

## *WWF statement/reply to SG statement ISA 23*

**Thank you Mr President,**

And also to thank the SG for his comprehensive report.

Mr President, Assembly members and observers

In reply to the SG report we would like to highlight the following,

Independent scientific research should be encouraged/funded in order to complement contractor data and to aid in the development and population of environmental baseline databases.

Hence we are pleased to see the described partnerships, the taxonomic atlas series and in particular the developments around the use of DNA sequencing and monitoring of marine biodiversity in the SGs report.

We believe this is a good start, but relating to this and the data management strategy specific data beyond contractor data is still needed to fill the gaps in knowledge and aid the characterisation of the deep sea environment and time should be allowed for this credible characterisation.

For example environmental data should be fully shared, and national reports be made publicly available to all and only subject to specific protection of proprietary data according to prescribed procedures.

It is only through transparency of such comparable good quality data that accountability will be achieved regarding the credible/realistic assessment of environmental impacts and putting in place measures which are sufficient and will protect the marine environment.

Finally we recognise the Authorities efforts to engage a wide range of stakeholders through consultations and surveys and through the already developed stakeholder communication strategy, however we feel it would be useful to have specific insight into how stakeholder inputs are considered regarding decision making, not only in the process of regulatory development but also in the context of how stakeholders should be involved in relevant stages of implementation of the regulatory regime.

Such 2 way engagement will become even more important as the Authority moves towards potential exploitation.

Thank you ... ----- / end /-----