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Notification dated 28 July 2005 sent to member States by the Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority in accordance with regulation 20, paragraph 1 (c), of the Regulations on Prospecting and Exploration for Polymetallic Nodules in the Area

The Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority has the honour, in accordance with regulation 20, paragraph 1 (c), of the Regulations on Prospecting and Exploration for Polymetallic Nodules in the Area (ISBA/6/A/18, annex), to notify the member States of the Authority of the receipt, on 21 July 2005, of an application for approval of a plan of work for exploration for polymetallic nodules from the German Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources on behalf of Germany. A summary of the application as provided by the applicant is attached herewith for the information of member States of the Authority (see annex).

The application has been placed on the agenda of the Council for consideration at the eleventh session of the Authority. The members of the Legal and Technical Commission have been duly notified of the application in accordance with regulation 21, and the application has been placed on the Commission's agenda for its meeting from 8 to 19 August.

Annex I

Summary of the German application for exploration of polymetallic nodules

On behalf of the German Federal Government, the German Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (BGR) is submitting an application for the exploration of polymetallic nodules in two distinct areas in the Pacific nodule belt (see figure): area W (~13°N/137°W; 34,080 km²; 4,850 m average water depth) and area E (~12°N/118°W; 115,896 km²; 4,200 m average water depth), covering a total area of 149,976 km². The application is based on prospection data collected from 1976 to 1978 by the German consortium Arbeitsgemeinschaft meerestechnisch gewinnbarer Rohstoffe (AMR) within the scope of the polymetallic nodule investigations under the auspices of the Ocean Management Inc. (OMI) consortium. BGR has inherited voluminous archive material from the German company Preussag AG, which, as a partner of AMR, was active as pioneer prospector on polymetallic nodules in the central Pacific Ocean and even undertook a pilot mining test in the 1980s. According to the 624 samples recovered from the sea floor, the average nodule coverage is 7.8 kg/m² in area W and 13.5 kg/m² in area E, and the nodule resources of the total area amount to 1,830 million tons, with nickel, copper and cobalt altogether comprising 46.6 million tons. The proposed work programme for the first five years will include the comprehensive evaluation of the Preussag archive material and a research cruise to the license area. The central topics of this cruise will be: (a) the acquisition and interpretation of acoustic reflectivity data (utilization of the side-scan sonar function of modern swath sounding systems); (b) seafloor sampling for calibration and ground truthing of digital acoustic data; and (c) the investigation of benthic communities (taxonomy, composition of assemblages, biodiversity).

