

Agenda Item 15: General Policy for the Protection and Preservation of the Marine Environment

Panama fully supports the proposal by Chile, Brazil, Costa Rica, France, Germany, Ireland, Palau, Switzerland, and Vanuatu to develop and adopt a "General Policy of the Authority for the Protection and Preservation of the Marine Environment." At a time when global concern about the devastating potential impacts of deep-sea mining in international waters is increasing, establishing this Policy is an unavoidable duty to meet the objectives of UNCLOS and adopt a precautionary approach to activities in the Area.

This Policy must be developed, discussed, and approved with the collaboration of all members of the Authority, including the Council, the Legal and Technical Commission, and observers, through open inter-sessional dialogues. Only through collective and well-founded adoption can we fulfill our mandate to protect the marine environment from the harmful effects of deep-sea mining in international waters.

This proposal represents not just a step forward but a significant advance in our efforts to safeguard the marine environment of the Area. This Assembly, as the supreme body, has the responsibility to provide the necessary responses for the proper development of the Authority's processes. We must initiate a process that generates the major agreements necessary to define effective protection of the marine environment.

The adoption of this policy will establish a cohesive and robust framework for the Authority's decision-making, integrating best governance practices and science-based decisions. It will also strengthen our coordination with other relevant instruments, such as the BBNJ Agreement and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Moreover, this Policy is vital to defining the minimum standards for the protection and preservation of biodiversity in international waters, a region still vastly unknown. We need a solid instrument that ensures the survival of the millions of deep-sea species yet to be discovered. Protecting this biodiversity is essential to maintaining the balance and health of our oceans.

Panama's support for this proposal not only underscores our dedication to the sustainable environmental management of the ocean but also highlights the importance of international collaboration to overcome global environmental challenges. This initiative will strengthen the Authority's capacity to lead in sustainable development and environmental preservation, setting a standard of excellence for ocean governance.

We call on all member states to support this draft decision of the Assembly. Together, we can take monumental steps to ensure the health and sustainability of our oceans. Let us honor our common heritage and commit to taking decisive actions today to secure a thriving marine environment tomorrow.

