



DSCC intervention on Agenda item 12: Regional Environment Management Plans

19 February 2020

Thank-you Mr. President

Regional Environment Management Plans (REMPs) are a critical mechanism for protecting biodiversity in the marine environment and we welcome the proposals from DE and NL, co-sponsored by CR and the proposal for the new paragraph 44 bis.

Biodiversity considerations must be “mainstreamed” in the regulations. Scientists have expressed concern over the loss of biodiversity likely to occur as a result of deep-sea mining based on the technology currently available or in development and the scale of the mining necessary to be ‘economically viable’.

We would note that already in 2002 the WSSD Johannesburg Plan of Implementation in para 32 called for States to: “Develop national, regional and international programmes for halting the loss of marine biodiversity...” and that the 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement obligates States to ‘protect biodiversity in the marine environment’ in the management of fisheries on the high seas. Just last year, the May 2019 report of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), warned that a million species already face extinction. This adds urgency to the need to prevent further biodiversity loss on the planet, including in the deep sea.

*SDG Target 14.2 commits States to, by 2020, “sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience and take action for their restoration, to achieve healthy and productive oceans”.*

We think the REMP proposals go some way towards meeting these concerns in the interim and we welcome and support the proposals from Germany and the Netherlands, co-sponsored by Costa Rica and supported by many delegations today. However, we do not think the above points are yet properly reflected in Regulations.

To this end, States Parties to the ISA should establish a clear requirement in the regulations stipulating that, and I quote, “no mining should be authorized to proceed unless it can be managed to prevent the loss of biodiversity, prevent the degradation of deep-sea ecosystems, and ensure that the resilience of deep-sea ecosystems is maintained and not compromised by mining activities”. We would suggest this as a new paragraph 44 (e).

We also support the comments made by Fiji. The REMP should require a catalogue of all species within a region, possibly as a requirement in the template, including rare and endemic species, as well as baseline

information on their connectivity and functional roles in the ecology of the region and other relevant biological parameters. This is fundamental.

Regarding workshops to develop the REMPs we concur with many delegations that they must be open to all stakeholders. The open and inclusive nature of the Hamburg workshop set a good precedent.

Finally, Mr. President, we support the intervention made by the United States that a single compilation document be produced for the next meeting of the Council which includes proposals submitted on the draft regulations from all members of the ISA, observers and other stakeholders.

Thank you