

ISA 2016 Speech
Observer FISH REEF PROJECT

Thank you Delegates, Excellences, Fellow Observers and ISA Staff, and a special thanks to Mr. Lodge, Mr. Novati, Mr. Muslow and Mrs. Griffith for your dedication and hard work that we all benefit from.

The mission of the Fish Reef Project is to Help Ocean Life Thrive through direct action project such as scientifically proven man made reef systems. We are a highly dedicated group of true believers that want only to leave a healthy ocean for future generations.

The Law of The Sea states: that balancing the scale of nature for environmental impacts is required and that the ocean should be seen as single system and not compartmentalized.

For this reason we have pioneered, and launched a system known as the international marine mitigation bank, or IMMB.

The system is simple: in nearshore areas we deploy reef units known as reef balls, an igloo shaped concrete unit with holes in it- then as coral, fish and marine life grow, we validate the new biomass – each new ton of biomass becomes a credit in our system. The credits are then sold to those making impacts in the marine ecosystem , in this case deep sea mining.

There is a clear, scientifically proven link between the health of the shallow sea and the deep sea – many life forms start out in the shallow coral ecosystem and migrate to the open ocean and the deep sea, so to help shallow coral ecosystem is to help the deep sea- it is all one system-it is one ocean.

We ask that for each ton of life impacted in the deep sea that several tons of new life be created in the shallow seas. In this way we can offset dying coral

ecosystems, improve fish stocks, enhance food security for locals, attenuate sea level rise and the effects of ocean acidification – in short by using the IMMB system to offset the impacts from deep sea mining, we, as global community can use it as a tool to create ocean health in the near-shore marine ecosystem on an unprecedented scale. We can stem the loss of coral ecosystem and revitalize the marine ecosystem of entire regions.

The IMMB system has reasonable, clearly stated costs and guaranteed deliverables in the form of new biomass - so there is no grey or risk of confusion about what took place at the end of the day. The International Marine Mitigation Bank is a type of insurance to the world, that although harm may have occur in the deep sea from mining- at least something quantifiable and good took place for the ocean and for humanity as a whole. Remediation of the deep sea itself in 5000 meters is impractical, however we do support research, impact avoidance and adaptive management. The IMMB system is there only for truly unavoidable impacts.

The IMMB system is fair, transparent, measurable and validated by multiple parties. We share a full 20% of all our revenues with each nation that we place reefs in- so it can be major economic driver for developing nations. The IMMB system balances the scales of nature and economy. Currently Papua New Guinea is our hub where 85 percent of people living on the coast get their food direct from the sea and our system will increase food security and therefore political stability considerably – the IMMB system allows many people to benefit from deep sea mining that otherwise would realize no benefits what so ever.

We propose that the ISA receive a significant royalty from the IMMB system that can go to subsidize the travel expenses to future ISA session for developing nations. We can all see attendance dropping at the ISA, likely due to cost. It is imperative that the smaller nations continue to participate in the ISA process.

We also plan to make a series of reefs right here in Jamaica. This is critical as the people of Jamaica have hosted the ISA for more than two decades and their beaches are losing ground to sea level rise, corals are dying and fish stocks are

depleted- we can help reverse this trend and provide food, jobs and ocean health right here in Jamaica through the IMMB system.

Due to lack of proper mitigation strategy, the land based mines in Papua New Guinea have fought multi billion dollar law suites - perhaps with the IMMB system in place, deep sea mining can avoid such a financial calamity as it will help mining companies come into compliance with the Law of the Sea, Equator Principals and global public opinion about the best ways to operate.

I have spent the last year traveling to meet many state parties on their home turf to discuss the IMMB- I would like to thank them for their hospitality and the strong support that they have shown for the IMMB system.

In the Spirit of collaboration and cooperation we have offered our system as an open platform for all NGO's and observer groups to access- this means that if an NGO can create new biomass in the sea – we will verify it for them and enter the new life as credits into our bank and share revenues with them. In this way everyone here today can participate in this great effort to create ocean health and balance the scales of nature.

In a 1980 National Geographic Article on Deep Sea Mining , the great Jacques Cousteau said that it was natural for man to obtain their minerals from the deep sea, but it is paramount that environmental impacts be understood, avoided when possible and offset through direct action when impacts cannot be avoided.

The Fish Reef Project is proud to have created the IMMB, a direct action, universal platform to offset the impacts from Deep Sea Mining and we invite everyone in this room to be a part of it and embrace it so that we may all leave a positive legacy of ocean health for many generations to come.

On a personal note: I began my relationship with the sea at age six- I grew in a humble household where if we wanted good protein I had to catch it from the sea. Since then, the ocean has been my provider, my teacher, my employer and place of spiritual solace. Hence it has become my life long mission to look out for the ocean in the best way possible and give back to her more than I have taken over the years

Thank you very much