December 13, 2021 (ISA Assembly Day 1)

DSCC intervention on Item 8: Statement by the President of the Council on the Work of the Council

Thank you, Mr President

We join the other delegations in congratulating you on your election as President.

DSCC thanks the President of the Council for his report.

On the matter of the roadmap, as was discussed in the Council last week, there are many questions raised by the 2-year rule, and it is clear that the 2023 deadline may not be met. We note that the 2-year Rule, (being paragraph 15 of Section 1 of the 1994 Agreement), clearly recognizes in paragraph (c) that Council may not complete the elaboration of the regulations - or more properly the RRPs which would include the standards and guidelines. There are also a considerable number of difficult legal issues.

This reality was recognised by a number of delegations in inclusion of the 'what-if' item in the roadmap.

Mr President, what is urgent is that we are in a biodiversity crisis, and we must not engage in a headlong rush to seabed mining, when we do not have sufficient evidence to ensure the effective protection of the marine environment, taking into account the precautionary principle.

Instead, it is important to heed the widespread calls for a moratorium and follow the call made by the World Conservation Congress of IUCN in resolution 69 in its call on all State Members, individually and through relevant international fora, to support and implement a moratorium on deep seabed mining.

We will comment on this matter later under Item 9.

Finally, Mr president, we wish to bring your attention to the issue of open meetings of the Legal and Technical Commission, which continues to meet behind closed doors. This was raised by a number of delegations and was reflected in the Council decision, and is of considerable concern to the Assembly, as the Assembly is the supreme organ of the Authority, and made a specific request to the LTC to hold more open meetings following the lengthy Art 154 review process.