



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR – DSCC ANNUAL REPORT, 2017

Herewith we present the Annual Report for the *Stichting* Deep Sea Conservation Coalition, covering the period from 1 January to 31 December 2017. The content has been prepared in accordance with Part 9 of the Dutch Civil Code.

Deep-sea Fisheries

In 2017, the DSCC continued its work to ensure that deep-sea fisheries are brought into effective management regimes and deep-sea habitats are protected. The work focused on three main areas:

1. Effective implementation of the newly adopted European Union (EU) deep-sea fisheries regulation;
2. Stronger measures to protect deep-sea ecosystems and sustainably manage deep-sea fisheries on the high seas to implement the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolutions committing nations to protect the deep sea from damage caused by bottom fisheries on the high seas through target regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) in the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans; and
3. Working with the UN and other international bodies to review, reinforce and strengthen international processes for the protection of the deep sea.

European Union

Thanks in part to 4 years of intense advocacy on the part of the DSCC and partners, a new law adopted by the EU in December 2016 represented a major step forward for the protection of Europe's deep-sea waters. As with any policy win, the success of this legislative achievement will ultimately be measured by how well it is implemented. In 2017, the DSCC conducted some targeted work primarily with the European Commission to ensure that actions are taken toward effective implementation.

Regional Fisheries Management Organizations

The DSCC sends policy, legal and scientific experts to relevant RFMO meetings to advocate for better regulations and effective action to protect deep-sea ecosystems from the harmful impacts of fishing. This work is vital to ensuring that the protection measures agreed to by all countries are carried out on the water. Detailed progress at individual RFMOs is listed in Appendix 1 to this letter.

International ocean governance

In June, the United Nations held the first UN Ocean Conference, a high-level meeting to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG14). At the Conference, the DSCC and its member organizations called on high seas fishing nations to fully and effectively protect deep-sea ecosystems from the significant adverse impacts of deep-sea fisheries, including through prohibiting bottom trawling on seamounts. This would be a

significant contribution to meeting SDG14.2 by its target date of 2020, to protect marine ecosystems, strengthen their resilience, and achieve healthy and productive oceans. We joined the more than 1,000 voluntary commitments made in the Conference with our own commitments, which can be found [here](#).

The DSCC also continued to engage with member organizations and others in the High Seas Alliance in the process of developing a new implementing agreement under the UN Convention for the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) for the conservation of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) to ensure that deep sea conservation is effectively addressed. In December, the UN formally agreed to convene an intergovernmental conference to produce a legally binding treaty on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in the high seas outside national maritime boundaries. The first session is set to start in September 2018 with negotiations expected to last through 2020.

Deep-seabed Mining

The DSCC's primary goal on deep seabed mining is:

- To ensure that marine habitats, biodiversity and ecosystem functions are effectively protected from seabed mining.

In 2017 the drafting of regulations by the International Seabed Authority (ISA) to allow commercial deep-sea mining entered a new, accelerated phase of development. A draft text of the exploitation regulations was tabled with a deadline for comments established for November 2017, with a target date of 2020 set to finalize the regulations. The DSCC continued to develop and refine its position and engage in the debate. This has included coordinating with member organizations and scientists toward ensuring that the ISA negotiations produce the strongest possible transparent, accountable and effective regulations.

Regarding the ISA review of its structure and working methods, which concluded in 2017, we continued our work of previous years, particularly with respect to promoting transparency and the establishment of an environmental and/or scientific committee.

The process for submitting a proposal to the ISA for a strategic environmental management plan for the northern Mid Atlantic Ridge – the SEMPIA process – has run into delays. Nonetheless, the scientists involved continue to advance through preparing a paper for publication, aiming to formally submit their proposal to the ISA in the first half of 2018.

The DSCC attended the annual meeting of the ISA in August. During the meeting, the Assembly agreed to hold two meetings of the Council per year in 2018 and 2019 in order to expedite completion of the negotiations for the exploitation regulations. We held a side event and made numerous interventions expressing our concern about the lack of effective measures for the protection of the marine environment in the draft regulations and the need for far greater transparency in the working methods of the ISA.

