge and experience in this area within a transparent and inclusive process with a view to follow the precautionary principle and the effective protection of the marine environment from harmful impacts from human activities in the area.

Thank you again Mr. President!