

UK General Statement during the 309th meeting of the Council

- The UK is a world leader on tackling climate change and an international advocate for the highest possible environmental standards.
- Whilst deep sea mining is not currently undertaken in international waters we recognise the growing pressure to extract deep-sea resources and are concerned about the potential impacts of mining activities on the fragile marine environment.
- This is why the UK supports a moratorium on the granting of exploitation licenses for deep sea mining projects by the International Seabed Authority (ISA).
- This precautionary approach which means we will not sponsor or support the issuing of any such licences for deep sea mining by the ISA unless and until there is sufficient scientific evidence about the potential impact on deep sea ecosystems.
- This is why the UK has been driving the need for strong enforceable environmental regulations, standards and guidelines to be developed by the ISA and put in place before any mining commences.
- To support this, the UK is committed to developing a new multi-disciplinary UK deep sea mining environmental expert network to champion UK expertise in environmental sciences, leading on filling gaps in knowledge in order to provide sufficient scientific evidence to fully understand the potential environmental impacts of deep sea mining.
- This announcement makes it clear that the UK recognises that the impacts of deep sea mining are not fully understood and our position is to proactively support research, using UK scientific expertise, to improve international understanding and enable effective regulation.