

IUCN intervention regarding the Report of the Chair of the Legal and Technical Commission on the World of the Commission at its session in 2017.

Agenda Item 12

Thank you Mr President.

IUCN would like to join others in expressing our thanks for the report of the Chair of the Legal and Technical Commission on its work at its 2017 sessions amidst an ever increasing workload.

IUCN would like to make brief comments with respect to three items: 1) annual reports of contractors, 2) the revision of the guidance for contractors for baseline assessments and 3) to raise more general concerns on transparency and inclusivity in the process of developing the exploitation regulations.

First, with respect to Annual report of Contractors, IUCN notes that there have been issues with respect to compliance by some contractors not just on provision of data but also with the methodology used for assessment of possible impacts during the exploration phase. The LTC report notes in para 15g, that there were: issues including small sample sizes and insufficient numbers of sampling stations and lack of description of pelagic communities. These and other components will be vital for future analyses of potential environmental impacts including regional level analyses. IUCN would thus like to know what plans there are for follow-up and what remedial actions are to be taken.

Second, further with respect to the guidance of contractors for the assessment of the possible environmental impacts arising from exploration, IUCN is pleased to note the progress for its updating. IUCN suggests that in light of the high degree of importance of this work for future environmental impact assessments under the exploitation regulations and the need for these environmental surveys to be fit for purpose, that a wider range of stakeholders in addition to the contractors be included in future consideration of the draft revised recommendations.

Third, with respect to transparency and inclusivity IUCN is concerned over the closed nature of Working Group on responsibility and liability in paragraph 23 and suggests that provision should be made for ensuring the widest range of expertise and interests are engaged.

Similarly IUCN is pleased to learn about the forthcoming workshop on the development of criteria for IRZ and PRZs in late September in Berlin as noted in paragraph 27. IUCN notes however that these criteria are a matter of concern for all, and would like to know what provisions are being made for the participation of ISA Member States and observers.

And finally, IUCN would just like to also raise the issue of the need for integration of the work with that of other organizations, including the Convention on Biological Diversity and its work on EBSAs. IUCN notes that with respect to the Polish application in the Mid Atlantic Ridge, the Lost City Hydrothermal vent field in the northern corner of the application area has been put forward as an area meeting the criteria for Outstanding Universal significance under the World Heritage Convention in a recent 2016 report sponsored by the World Heritage Convention (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/highseas>)

Thank you Mr. President.