Item 11: Draft regulations on exploitation of mineral resources in the Area

Review of progress on the road map
Delivered on 03.11.2022

Many thanks, Mr. President, and good afternoon.

We thank the numerous States who have expressed their views on the roadmap, the need to protect and preserve the environment, as well as the limited scientific knowledge that currently exists.

Based on current scientific understanding, deep-seabed mining will result in biodiversity loss and irreversible harm to deep-sea ecosystems, including the functions and services they provide. To manage this nascent industry effectively, decision-making must be based on robust science. However, scientists do not yet completely understand biodiversity, ecosystem functions and services, and resilience in the deep ocean. A recent peer-reviewed scientific study, authored by many in this very room, showed that just 1% of the scientific categories assessed for regions with mining exploration areas had enough scientific knowledge to enable evidence-based management.

The international community is currently not in a position to reliably predict the extent and severity of expected impacts from commercial mining, including plumes, contaminant release and toxicity, noise, vibration and light, how this would affect marine life, and any direct or indirect effects on commercially important fisheries or other ocean users. The continual discovery of new species, processes and ecosystem services in the areas targeted for mining make the prediction of impacts especially uncertain. Available tools, such as scientific models that can help predict environmental impacts, require baseline data that are not yet fully available, and small-scale *in situ* tests to verify these models' accuracies only go so far. Scientific approaches such as these take time. The UN Decade for Ocean Science (2021-2031) offers a timely opportunity to gather the resources and expertise required to fill some of the deep-sea science gaps outlined above.

Ultimately, the Deep-Ocean Stewardship Initiative believes that rushing to meet the two-year rule will not allow much of the necessary scientific research to be completed, communicated, and taken into account, preventing critical scientifically informed decision making. DOSI can categorically state that the acquisition of the necessary scientific research to inform best environmental practices that will underpin any future regulatory framework for exploitation will not be finalized by July 2023, nor for many years beyond that.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.