

IUCN comments regarding Agenda Item 9--Article 154 Review

Thank you Mr President.

IUCN would like to join the many others in expressing our thanks to the Chair of the Review Committee, Ambassador Tuerk, the Review Committee and all those who supported the process. This review was a very important exercise to bring focus on ways the Authority can achieve its objectives in an efficient and effective manner.

IUCN appreciates the 19 recommendations as important steps forward. IUCN also hopes that the next 5 year review will incorporate the lessons learned as raised by Amb Tuerk as well as support consideration of a wider range of options to transform how this organization does its work. Issues of more urgent concern, however, include the need for greater transparency, data availability and public engagement in all aspects of the Authority's work as raised by the Pew Charitable Trusts, Greenpeace, WWF and DSCC and many States before them.

IUCN would like to focus our comments on Recommendations 7 and 17.

Mr. President, as we heard this morning from the Minister of Jamaica, the ocean itself is changing, and how we manage human activities will need to both accommodate and anticipate those changes, including against cumulative impacts.

As emphasized by Jamaica and many others, the move towards a strategic plan for the Authority is a positive step forward. At the same time, there is a need, as proposed by Jamaica, for a strategic plan and vision for addressing the many environmental issues and measures required to fulfil the Authority's mandate of ensuring effective protection of the marine environment and acting on behalf of all humankind.

Mr. President, a strategic environmental plan could either be separate from or part of the strategic plan envisaged in Recommendation 17. **What is most important is that it lay out the key steps for advancing marine scientific knowledge of the deep ocean, for advancing our understanding of potential mining related impacts both individually and cumulatively, and for advancing the necessary measures to protect and conserve our common natural heritage as laid out in Article 145. The recommendations in the Berlin Workshop report are worth particular consideration in this regard.**

With this in mind, IUCN would recall Recommendation 7 which encourages the Secretary General to consider how to engage more extensively with the scientific community and deep sea projects and initiatives related to the Area. UNCLOS Article 143 on marine scientific research envisages a much more active role for the Authority as well as member States in promoting, coordinating and making centrally available marine scientific research. Key gaps in understanding with respect to potential impacts of seabed mining include the extent, duration and potential toxicity of plumes including their effects in the water column at all depths, ecotoxicology and species connectivity to name a few.

Hence IUCN is hopeful that implementation of Recommendations 7 and 17 also includes a proactive approach to pursuing these fundamental scientific and environmental issues in a coherent and coordinated fashion. As a start, a central repository that makes relevant research papers and research projects and other initiatives available to all, could be a useful complement to an effective data management system and data management strategy.