



Tetiara Society Opening Statement

Thank you Mr. President.

For the admission of our organization as an Observer and for granting me the floor.

Thanks also to our wonderful hosts the people and government of Jamaica.

Your Excellencies, Ministers, Secretary General, Members of the Assembly, Observers, ladies and gentlemen

I deliver this statement on behalf of Tetiara Society.

Our organization was founded to preserve and protect the atoll of Tetiara in French Polynesia, and develop it as a model for atoll conservation. Led by our local communities, supported by visitors and international partners, we carry out research, conservation, and education programs on the island – doing our best to make Tetiara a beacon of hope for the world. But, we cannot protect the island of Tetiara, in the heart of the Pacific, if the world continues to pollute and extract from the ocean that surrounds us and nurtures our planet – our island Earth.

To help protect these global commons we created the Blue Climate Initiative to focus on climate change solutions and ocean conservation. Convening experts from across the world, we learned that while there are many opportunities to sustainably use the ocean for food, energy, and medicines, deep sea mining represents an unacceptable risk with dubious potential benefits.

This commitment is why we are here, where we have brought science and traditional knowledge to bear on both technical issues, and in support of indigenous people of the Pacific. On the technical side, we invite you to read the paper on the Blue Climate Initiative website that makes the point that, new battery technologies have already made mining deep sea metals totally unnecessary.

The recent discovery of “dark oxygen” on the seafloor in the Clarion Clipperton Zone has potential implications for theories on the origin of life, and as an engine that sustains life across the ocean floor. This discovery offers an opportunity to see the profound connections between science and traditional knowledge. Here on the floor of the Assembly we have heard from our Hawaiian partners from the Maui Nui Makai Network and yesterday from His Excellency from Palau and the Honorable Minister from Vanuatu, that there is a powerful cultural and spiritual connection between the indigenous people of the Pacific and the deep ocean, including the belief that this is where life on earth was created. If the “dark oxygen” hypothesis turns out to be a reality, then it will confirm what the people of the Pacific have known for thousands of years and add amazing new evidence to the theory that the ocean is the cradle of life.



In what is perhaps a cautionary story, the researchers who made the “dark oxygen” discovery had been recording increases in oxygen levels for some 9 years before they finally trusted their instruments and accepted that oxygen was in fact being produced, potentially by the deep sea nodules themselves.

In a similar fashion the ISA has only started to listen to the indigenous people of the Pacific – those people who for centuries have lived on and cared for that very ocean that is the target of exploitation. Now is the time to accept that there are voices to be heard, and cultural issues to face, before decisions are made on whether to mine the deep sea.

Thank you Mr. President