

Italy's comments to point 8 of the Agenda

Thank you Mr. President,

Hon. Pearnel, Mr. Secretary General, colleagues

Allow me to join my preceding colleagues to congratulate you for your election and to thank Jamaica for its warm hospitality.

I'm honored to make my first intervention in relation to the report of the Secretary General, which is an excellent review of the activities of the Authority and a testimony of the concrete and effective pace our Organization has taken in the last few years.

This excellent report testifies the increasing value of the activity of the Secretariat of the Authority in providing the Organization with guidance, technical support and knowledge building.

Italy would like to praise progress in particular on three issues: environmental protection, transparency and responsibility of States, development of scientific and technological knowledge.

As for the **environment**, I would like to stress first and foremost the importance of adopting further environmental management plans for the Area. The work of the Secretariat in supporting studies and workshops on this matter is of extreme importance.

We must bear in mind the importance of keeping ISA efforts on the exploitation of seabed mineral resources in line with the needs and the rights of **future generations** also as a contribution to reach the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 14.

Environmental protection means also damage prevention. Our work on drafting the Regulations should in general terms ensure that the profitability of economic activities on seabed is properly ensured. On the other side, however, Italy considers it paramount that the Regulations also ensure minimizing effects on the environment and people safety and health. The minimization of the risk of incidents should be a key principle in the Exploitation Regulations and national legislations on resource exploitation should be consistent with this principle.

About **transparency**, the progress made in the diffusion and accessibility of information on mining activities to the large public is of paramount importance to build public awareness, but also in order to legitimize the Authority to the eyes of public opinions. In this framework, the identification of a balanced payment mechanism based on the principle of benefits sharing which does not make the exploitation of resources uneconomic by slowing down the industrial initiative, will also be important.

The record participation to the 24th Assembly demonstrates the increasing interest of member States to seabed mining. Such interest also reveals the need to carefully assess the extent of the liability, in particular of Sponsoring States, and compliance by contractors and operators. This will also define the scope of control by the Authority and the extension of enforcement powers to be recognized both to the Authority and the Sponsoring States. Also in this field, the ISA started a valuable effort of gathering relevant national laws and regulations from member States. This will possibly contribute to enlarge and deepen the debate, as well as provide a benchmark platform on how to treat complex issues related to seabed exploration and exploitation. In this regard, **Italy** does not have an ad hoc legislation on seabed mining. Nonetheless, it has a detailed mining code, which will be soon shared with the Secretariat.

Last, but not least, allow me to praise the valuable work of the Secretariat in promoting and encouraging marine scientific research (and yesterday's Secretary General Award for excellence in deep sea research is another important example). We believe that means and methodologies to mobilize adequate resources for marine scientific research are fundamental and will need to be further spelled out and planned in the

future. Italy is doing its part, actually close to home, by exploring the mineral resources and the environment protection implications of a possible exploitation on the seabed and the volcanic seamounts in the Southern Tyrrhenian Sea, which is a relatively small laboratory of deep sea exploration. Also, let me mention the exhibition *Prospecting Ocean*, currently on stage in Venice, mentioned yesterday during the side event by Deep Sea Conservation Coalition, which was developed in collaboration with the **Italian Institute of Marine Sciences**, which is an extremely interesting exploration of contemporary challenges facing the ocean floors.

Thank you Mr. President.