

IUCN Statement
ISA 29th Session, Part II
Council and Assembly
July 2024
ISA HQ, Kingston, Jamaica

Delivered on 31st July 2024 – Agenda item 7 - Annual report of the Secretary-General under article 166, paragraph 4, of the Convention

Thank you, Mr. President.

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates and colleagues,

As this is the first time our delegation takes the floor in this Assembly, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) would like to join the chorus in expressing our support to you Mr President and in thanking the Government of Jamaica for its warm hospitality, and the Secretary-General and all Secretariat members for their hard work in developing the annual report. IUCN also acknowledges the good efforts deployed by delegations in recent weeks and welcomes the new observers.

IUCN continues to uphold the need for a moratorium until the six conditions set forth in IUCN Resolution 122 are met. These are:

1. The **risks** of mining are comprehensively understood and effective protection can be ensured;
2. **rigorous and transparent impact assessments** are conducted based on comprehensive baseline studies;
3. the **Precautionary Principle and the ‘Polluter Pays Principle’** are implemented;
4. **policies incorporating circular economy principles** to reuse and recycle minerals have been developed and implemented;
5. mechanisms are in place to **consult with the public** throughout decision-making; and
6. the governance of deep-sea mining is **transparent, accountable, inclusive, effective and environmentally responsible.**

Scientific research strongly indicates that these six conditions have not yet been met. That the known and widely documented **risks are not acceptable; the technical and economic viability** of seabed mining remains unproven and controversial. The environmental, social and cultural **impacts cannot be effectively assessed, managed nor compensated; and** the regulations remain insufficient.

We know that if deep-sea mining is permitted to occur, **biodiversity loss** in these unique ecosystems will be inevitable, and the consequences for ocean ecosystem function, and for humanity, will be vast.

The recent **ITLOS advisory opinion** states that *“The development of an effective common regulatory framework presupposes the existence of adequate information on the state of the marine environment based on updated scientific criteria and methods.”* To reflect this requirement will entail an enhanced collaborative approach to independent marine scientific research and significantly scaled-up funding.

Mr President, many voices have joined the call for a ban, pause or moratorium on deep-sea mining in the Area; **30 ISA Member states**, civil society, along with a growing number of companies, investors and re-insurers covering 60% of global insurance. It is **time that we listen to these voices.**

As the Assembly is the supreme organ of the ISA, IUCN welcomes the proposed agenda item to discuss a **general policy on the protection of the marine environment**. Such a policy is timely, necessary and overdue. It is a precondition to giving effect to the Authority’s legal responsibility to ensure the effective protection of the marine environment from the harmful effects of exploitation activities before allowing them to commence,

IUCN similarly welcomes the commencement of the second, also **overdue, periodic review of the ISA** as set out in Art 154. It is a vital opportunity to improve the **transparency, accountability and inclusiveness** of the Organization.

Mr President,

Given the recent adoption of the BBNJ Agreement, it is now time for Member States to ensure that **legal responsibilities and political ambition** for the protection and preservation of the marine environment are not compromised by the decisions taken by the Authority. As trustees acting on behalf of humankind as a whole, the common heritage of humankind principle must reign supreme in the work of the Authority.

In closing IUCN believes in **equity and equality which includes access to information and resources. IUCN therefore remains committed to assisting in particular**

developing countries wishing to gain access to the latest scientific, governance, economic and financial information to make informed decisions.

I will end with a quote made by the Secretary General, "Let us hope that the best days lies ahead of us."

With that, we thank you for giving us the floor adding the voice of nature.