

**Annotated Agenda of the Council  
of the International Seabed Authority for  
the first part of its Thirty-first Session  
(9-20 March 2026,<sup>1</sup> Kingston, Jamaica)  
v. 3 March 2026**

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## **I. Introduction**

1. The thirty-first session of the Council of the International Seabed Authority will take place in two parts. The first part will consist of nine meetings from 9 to 20 March 2026,<sup>2</sup> in Kingston, Jamaica, at the Jamaica Conference Center, following the ten-day meetings of the Legal and Technical Commission (23 February to 6 March 2026). The second part is scheduled for 13 to 24 July 2026.

2. This note aims to inform members and observers of the International Seabed Authority on matters for consideration by the Council at its forthcoming March 2026 meetings. It provides an overview of the items on the provisional agenda of the Council ([ISBA/31/C/L.1](#)). All official documents prepared for the upcoming meetings, including the indicative programme of work ([PDF](#)), are placed on the Authority's website as they become available: <https://isa.org.jm/sessions/31st-session-2026/>

3. This note is to be read in conjunction with the Delegates Notebook ([EN](#), [ES](#), [FR](#)). Pre-session documents on the Further Revised Consolidated Text (ISBA/31/C/CRP.1/Rev.2) ([Word/PDF](#)) and its clean version (ISBA/31/C/CRP.2/Rev.2) ([Word/PDF](#)), the Further Revised Suspense Document (ISBA/31/C/CRP.3) ([PDF](#)), the draft indicative list of outstanding issues (ISBA/31/C/CRP.4) ([PDF](#)), the briefing note on the Further Revised Consolidated Text ([PDF](#)), and associate documents are also available for ease of reference on the webpage for the thirty-first session and can be found under the section "Council" and then on the right-side menu under "Part I – Working Documents and Other Information", <https://isa.org.jm/session-31-council-part-1-march-2026/>. All submissions from delegations and observers should be sent to [council@isa.org.jm](mailto:council@isa.org.jm) and will be uploaded on the same webpage.

## **II. Opening of the session (item 1 of the provisional agenda, Monday 9 March 2026)**

4. The Council will open its thirty-first session on Monday 9 March 2025, at 10:00 am, at Conference Room 1 of the Jamaica Conference Center.

## **III. Adoption of the agenda (item 2 of the provisional agenda, Monday 9 March 2025)**

5. Pursuant to Rule 14 of the Rules of Procedure of the Council,<sup>3</sup> at the beginning of each session, the Council shall adopt its agenda for the session on the basis of the provisional agenda. The Council may, however, in urgent circumstances, make additions to the agenda at any time during a session.

6. Accordingly, the first decision of the Council will be the adoption of its agenda for the entire thirty-first session in 2026 ([ISBA/31/C/L.1](#)). For this first part of the session, a total of 12 items out of 21 currently listed on the provisional agenda of the Council will be considered by the Council as indicated on the

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<sup>1</sup> Friday, 20 March 2026, is an official holiday (Eid al-Fitr), observed by the ISA ([ISBA/ST/IC/2025/8](#)).

<sup>2</sup> Friday, 20 March 2026, is an official holiday (Eid al-Fitr), observed by the ISA ([ISBA/ST/IC/2025/8](#)).

<sup>3</sup> [ISBA/C/12](#)

indicative programme of work. The Council will be invited to adopt the agenda of the Council.

#### **IV. Elections of the President and Vice-Presidents (items 3 and 4 of the provisional agenda, Monday 9 March 2025)**

7. Following the adoption of the agenda, the Council will move forward with the election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the Council. Pursuant to rule 22 of the Rules of Procedure of the Council, each year at its first regular session, the Council elects a President and four Vice-Presidents from among its members, so that each regional group is represented by one delegate.

8. Members of the Council are reminded that following the principle of rotation between regional groups, it is the turn of the Asia-Pacific Group to nominate a candidate for the Presidency of the Council for its thirty-first session in 2026.

9. Regarding the nomination of Vice-Presidents, the Secretariat kindly requests regional groups to coordinate their candidate nominations for these positions in advance of the Council's opening session. This preparation will help ensure the smooth conduct of proceedings. Regional groups are encouraged to submit the nominations to the Secretary of the Council, Mr. Marcelino Miranda, at [mmiranda@isa.org.jm](mailto:mmiranda@isa.org.jm) at the earliest available opportunity.