DSCC representatives also participated in numerous conferences, research projects and policy initiatives to put forward conservation perspectives. A detailed list of relevant additional deep-seabed mining events and meetings can be found in Appendix 2.

Outreach

Across its campaign areas, the DSCC continued to develop and share materials and undertake legacy and social media work to raise awareness about the vulnerability of the deep ocean. To this end, we launched a new DSCC website in May, with an improved structure, a fresh new look and updated content on deep-sea fisheries and mining. The site contains new features intended to keep followers better informed about and engaged with our mission. Our website and social media channels – including Twitter and a newly opened Facebook page – were regularly updated with relevant content developed by partners and featured in public media channels. The DSCC closed the year with approximately 3,375 followers on Twitter.

In June the DSCC participated in writing a commentary piece led by deep-sea biologists entitled “[Biodiversity loss from deep-sea mining](#)” published in Nature Geoscience. The article makes the case that biodiversity loss will be unavoidable if deep-sea mining is permitted to occur and that most mining-induced loss of biodiversity in the deep sea is likely to be permanent on human timescales. In a [press release following the article’s publication](#), the experts state that the ISA must communicate this risk clearly to its member States and the public to inform discussions about whether deep-seabed mining should proceed, and if so, what standards and safeguards need to be put into place to minimize biodiversity loss.

Accounts and operation

The *Stichting* DSCC Board of Directors comprises:

Chair – Lance Morgan
Secretary – Sebastian Losada
Treasurer – Susanna Fuller

To support the Board, a coordination team works with a Steering Group that consists of the Ecology Action Centre, Greenpeace International, Marine Conservation Institute, the Natural Resources Defense Council, The Pew Charitable Trusts, Seas At Risk and WWF. We have developed a formidable international team of scientists, policy and communication experts, lawyers and political activists who, on behalf of the deep sea, have established a strong reputation and profile at the United Nations and in other fora. The DSCC also has an affiliate foundation in New Zealand. Its Board of Directors is identical to the *Stichting*.

The Coalition is made up of more than 70 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including environmental organizations, fishers organizations and law and policy institutes, committed to protecting the deep sea. Our web site contains a list of DSCC members and information on each one.

Financial report 2017

The DSCC's work is made possible through the generous support of foundations and member organizations. The DSCC does not receive any funding from governments or corporations, nor does it have any paid staff. In 2017, the DSCC received in-kind support from many of our member organizations and financial support from: J.M. Kaplan Fund, Oceans 5, The Overbrook Foundation, The Pew Charitable Trusts, Synchronicity Earth and The Waterloo Foundation.

Balance sheet as of 31 December 2017 (in euros)	
ASSETS	
<i>Current</i>	
Cash & Cash equivalents	100,244
Receivables	
Prepays	
Total Assets	100,244
LIABILITIES	
<i>Short term</i>	
Payables	14,289
Accruals	7,308
Deferred project revenue	78,647
Total Liabilities	100,244

Statement of Operations year end 31 December 2017 (in euros)	
PROJECT REVENUE	
Fisheries EU	
Fisheries International	48,132
Seabed Mining	318,037
Total Project Revenue	366,168
PROJECT EXPENSES	
Administration	14,97
Advocacy	159,662
Communication	114,148
Coordination	74,966
Science	2,422
Total Project expenses	366,168

The annual accounts 2017 were drawn up by Weller Tax and Accounting according to generally accepted accounting principles in the Netherlands, and were audited by Boonzaijer & Merkus Accountants & Adviseurs.

