



Council

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Agenda item 14

Report of the Chair of the Legal and Technical Commission on the work of the Commission at its twenty-seventh session

Decision of the Council of the International Seabed Authority on the deferral of the schedule of relinquishment upon request by the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources

The Council of the International Seabed Authority,

Recalling that, on 6 May 2015, the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources entered into a 15-year contract for exploration for polymetallic sulphides with the Authority,

Recalling also regulation 27, paragraph 2, of the regulations on prospecting and exploration for polymetallic sulphides in the Area (“the Regulations”),¹ which refers to the schedule of relinquishments of the area allocated to contractors,

Noting that, according to such schedule the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources is required to relinquish at least 50 per cent of the original contract area allocated to it by 6 May 2023, being the end of the eighth year from the date of the contract, and at least 75 per cent of the original contract area allocated to it by 6 May 2025, being the end of the tenth year from the date of the contract,

Noting also that the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources requested to defer the schedule of relinquishment, owing to the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on its operational activities,

Recalling that, pursuant to regulation 27, paragraph 6, of the Regulations, the Council may, at the request of the contractor, and on the recommendation of the Commission, in exceptional circumstances, defer the schedule of relinquishment and that such exceptional circumstances shall be determined by the Council and shall include, inter alia, consideration of prevailing economic circumstances or other unforeseen exceptional circumstances arising in connection with the operational activities of the contractor,

¹ [ISBA/16/A/12/Rev.1](#), annex.



Considering that the Legal and Technical Commission has found that the reasons presented by the contractor qualify as “unforeseen exceptional circumstances arising in connection with the operational activities of the contractor”,² and has recommended to defer by one year the schedule of the first relinquishment to 6 May 2024 and the second relinquishment to 6 May 2026,

Acting upon the recommendation of the Commission,

1. *Determines* that the reasons presented by the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources qualify as “unforeseen exceptional circumstances arising in connection with the operational activities of the contractor”;
2. *Defers* the schedule of the first and second relinquishments as recommended by the Commission;³
3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to communicate the present decision to the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources.

*277th meeting
30 March 2022*

² See [ISBA/27/C/16](#).

³ *Ibid.*