



EMMANUEL MACRON CALLS FOR A STOP TO DEEP-SEA MINING AT UN OCEAN CONFERENCE

MEDIA REACTION

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As resistance to the emerging destructive deep-sea mining industry continues to skyrocket in Lisbon this week at the UN Ocean Conference, French President Emmanuel Macron has called for a stop to mining in the high seas.

Speaking at an official conference side event held at the Lisbon Oceanarium, President Macron stated: “We have to create the legal framework to stop high seas mining and not to allow new activities that endanger ecosystems.”

Throughout the week at the UN Ocean Conference, the controversial issue of deep-sea mining has been high on the agenda with politicians, youth groups, scientists and civil society all calling to defend the deep and stop the nascent industry in its tracks.

The Director of the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition Sian Owen said: “The momentum created this week at the UN Ocean Conference is a tipping point for the deep ocean, the blue heart of our planet. President Macron has effectively echoed the countless calls this week to press ‘pause’ on any and all ambitions to mine the deep sea.”

Earlier this week, Palau spearheaded a new Alliance of Countries Calling for a Deep-Sea Mining Moratorium with Fiji and Samoa joining the call. French MEP Marie Toussaint also launched a new Global Parliamentary Declaration Calling for a Moratorium on Deep Seabed Mining on behalf of the group, Parliamentarians for Global Action, with 102 signatories across 37 countries.

“The UN Ocean Conference has shaped up to be a watershed event for the protection of the ocean with the increasing calls for a moratorium or ban on deep-sea mining” said Matthew Gianni, co-founder of the DSCC.

In his speech today, President Macron referred to a statement by the new Australian Minister of the Environment, Tanya Plibersek, earlier this week, who stated that with the new government ‘Australia is back’ when it comes to protecting the environment. In the 1980s, France and Australia combined forces to change the course of negotiations to open up the Antarctic continent to mining and convinced the other countries involved in the negotiations to agree to a moratorium on mining in Antarctica. The DSCC’s Matthew Gianni commented: “I can’t help but think President Macron may have been signalling to the Australian

government that they try it again, this time to protect the global ocean commons from the same destructive industry, before it starts.”

Scientists continue to raise the alarm that if the industry were to go ahead, it would result in an irreversible loss of biodiversity and could threaten critical carbon stocks, potential medicines and fisheries for species such as tuna.

As the backlash surrounding the destructive industry builds, so do concerns that the International Seabed Authority, the body charged with regulating the emerging industry, is not transparent or fit for purpose. Earlier in the week at an event hosted by the Authority, a peaceful protest consisting of the quiet display of A4 signs, with the message, “Deep-Sea Mining: stop and think”, resulted in UN security threatening to remove delegates from the conference and confiscate their badges. Civil society has also protested the Authority’s lack of transparency as new restrictions on participation at upcoming deep-sea mining meetings in July and August have been introduced, closing the door on negotiations for many stakeholders at what would be a critical juncture. In a joint letter to the ISA Secretary General, 31 civil society organizations called on the Authority to lift the restrictions or else postpone the meetings to ensure that as many states, civil society organizations, journalists and others can make their voices heard.

It is now vital that the frontrunners of this political movement take the moratorium call to the International Seabed Authority and other international fora as the year goes on. The world is watching.

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