

U.S. Intervention at ISA Council Meeting on Proposed APEI-13 Designation

December 2021

- Thank you, Mr. President. As this is the first opportunity for our delegation to speak, we congratulate you on your election as President and assure you of our delegation's support of your stewardship over the Council's work. We wish to thank the government of Jamaica and the Secretariat for facilitating these in-person meetings. We also wish to congratulate the LTC and in particular its chair for the impressive work done over the last two years under immensely challenging circumstances.
- The United States strongly supports measures, including the establishment of APEIs, for the protection of the unique flora and fauna and ecosystems of the deep sea environment, and to develop a better understanding of those systems, their interdependencies, and their variability before beginning any development of these areas. This will be crucial for understanding the impact of any future extractive activities and ensuring their safety and best practices in any development.
- The United States notes the potential importance of deep seabed mining as a source of metals needed for renewable energy technologies. At the same time, we need to ensure effective protection of the marine environment.
- The United States for decades has advocated for a stable and internationally recognized framework for seabed mining that has protection of the marine environment as a core principle. It is essential that this regulatory framework provide effective protection for the marine environment from harmful effects which may arise from seabed mining activities, as required by the Convention. In this context, the ISA's consideration of APEIs to strengthen the Regional Environmental Management Plan for the Clarion-Clipperton Zone is appreciated.
- The U.S. Congress enacted legislation in 1980 to regulate the exploration and commercial activities of U.S. citizens in seabed areas through licenses and permits. Under this legislation, the United States issued a number of exploration licenses in the early 1980s, two of which continue to be periodically renewed under U.S. law. The United States notes that proposed APEI-13 overlaps in part with one of these two exploration licenses.
- The current and previous U.S. Administrations have had a long-standing interest in the United States becoming party to the Law of the Sea Convention and participating in the work of the Authority as a full member. If and when the United States joins the Convention, we would seek to better align the foregoing interests with decisions that may be taken here.
- We thank you for the opportunity to deliver this statement and thank you for your consideration.