



## Council

Distr.: General  
6 October 2020

Original: English

---

### Twenty-sixth session

Council session, part II

Kingston, 20–24 July 2020

Agenda item 8

**Status of contracts for exploration and related matters,  
including information on the periodic review of the  
implementation of approved plans of work for exploration**

### **Report on the relinquishment of 50 per cent of the area allocated to China Ocean Mineral Resources Research and Development Association under the contract for exploration for polymetallic sulphides between the Association and the International Seabed Authority**

#### **Note by the Secretariat**

1. The contract for exploration for polymetallic sulphides between the China Ocean Mineral Resources Research and Development Association and the International Seabed Authority was signed on 18 November 2011. The area allocated to the Association under the contract covered 10,000 km<sup>2</sup>.
2. Pursuant to regulation 27 (2) (a) of the regulations on prospecting and exploration for polymetallic sulphides in the Area ([ISBA/16/A/12/Rev.1](#), annex), by the end of the eighth year from the date of the contract, the contractor must have relinquished at least 50 per cent of the original area allocated to it.
3. Accordingly, the China Ocean Mineral Resources Research and Development Association was required to relinquish at least 50 per cent of its allocated area by 18 November 2019. On 26 March 2020, the Association submitted to the secretariat a report on the 50 per cent relinquishment of the allocated area under the exploration contract for polymetallic sulphides, including a list of relinquished cells and maps of the relinquished area.
4. At the second part of its twenty-sixth session, held from 6 to 31 July 2020, on the basis of the technical review carried out by the secretariat, the Legal and Technical Commission noted that the contractor had complied with its relinquishment obligations pursuant to the applicable regulations and the recommendations for the



guidance of contractors on the relinquishment of areas under exploration contracts for polymetallic sulphides or cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts (ISBA/25/LTC/8).<sup>1</sup>

5. The total area, the coordinates of which are available at <https://isa.org.jm/files/documents/List%20of%20Coordinates.pdf>, consists of 100 blocks, with each block consisting of 100 cells and each cell measuring 1 km x 1 km. The number of blocks per cluster vary from 5 to 19. A total of 5,000 cells were relinquished from among the 100 blocks within 12 clusters (see annex).
6. The relinquished area has reverted to the Area.
7. The Council is invited to take note of the present note.

---

<sup>1</sup> ISBA/26/C/12/Add.1.

# Annex

## Map of area relinquished by China Ocean Mineral Resources Research and Development Association pursuant to its exploration contract for polymetallic sulphides

