

## Deep Sea Conservation Coalition, Agenda item 11

17 March, 2025

### Opening Statement

On behalf of the DSCC and our 130 member organizations I would like to start by congratulating you, Madam Secretary General, on your election and to wish you every success in opening this new chapter for the International Seabed Authority. Your leadership presents a **real** opportunity to steer the ISA towards **science** and sound **governance** at a time where **multilateralism**, environmental protection, and global **equity** are more important than ever. You can count on our support in this journey.

There is no denying that we stand at a critical juncture in our stewardship of the planet's most fragile ecosystems. While deep-sea mining is debated here at the ISA, in other fora, States are scrambling to meet obligations to stop and reverse global biodiversity loss. The two are simply incompatible. Independent scientists say [there is currently no way to avoid permanent and irreversible environmental harm](#) if deep-sea mining were to go ahead. Deep-sea mining further [risks disrupting our planet's largest carbon sink](#) during a climate emergency.

The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, stated last year that "the development of an **effective common** regulatory framework **presupposes** the existence of adequate information on the state of the marine environment". Yet a [recent article](#) published in [Nature](#) finds that the Mining Code "currently lacks science-based assessments of **environmental thresholds and indicators of harm**, including **adequate** means to detect damage and biodiversity loss. All components which are necessary to ensure implementation of Article 145 of UNCLOS . The continual groundbreaking science emerging from the depths shows how little we actually know.

What's more, regarding benefit-sharing, a recent report by economists at Planet Tracker indicates that countries could receive little to no economic benefits from deep-sea mining, but rather suffer the costs associated with the consequences of the environmental damage.

**Yet** under the threat of a mining application, the ISA and its members continue to meet under pressure. There is **no actual need** and **no social license** for deep-sea mining: major banks and insurance companies, businesses, fisheries associations, UN human rights leaders, Indigenous peoples and coastal communities publicly reject the industry.

There is an old proverb that goes - the one who rushes, stumbles, loses balance. These are not times where one should rush, but rather **pause** and carefully consider the consequences, guided by the duty to protect the common heritage of humankind.

The UN Secretary-General António Guterres has aptly stated, "We must protect the ocean against the relentless pursuit of **extractivism**. Our oceans are not a limitless resource, and we must act now to ensure **their health** and sustainability for future generations."

A moratorium on deep-sea mining is required to safeguard both the ocean and the multilateral process from **industry pressures**. Under a moratorium or precautionary pause on **extraction**, the ISA could emerge as a global leader in deep-sea stewardship, advancing international cooperation through the promotion of marine science, knowledge and capacity building - generating long term sustainable benefits for humankind as a whole.

Thank you.

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