Sincerely,



Lance Morgan, PhD
Chair of the Board of Directors
Deep Sea Conservation Coalition

Appendix 1: Progress on Regional Fisheries Management Organizations

- The **Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO)** made good progress regarding the protection of seamounts. In particular, the closure of the New England Seamount chain was extended to cover five additional seamounts. However, NAFO failed to put regulations in place for Alphonsino, a deepwater species fished over seamounts.
- At the **North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC)** we were pleased to see an agreement to maintain the closed areas - set to expire this year - until 2022, as well as the extension of the Hatton–Rockall Basin Area closure as recommended by ICES, thus enhancing the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) in the NEAFC Regulatory Area. We remain concerned over a number of areas, however, including i) scientific advice on where VMEs are likely to occur, ii) stock assessments for deep-sea species, iii) the large number of species impacted as bycatch, iv) the implementation and enforcement of the measures prohibiting bottom fisheries in closed areas and the measures for exploratory fisheries outside of the existing fishing areas, and v) talk of excluding extended continental shelf areas within the NEAFC Regulatory Area from the bottom fishing measures.
- The **South Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA)** made progress on transparency in agreeing to establish the principle that national reports must be made public, with the onus on the State to justify confidentiality. Less positively, in the past two annual meetings of parties, France – on behalf of its overseas territories - blocked suggestions to close fishing in in a number of so-called ‘benthic protected areas’.
- The **South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO)** held a number of workshops. Consultations and meetings of the Scientific Committee throughout 2017 to draft a new regulation for deep-sea bottom fishing. A proposal for a new regulation was put forward at the conclusion of the process but subsequently withdrawn following a threat from the New Zealand fishing industry, and without consultation with the DSCC and other NGOs involved in the consultations. The DSCC pushed both for the adoption of the proposed measure and greater transparency in the review process.

Appendix 2: Deep Seabed Mining – Brief 2017 calendar of other events and meetings in which the DSCC participated

February - Science/policy workshop convened by DOSI at Scripps Oceanographic Institute to evaluate, critique and provide comments on the *'Discussion Paper on the development and drafting of Regulations on Exploitation for Mineral Resources in the Area'*.

March - Workshop in Berlin co-sponsored by the German government and the ISA. DSCC organized a session with presentations by Seas At Risk (SAR), Greenpeace, Earthworks, WWF and DSCC.

April - Workshop co-sponsored by the government of Singapore and the ISA to debate the regime of the ISA with respect to the types of royalty payments that would be made by companies and contractors to the ISA.

May – A group of scientists, geologists, conservationists and experts in international law and ethics met in Oslo to debate mining on active hydrothermal vents. The group drafted a paper for publication making the case that active hydrothermal vents should be placed off-limits to mining by the ISA.

July –SAR and the DSCC worked with Members of European Parliament on amendments related to deep-sea mining, the ISA and transparency to a draft European Parliament resolution on international ocean governance.

August – DSCC participated in meetings of DOSI at Woods Hole to develop work plans on deep-sea fisheries and mining. The DSCC co-organized a follow-up workshop at the University of Maine on EIA criteria and efficacy in assessing impacts on VMEs in relation to deep-sea fishing.

September – DSCC participated in an ISA workshop on the design of Preservation Reference Zones (PRZs) and Impact Reference Zones (IRZs) in Berlin. Twenty-four contractors were invited to the workshop, with 8 deep-sea scientists and several non- or inter-governmental organizations. In a presentation, the DSCC questioned the rationale for deep-sea mining.

October – DSCC representatives made presentations to the Greens and the European Free Alliance in the European Parliament, the EU's BlueMining Project in Aachen, Germany, and to a well-attended event and debate – *'Deep Sea Mining – A sustainable choice for Portugal?'* organized by Oceano Livre and SAR in Lisbon.

November – DSCC presented at a special session of the Latin American Marine Science Congress, together with scientists, the Brazilian navy and the Brazilian ISA contractor. DSCC also participated in the South Atlantic and Wider Caribbean workshop of the UN's Second World Ocean Assessment and made a presentation on deep-sea mining and the ISA, the BBNJ process, the SDGs, and implementation of UNGA resolutions on deep-sea fisheries.