

International Seabed Authority: 24th Assembly session
Tuesday 25 July 2018
Agenda item 7: Report of the Secretary-General

Statement of IUCN

Mr. President,

IUCN would like to join the chorus in congratulating you on your election, in thanking the Government of Jamaica for its hospitality, and in thanking the Secretary-General and the staff of the International Seabed Authority Secretariat for their hard work in developing the annual report. IUCN would especially like to thank the staff of the Authority for their courteous and professional manner in stewarding us through this 24th Session.

IUCN appreciates the great strides made by the Authority with respect to the draft mineral regulations, the draft Strategic Plan, the data management strategy and the regional environmental management plans. IUCN also thanks the Authority for its initiative to live-stream the sessions of Council and the Assembly. It has already enabled IUCN to receive helpful comments from colleagues as far away as Australia. Now that this space-age technology exists, IUCN suggests that, as raised by the DSCC, consideration be given to also livestreaming the sessions of the Legal and Technical Commission as a matter of course, except when information of proprietary interest is being discussed.

IUCN would also join others in thanking the Secretariat and TOML for their recognition of and support for enhancing the capacity of young professional in developing countries.

IUCN would, unsurprisingly, like to underscore the importance of **vastly scaling up efforts** on all these fronts if we are to achieve the UNCLOS injunction of ensuring effective protection of the marine environment from any harmful effects from seabed mining. IUCN endorses the statements by the DSCC and the Pew Charitable Trusts in this regard. IUCN further highlights the potential importance of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development to enable all nations to participate in generating the knowledge necessary to enable humankind to make informed decisions on these challenging issues.

With respect to the United Nations negotiations on marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction, IUCN would like to underscore that effective protection of the ISA's Areas of Particular Environmental Interest may require additional action to stem threats from other activities and sectors, including cumulative impacts. The APEIs and additional conservation measures within the mandate of the ISA will also have an important but nevertheless insufficient role in any future coherent network of marine protected areas beyond national jurisdiction. For this reason, enhanced cooperation and coordination with other sectors and recognition of

scientific input and advice from conservation agreements including the Convention on Biological Diversity and a new legally binding instrument for BBNJ, will be essential.

In closing, IUCN would like to use this opportunity to announce the arrival of hard copies of its recent report on Deep sea mining: a rising environmental challenge.¹ (which involved side trips to Buenos Aires and Madrid—perhaps hinting that we should be translating the report into Spanish)

This report, after providing a comprehensive review of the history, geology, ecology, technology and legal framework for deep sea mineral exploitation, leaves us with some parting thoughts that IUCN hopes this body will consider:

- 1) That UNCLOS's directive to develop and protect the marine environment implies the option of not proceeding if adequate protection cannot be ensured; and
- 2) That deep sea development for the benefit of humankind should be considered less of an obligation than an opportunity, which requires a better understanding of the full range of potential environmental and social costs as well as knowledge as to what other options may be available to secure long term value from the wealth of deep ocean resources.

I am happy to share hard copies upon request.

Thank you, Mr. President.

¹ Cuyvers, L. et al. (2018). [Deep seabed mining: a rising environmental challenge](#). Gland, Switzerland: IUCN and Gallifrey Foundation.