#### **V. Consideration, with a view to adoption, of the draft regulations on exploitation of mineral resources in the Area (item 11 of the provisional agenda, Monday 9 – Thursday 19 March 2026)**

##### ***Presentation of the Further Revised Consolidated Text of the draft regulations on exploitation of mineral resources in the Area***

10. The Council will continue its consideration of the Draft Regulations on the exploitation of mineral resources in the Area, as a matter of priority, following the Council decision on a thematic approach to the continuation of the elaboration of rules, regulations and procedures relating to exploitation to resolve remaining key outstanding matters ([ISBA/30/C/18](#)). According to paragraph 3, the Council requested the secretariat to prepare a further revised consolidated text, based on the discussions during the thirtieth session, and upload it to the website of the International Seabed Authority well in advance of the first meeting of the thirty-first session.

11. In that regard, the secretariat published on 23 December 2025, the following documents:

(a) the Further Revised Consolidated Text (ISBA/31/C/CRP.1) (marked-up version);

(b) a clean version of the Text (ISBA/31/C/CRP.2). For the first time, this clean version has also been published, wherein all marked-up text has been accepted and the comment boxes removed. The document is solely provided with an aim of offering to the Council a better overview of how the content might look. It is highlighted that, in case of any inconsistency between the two documents, the mark-up version shall prevail;

(c) a Further Revised Suspense Document (ISBA/31/C/CRP.3) ([PDF](#)), which contains all the elements to be relocated from the draft Regulations on Exploitation of Mineral Resources in the Area to the Standards and Guidelines and other Rules, Regulations and Procedures of the Authority.

12. On 12 February 2026, a revised version of the Text (ISBA/31/C/CRP.1/Rev.1) and a revised clean version (ISBA/31/C/CRP.2/Rev.1) were published on the website of the Authority, incorporating minor editorial matters identified in the initial version of the document identified by the secretariat and some

additional comments received by working groups. A second revised version of the Text (ISBA/31/C/CRP.1/Rev.2) [/PDF](#)), and a second revised clean version (ISBA/31/C/CRP.2/Rev.2) [\(Word/PDF\)](#) were published on 16 February 2026. [Word/PDF](#)), and a second revised clean version (ISBA/31/C/CRP.2/Rev.2) [\(Word/PDF\)](#) were published on 16 February 2026.

13. Additionally, the Secretariat published a briefing note on the Further Revised Consolidated Text [\(PDF\)](#). Its purpose is to provide an introduction to the text of the draft Exploitation Regulations to assist delegations in their preparations for the thirty-first session of the Council.

#### ***Presentation and examination of the indicative list of outstanding issues***

14. As outlined in paragraph 5 of decision [ISBA/30/C/18](#), and at the request of the Council, the Secretariat has prepared a draft indicative list of outstanding issues [\(PDF\)](#). The list, as instructed, is organized in accordance with the four main thematic areas identified in paragraph 2 of that decision and is based on the discussions held by the Council during its thirtieth session, as well as on outstanding matters reflected in the Further Revised Consolidated Text of the draft regulations on exploitation of mineral resources in the Area.

15. Furthermore, pursuant to ISBA/30/C/18, paragraph 7, the Council decided that it would examine, at the beginning of the thirty-first session, the draft indicative list of outstanding issues prepared by the secretariat, with a view to informing the programme of work of the session.

16. In this regard, the Council will be invited to examine the draft indicative list of outstanding issues.

#### ***Negotiations on the Further Revised Consolidated Text***

17. Pursuant to Council decision ISBA/30/C/18, paragraphs 1, 5, 6 and 7, the Council is expected to continue negotiations on the Further Revised Consolidated Text on a thematic approach for the thirty-first session of the Council towards resolving the remaining key outstanding matters.

18. By the end of the second week, the Council may discuss the development of Standards and Guidelines, review the progress on the draft exploitation regulations and agree on necessary intersessional work.

#### **VI. Report of the Secretary-General on the status of contracts for exploration and related matters, including information on the periodic review of the implementation of approved plans of work for exploration (item 7 of the provisional agenda, Monday 16 March 2026).**

19. The Council will receive for its consideration a report on the status of the contracts for exploration and periodic reviews of the implementation of plans of work for exploration, [ISBA/31/C/3](#) (advanced unedited version). The Council will be invited to take note of the report.

