

Deep Sea Conservation Coalition intervention

Agenda Item 11, Issue Note 6: The roles of the Council, Secretary-General and the Legal and Technical Commission in implementing the regulations

9 March 2018

We remain concerned over the challenges faced by the ISA in regard to serious environmental matters that must be addressed to ensure effective protection of the marine environment. We recall the suggestion by Australia yesterday and the intervention by Belgium earlier this morning of a scientific or environmental advisory body. The structure of the ISA is crucial, and as has been noted, the 1994 Agreement calls for an evolutionary approach.

The tasks of reviewing and assessing all the application documents, EIAs, contractor's reports, obtaining further scientific advice, assessing public comments and making necessary revisions to the documents, recommending standards, guidelines etc amongst others, require experts in marine biology, oceanography, law and engineering to name a few, and will be very time consuming to be done effectively. RFMOs, the IMO (GESAMP) and CBD (SBSSTA) and many other international bodies have established scientific committees and/or advisory bodies. We believe this essential to assist the Council and the LTC in its functions as well as other bodies of the ISA.

To help such a body obtain the best scientific advice, a global network of hundreds of deep-sea scientists, called INDEEP, as well as the Deep Ocean Stewardship Initiative, could be in a position to organize and provide comprehensive scientific advice and input to the Authority. In fact INDEEP has worked with the Authority in the past to help organize and provide scientific advice through workshops on taxonomic advice. This could be a very cost-effective means of obtaining the best possible scientific advice available as has been recommended by many delegations, and Japan in particular, in interventions over the past few days.

Finally, we wish to reiterate our views on transparency, in relation to the LTC in particular. As Jamaica stated, the LTC has extensive powers. The Council and all stakeholders would benefit from knowing the information upon which the LTC bases recommendations, the rationale for why it makes the recommendations it does, and more open meetings of the LTC as called for by the Assembly last year, particularly when deliberating issues related to matters relating to the protection of the marine environment.

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