

WWF statement

Thank you Mr President, Firstly let me join other delegations in congratulating you on your appointment and thank the SG for the presentation of his comprehensive report.

Mr President, Assembly members and observers - The global oceans are already highly impacted by anthropogenic influence, the deep oceans in particular provide a vital homeostatic function for the entire planet and this is why the societal benefit of DSM plus circular economy options must be considered carefully before such activities are embarked upon.

Recognising this WWF believes that until a fit for purpose regulatory regime is in place which will deliver protection for a representative range of habitats, ecosystem form/function/processes and associated biodiversity DSM activities should not occur.

The regulations must be robust and include clear conservation and management objectives, transparent and enforceable procedures including access to information, public participation, review procedures, and requirements based on the precautionary approach and ecosystem approach, require comprehensive prior environmental impact assessments with an independent review procedure and respect the common heritage of mankind and designations from other international fora such as VME's and EBSA's.

The suit of protective measures should also include networks of **Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)**, which would ensure ecological coherence/connectivity.

In order to enable effective regulation/protection good quality baseline data which includes food-web structure, form/functions, interactions, comparable taxonomy on which to base plausible scientific decisions and to continually monitor effectiveness should be publicly available so such decisions can be transparent/accountable. Without the provision of such data, basic management tools, such as EIA, SEMP's, monitoring and assessment will be impossible, hence it is in all stakeholders interest for this data to be provided in a transparent manner and in doing so supporting the developmet of such tools in all areas of exploration.

As the development of a TOR regarding the Article 154 review is pending, in view of this and the increasing burden on the ISA we would suggest a thorough analysis of other equivalent operationalized structures. In particular the GESAMP model of providing scientific advice on specific matters of substance and the use of scientific and environmental committees.

Finally while we welcome the commitment to undertake a stakeholder consultation and participation strategy and the call for broader stakeholder participation, we believe that this should be linked to the data management strategy in the context of data sharing and transparency. Additionally in view of increased public interest in DSM we would also suggest that broader stakeholder participation should include wider civil society and that for example any further sensitization seminars may target the public at large.

Thank you ...

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