

## **Agenda Item 18: Ensuring Adequate Scientific Understanding to Support Informed Decision-Making**

Thank you, Mister President for giving me the floor,

This intervention is on behalf of WWF International and Greenpeace.

We strongly supports this agenda item submitted by the Government of Vanuatu and thanks them for bringing forward this important item for discussion.

Significant knowledge gaps remain regarding deep-sea biodiversity, ecosystem functioning, connectivity, recovery rates, ecosystem services, and the cumulative and transboundary impacts of mining activities. These concerns were clearly illustrated during recent discussions on environmental thresholds and in the dialogue with the Legal and Technical Commission. Despite years of work, there is still insufficient scientific knowledge, and more research is needed. If scientifically robust thresholds for harm cannot yet be identified, it is difficult to conclude that harmful effects can be avoided, as required by Article 145 of the Convention.

At the same time, the best available science continues to indicate that deep-sea mining could cause severe and potentially irreversible impacts to ecosystems that are highly vulnerable and slow to recover. For some species and habitats, recovery could take centuries, millennia, or may never occur.

We therefore welcome that Vanuatu will bring this item back on the agenda next session and look forward to further discussions then.

We encourage all Member States to ensure that decisions taken on behalf of humankind as a whole, are taken on the basis of sufficient scientific evidence. Advancing scientific understanding is not separate from informed decision-making, it is a prerequisite for it.

Thank you Mr. President.