

Thematic Discussion on Underwater Cultural Heritage

Informal Working Group facilitated by Brazil, Greece, Micronesia.

Thursday, 12 March 2026 – 4.30 pm – 6 pm.

I. Introduction:

The meeting will focus on DR35, but participants will also be asked for feedback on various cross-cutting UCH elements that are also referenced in DR35 or otherwise connected to DR35.

II. Prompts and associated guidance:

- 1) Please indicate whether your delegation is comfortable with working on the basis of the version of DR35 currently reflected in the Further Revised Consolidated Text ("FRCT") or on the previous version of DR35 (which the FRCT has proposed to be deleted).
- 2) Assuming that your delegation is comfortable with the current version of DR35, please provide your delegation's comments on the notification and protection scheme outlined in DR35, including your preferences for some of the alternative options and bracketed texts presented as well as any gaps in the scheme your delegation has identified.

Please note: If your delegation has specific textual proposals for DR35, then you are respectfully requested to introduce them conceptually and then submit the textual proposals in writing as soon as possible to the UCH IWG co-facilitators and ISA Secretariat for compilation and circulation to all ISA delegations after the thematic discussion, rather than have the proposals inserted on the screen during the thematic discussion (assuming that we use a screen). This is strictly for time management purposes, and if delegations prefer to have your proposals inserted on the screen, then we will of course do so.

- 3) Please also comment on several UCH-related cross-cutting elements that are referenced in or are otherwise relevant to DR35, particularly:
 - a. whether your delegation prefers to refer in DR35 and throughout the rest of the exploitation regulations to "Underwater Cultural Heritage" on the one hand, or to UNCLOS language on "objects and sites of an archaeological or

historical nature" on the other hand, and if your delegation prefers "Underwater Cultural Heritage," then which definition for the term in the Schedule your delegation prefers;

- b. whether your delegation supports the possible establishment of an Advisory Group of Experts on Cultural Matters, and if so, what the composition of that Advisory Group could be, whether that Group would be a subsidiary organ/body of some sort of the ISA, and what the role of that Group could be in DR35 and/or other exploitation regulations;
 - c. whether your delegation supports references to cultural rights and/or interests throughout the exploitation regulations, whether as an alternative or as a supplement to references to Underwater Cultural Heritage, and if so, then what your delegation considers to be cultural rights and/or interests in the context of the exploitation regulations.
- 4) Please indicate whether your delegation supports the renewal of the mandate of the UCH IWG for another intersessional period, or if your delegation believes that the issue of UCH should no longer be treated by the Council as an outstanding issue.

Kingston, 10 March 2026