

Madame President,

In joining the long line of well-wishers today, Germany would also like to take this joyous occasion of the International Seabed Authority's silver jubilee for a brief look back on the ground covered so far, and, more important, on the tasks that still lie ahead of us.

As host country to the Authority's sister institution, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, and the Authority's second largest financial contributor from its inception, Germany pledges its continued and unmitigated support to help the Authority fulfill its mandate. 25 years into its existence, this body has now reached a point where its key deliverable, the exploitation regulation, finally seems within reach. And, if I may slip in a personal note, I can say this from the perspective of someone who attended the deliberations on the mining code in this room already more than 20 years ago. The draft submitted by the Legal and Technical Commission is a solid and well-balanced basis, and with it, Germany hopes that the Council will be now able to make substantial progress in the next session, if need be by extending the duration of its meetings.

This being said, Germany remains mindful of and in fact shares some of the concerns about possible harm to the marine environment, and agrees that Deep Sea mining requires effective safeguards not only relating to the seabed, but to the whole of the marine environment. Like many other member states, we believe that the drafting of the exploitation regulation must be accompanied by the elaboration of sound and binding regional environmental management plans for the zones considered for mining. Germany will host a workshop on this subject this coming November, and looks forward to strong participation from member states and observers.

However, like the drafting of the exploitation regulation, this important work must be undertaken with a focus on deliverables and timelines, and, if I may be candid, in good faith by all, if this body is to remain relevant for the next 25 years to come.

I thank you, Madame President.