

P-SIDS REGIONAL TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP

“Deep seabed environmental management and monitoring”

27th July 2021

SPC Opening Remarks

- Honourable Mark Brown, Prime Minister of the Cook Islands
- Mr Michael Lodge, Secretary-General, International Seabed Authority
- Mr Liu Zhenmin, Under Secretary General, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs
- Mr Jens Frølich Holte, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway
- Mr Henry Puna, Secretary-General of the Pacific Islands Forum

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

A very warm greetings from the Pacific Community to you all.

It is indeed my pleasure to accept the invitation to provide some opening remarks for this training workshop on “Deep Seabed Environmental Management and Monitoring”.

I understand that this event is the 4th training workshop to be organised under the UNDESA-ISA “Abyssal Initiative for Blue Growth” for the Pacific. I am glad that SPC was invited as a partner and I have been informed that my staff at the GEM Division have been working collaboratively with the ISA, UNDESA and the Commonwealth Secretariat in this capacity building initiative.

It is vitally important that Pacific Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) that have an interest in deep sea mining should have the required capacity to be able to fully participate in this new industry. Apart from the broad range of benefits that countries are likely to enjoy such as employment and government revenue through royalties and taxes, they should also have the capacity to be able to enforce the law and effectively regulate deep sea mining activities.

Over the last decade the Pacific Community has been supporting the Pacific SIDS through capacity building initiatives, development of regional and national frameworks, as well as engaging various experts and stakeholders, which enable Pacific SIDS to make informed decisions in relation to their respective deep seabed mineral development interests. SPC will again participate in this training workshop and contribute to building the knowledge base and capacities of the four Pacific Sponsoring States, namely Cook Islands, Nauru, Kiribati and Tonga.

I would like to thank the ISA and UNDESA for organising this training workshop that specifically focuses on deep seabed environmental management and monitoring. While a number of developed countries have conducted or moving towards pilot mining, full deep seabed mining operation is yet to happen anywhere in the world. All the Pacific SIDS are relying heavily on fishery resources for both their daily sustenance and economic wellbeing. Most of these countries are concerned about the potential impacts of deep seabed mining on their fish stocks. Fish is a migratory species and what happens in “the Area” can potentially adversely impact the fishery resources within the national jurisdictions of Pacific SIDS.

I am sure this workshop will help build the national capacities of the four Pacific Sponsoring States in environmental management and monitoring of deep seabed mining activities with national jurisdiction

as well as in the Area. SPC will continue to work with partners to secure the required resources and provide relevant technical assistance and sound advice that will enable Pacific SIDS to make informed decision.

SPC, as the lead agency on DSM in the Pacific, will continue to be involved in any DSM development discussions and to ensure that DSM activities are conducted in an environmentally sound manner and the Pacific SIDS will get their fair share of the benefits.

Thank you