

Explanatory Note:

Agenda item: Ensuring Adequate Scientific Understanding to Support Informed Decision-Making

The Republic of Vanuatu has the honour of putting forward this agenda item for the Assembly “**Ensuring Adequate Scientific Understanding to Support Informed Decision-Making**” and we look forward to discussing this matter at the upcoming Session.

This agenda item focuses on the need for sufficient, robust and universally accessible scientific information to ensure the effective protection of the marine environment from the impacts of deep seabed mineral exploitation.

The proposed agenda item responds to the current paucity of knowledge on deep-sea ecosystems, biodiversity, ecosystem services, and the potential cumulative and transboundary impacts of deep-sea mining, including on ocean-dependent sectors such as fisheries. Disruption to deep-sea ecosystems may affect marine food webs, fish stocks and ecosystem connectivity, with implications for livelihoods, food security and the economies of many coastal and island States.

The agenda item is built on the obligations under articles 192 and 145 of the Convention, the mandate under article 143 concerning marine scientific research, and the application of the precautionary principle or approach. The Republic of Vanuatu further envisages the promotion of independent marine scientific research, capacity building and technology transfer, with particular attention to the needs of developing States, including Small Island Developing States and Least Developed States.

Consideration of this issue is intended to help the Authority:

- Consider how best to identify the key scientific knowledge gaps relevant to protection of the marine environment,
- Promote independent marine scientific research,
- Strengthen capacity building and knowledge sharing, especially for developing States (including SIDS and LDCs), and
- Establish an appropriate response to scientific knowledge gaps