

## **SPC Intervention at ISA Assembly**

Thank you Madam President,

As this is the first time the Pacific Community is taking the floor, please allow me to congratulate you in your appointment as the President of the Assembly. The Pacific Community wishes to thank the Secretary General for his excellent leadership and the Secretariat staff for their hard work over the last year.

The Pacific Community wishes to thank Madam President of the Council for her leadership and the Council members for their deliberations last week over important issues pertaining to the operation of various organs of the Authority.

In particular the review of the Exploitation Regulation. While we were listening attentively to the exchange of views we are glad that the Council has made progress in its endeavour to have a robust Regulation that we can all be proud of.

Madam President, the Pacific Community is the oldest regional organisation serving the Pacific Small Islands Developing States, it was established in 1947 and last month we celebrated our seventy-second anniversary.

Our mandate and annual work programmes are driven by our member country development needs and priorities. 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 interests.

Madam President, I travelled around the Pacific SIDS in the last decade conducting national deep seabed mineral stakeholder consultation workshops, and a common issue that was consistently raised by various in-country stakeholders is their concern about the potential impacts of deep seabed mineral activities on fishery resources.

The Pacific SIDS are heavily dependent on fishery resources and collectively they have a valid concern that needs to be considered and addressed in the Exploitation Regulations. The Pacific Community wishes to reiterate our call for the application of the Precautionary Approach and science-based decision making in all deep

seabed mineral activities in both national jurisdiction and the Area that will ensure adverse impacts on the living resources of the ocean are avoided or minimised.

Madam President, in our effort to address the concerns of Pacific SIDS, an “Assessment of the potential impacts of deep seabed mining on Pacific Island fisheries” was conducted and completed in 2016, in collaboration with our partners. This report has been shared widely with Pacific SIDS and partners.

The Pacific Community wishes to sincerely thank the ISA Secretariat and the UNDESA for their support to Pacific SIDS through the Abyssal Initiative for Blue Growth. In line with the wishes of our members, the Pacific SIDS, and consistent with the Pacific Community-ISA Secretariat Memorandum of Understanding, the Pacific Community is indeed privileged to support this capacity building initiative. It is an innovative approach that supports the aspirations of four Pacific SIDS that have decided to sponsor activities in the Area.

Allow me Madam President, to also thank PEW Charitable Trusts for its support that enables Pacific SIDS delegates to participate and contribute in many ISA organised events. This Pacific Community-PEW Charitable Trusts partnership has allowed Pacific SIDS representatives to effectively contribute to important ISA matters.

Lastly, Madam President the Pacific Community would like to congratulate ISA on its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and the remarkable work that had been achieved over the last 25 years. We wish the Secretary-General and the Authority many successes for the benefit of human kind in the next 25 years.

I thank you Madam President