#### **VII. Report of the Chair of the Legal and Technical Commission on the work of the Commission at the first part of its thirty-first session (item 13 of the provisional agenda, Monday 16 March 2026)**

20. The Council will receive a report on the work undertaken by the Legal and Technical Commission during the first part of its thirty-first session, held from 23 February to 6 March 2026. The report will be issued during the first week of the Council meetings in the form of an advance unedited version, followed by its translation into the official languages during the second week of the meetings. The Council may review and take action on any specific recommendations presented by the Commission. The Secretariat will take note of the oral and written comments made by participants during the meeting.

21. An addendum to the Chair's report on the work of the Legal and Technical Commission will be issued following the Commission's meetings in July 2026. As it has become the practice, the Council may subsequently adopt decisions on matters raised in these reports.

***Preliminary considerations on Council decision ISBA/30/C/19***

22. It is expected that some preliminary considerations may take place regarding the decision of the Council relating to the reports of the Chair of the Legal and Technical Commission ([ISBA/30/C/19](#)).<sup>4</sup>

**VIII. Report of the Secretary-General concerning the operationalization of the Economic Planning Commission (item 15 of the provisional agenda, Monday 16 March 2026)**

23. The Council will receive a report of the Secretariat with a proposal prepared for election mechanisms of the Economic Planning Commission, in consultation with the Legal and Technical Commission for technical input only, for consideration by the Council, pursuant to paragraph 2 of Council decision ISBA/30/C/17 on the operationalization of the Commission. The report will contain in its annex a draft decision of the Council on the election of the Economic Planning Commission.

24. The Council will be invited to take note of the report of the Secretariat and to consider adopting the draft decision set out in the annex.

**IX. Report of the Secretary-General on the engagement and cooperation with BBNJ bodies and processes (item 19 of the provisional agenda, Monday 16 March 2026)**

25. The Council will receive a report of the Secretary-General on the potential implications and opportunities for the work of the International Seabed Authority of the operation of the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction. The report includes in its annex a draft decision of the Council on engagement with bodies and processes under the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction.

26. The Council will be invited to take note of the report of the Secretary General and to consider adopting the draft decision set out in the annex.

**X. Report of the Secretary-General on the credentials of members of the Council (item 5 of the provisional agenda, Wednesday 18 March 2026)**

27. The Secretary-General will provide an oral report on the credentials of members of the Council. The Council will be invited to approve the report, pursuant to Rule 19 of the Rules of Procedure of the Council.

**XI. Consideration, with a view to approval, of applications for a plan of work for exploration (item 9 of the provisional agenda, Wednesday 18 March 2026)**

28. The Legal and Technical Commission is considering an application for a plan of work for exploration for polymetallic nodules by Impossible Metals Bahrain W.L.L., sponsored by the Kingdom of Bahrain.

29. If the Commission makes a recommendation to the Council, the Council will have the opportunity to consider the matter.

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<sup>4</sup> This item corresponds to agenda item 12, which is scheduled for consideration during Part II of the thirty-first session in July 2026. However, as preliminary information on the work of the Commission has been requested, it will be addressed under this item at the present meeting.

**XII. Consideration, with a view to approval, of applications for extension of a contract for exploration (item 10 of the provisional agenda, Wednesday 18 March 2026)**

30. As of 31 January 2026, eight applications for the extension of approved plans of work for exploration for polymetallic nodules had been received from the following contractors: Interoceanmetal Joint Organization; JSC Yuzhmorgeologiya; the Government of the Republic of Korea; China Ocean Mineral Resources Research and Development Association; Deep Ocean Resources Development Co. Ltd; Institut français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer; Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources of Germany; and Nauru Ocean Resources Inc. Each applicant requested a contract extension of five years. The applications have been placed on the provisional agenda of the Legal and Technical Commission for its meetings from 23 February to 6 March 2026.

31. If the Commission makes recommendations to the Council, the Council will have the opportunity to consider those applications and to adopt a decision regarding the corresponding application acting on those recommendations, in accordance with paragraph 9 of section 1 of the Annex to the 1994 Agreement, and in accordance with the Decision of the Council of 23 July 2015 relating to the procedures and criteria for the extension of an approved plan of work for exploration ([ISBA/21/C/19](#)).

32. Upon approval by the Council, a contract is to be extended by the execution by the Secretary-General and the authorized representative of the Contractor of an agreement in the form set out in Annex II of the Decision of the Council of 23 July 2015. The terms and conditions applicable to the contract during the extension period are the terms and conditions in force as at the date of the extension, pursuant to the relevant regulations.

Kingston, Jamaica, 3 March 2026