

International Seabed Authority

Press Release



Eleventh Session
Kingston, Jamaica
15 - 26 August 2005

Council (PM)

**SB/11/5
15 August 2005**

ISA COUNCIL DEFERS DETAILED DISCUSSION ON NEW REGULATIONS; DELEGATIONS TO EXAMINE EXPLANATORY NOTES FROM LEGAL AND TECHNICAL COMMISSION

The Council of the International Seabed Authority, meeting in Kingston this afternoon, agreed to defer until tomorrow morning its consideration of the rules, regulations and procedures for prospecting and exploration for polymetallic sulphides and cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts in the international seabed Area.

The decision was to allow delegations to study the set of Explanatory Notes (ISBA/11/C/5), governing those newly discovered rich minerals, prepared by the Legal and Technical Commission.

The Russian Federation, supported by China, proposed deferment of discussion of the draft regulations to give delegations time to examine the Explanatory Notes.

At the beginning of the afternoon session, President of the Council, Hee Kwon Park (Republic of Korea) noted that deliberation on the draft regulations, (ISBA/10/C/WP.1) which began last year, was a major item of the body's agenda. He proposed that statements of a general nature be made by representatives, followed by discussion on the item, regulation by regulation to ensure that a consensus was reached at the end. He drew attention to the Explanatory Notes saying they provided a useful basis for the discussions.

The representative of the Russian Federation felt that the president's proposal would not be effective at this time, especially since most delegations offered such comments at the last session. He said time would be better spent analyzing the LTC's document.

The Explanatory Notes outline the rationale followed by the LTC for its formulation of several key elements of the draft regulations. The Commission prepared the notes at the request of the Secretariat to address concerns and issues raised by members of the Council during the last session.

Five areas of uncertainty were raised during Council discussion at the tenth session. These areas, addressed in the explanatory notes, are the rationale behind a single set of regulations for the two deposits; rationale behind selection of block size; number of blocks in an exploration area; the contiguity of blocks and the rate and apportionment of blocks during relinquishment.

The Council will spend the remainder of this week considering the draft regulations. During the second week other agenda items will be addressed including consideration of recommendation of the Legal and Technical Commission for the approval of a plan of work submitted by the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources, on behalf of the Federal Republic of Germany. It will also take up the report of the LTC and the report and recommendations of the Finance Committee.

The Council will resume at 10 a.m. tomorrow, with the Legal and Technical Commission meeting in closed session.

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