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Agenda Item 11: Draft Regulations on Exploitation of Mineral Resources in the Area

Precautionary Approach

Fiji like others thanks the Secretariat and Mr. Chris Brown for the informative briefing note C8.

Like other delegations Fiji echoes the importance of adopting the precautionary approach with regards to activities in the Area largely because there are still many unknowns with regards to the potential environmental impacts of exploration and eventually exploitation in the Area. This is also the same approach many delegations including ours is taking in the BBNJ process.

As captured in Rio Principle 15, a precautionary approach has now received widespread recognition. In particular the “uncertainty” that underpins the approach calls for risk management actions that must be underpinned by best available scientific knowledge. In this regard it is in our view an imperative that this knowledge is readily available to all stakeholders as accessibility to such knowledge is often an issue for Pacific SIDS due to our limited institutional capacity, and this often impacts on our ability to apply the precautionary approach in a manner we desire in order to address and minimize risks. This sentiment is captured in Para 6 of briefing note C8.

To ensure the Authority can fully play its part in making this knowledge available, Fiji strongly supports the early completion of the ISA data management project, and the putting in place of capacity building initiatives to ensure all stakeholders can locate and access the environmental data they need. It is key in this regard that the ISA data base links easily to similar global ocean databases and the contractors provide all new and historic data they hold in a timely and regular manner particularly through the annual reporting requirements.

I thank you.