

**PART I OF 25TH SESSION OF ISA COUNCIL MEETINGS  
AGENDA ITEM 11 ON  
DRAFT REGULATIONS FOR EXPLOITATION OF  
MINERAL RESOURCES IN THE AREA:  
REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLANS**

**INTERVENTION BY SINGAPORE**

Madam President,

1 Thank you to the Secretariat for the document and to Mr Chris Brown for highlighting some of issues relating to REMPS.

2 As set out in Article 145 of UNCLOS, protection of the marine environment is a fundamental principle governing the Area. It is a principle that Singapore strongly supports. Protection of the marine environment is not something that can be achieved through one or two actions. Rather, an entire raft of measures is needed to ensure effective protection of the marine environment. Since the Council began its work yesterday, we have heard discussions on different measures aimed at providing strong protection to the environment. For example, in the discussion on the payment mechanism, there were discussions on the importance of factoring externalities into the model, including the provision of the costs of environmental monitoring. Questions were raised regarding the proposed allocation of 1% of the gross metal value to an environmental fund subject to a cap of \$500 million per contractor. It is important for such questions to be addressed to ensure that the measures that will be adopted will provide for effective protection of the marine environment. We also heard, in the afternoon, discussions on the importance of developing environmental standards and guidelines with criteria and thresholds. The work on such standards and guidelines will also form part of the series of measures to be undertaken to ensure protection of the marine environment.

3 In our view, regional environmental management plans or REMPs are a critical plank in the range of measures aimed at protecting the marine environment from harmful effects that may arise from activities in the Area. While REMPs are not in and of themselves legally binding instruments, they are a useful tool to support informed decision-making. REMPs ought to provide the Authority with a clear mechanism to identify particular areas representative of the full range of habitats, biodiversity and ecosystems within the relevant management area. In addition, REMPs will provide an important framework to guide contractors and researchers in the collection of environmental data needed to manage deep seabed mining. Our delegation therefore strongly supports the development of REMPS, and in this regard, we have taken note of the document ISBA/25/C/13, on the implementation of the strategy for REMPs.

4 On the specific issue of the relationship between the draft regulations and REMPS, we thank the Secretariat for the note highlighting the relevant issues for our consideration. We have three comments to make. Our first comment relates to the issue as to whether the Council has to impose a binding legal obligation on itself, presumably by way of the draft regulations, to develop REMPS. We agree with the Secretariat that it is not necessary to do so. We note that the REMP for the Clarion-Clipperton Zone was developed in the absence of any such legal obligation.

5 Our second comment relates to the proposal in the paper to assess, and revise where necessary, the environmental management and monitoring plans of contractors against objectives in the REMPs. In this regard, we would like to highlight our suggestion made during the ISA Session last July that the LTC look at the interaction between the broader environmental policy framework, including REMPs, and the exploitation regulatory framework. To

that end, the LTC may wish to consider what is the appropriate stage in the application process at which the Commission might take into account the applicable REMP. One possibility would be for draft regulation 14 on the Consideration of the Environmental Plans by the Commission to be one place in which it would be appropriate to make reference to the applicable REMP.

6 Our third comment relates to the suggestion that the Council may decide that no exploitation contract is to be granted in a particular region until a regional environmental management plan is implemented. This is a useful suggestion that can be further explored, taking into consideration how the roadmap for the delivery of draft regulations will align with the roadmap for the development of REMPs.

7 Thank you, Madam President.

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