

Greenpeace International Intervention at the 27th Session of the International Seabed Authority

Draft Regional Environmental Plan for the Area of the northern Mid-Atlantic Ridge.

Kingston, 3 Nov 2022

Thank you Mr. President,

Greenpeace International acknowledges the effort and expertise that went into preparing the draft REMP for the Area of the northern Mid-Atlantic Ridge with a focus on polymetallic sulphide deposits, and thanks the LTC for preparing and presenting this document.

The draft REMP shows that this wondrous region harbors unprecedented biodiversity, biomass and geological wonders. It has been suggested that life itself may have arisen on Earth in this locality. It is unique, globally important and irreplaceable. And to access polymetallic sulphides from it will require methodologies that will not so easily be greenwashed as harmless and gentle as some assert nodule collectors are. In fact the machines developed by Nautilus Minerals to target similar minerals off of Papua New Guinea can be described as nothing short of monsters.

Outside the confines and procedures of this organization, there is a narrative battle around deep sea mining that is not limited to State parties, but involves civil society organizations, corporations, the press, coastal communities, and frankly anyone with an interest and a platform. What we often hear from those intent on mining the deep sea is that it will be done safely and responsibly in areas of minimal impact. Deep sea mining advocates often claim that the CCZ is a desert, composed largely of sediment, poor in biodiversity, or that the process of mining is going to be akin to “gently plucking potato size rocks off the seafloor”. But we know that we haven’t even seen the tip of the iceberg in terms of scientific discovery, that those sediments are locking away unfathomable amounts of carbon, and as many of us witnessed in the presentation by NORI yesterday - gently plucking rocks off the seafloor is nowhere near an accurate analogy.

To the LTC’s credit, much of the biological value of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge was recognized, as was the importance of conserving it and doing minimal environmental harm. Yet many conclude we should exploit it anyway - and perhaps set aside a handful of areas in need of protection. The disconnect between the intrinsic value of what has been documented and the conclusion that we should authorize its exploitation anyway is mind-numbing. Why don’t we just protect all of it? There’s no entrenched business here, we’re not taking anything from anyone if we just recognize that the Common Heritage of Humankind means something more than potential profits. It literally means our heritage, along with that of all life on Earth. This body has the

authority to do this. To make a collective decision that some things have more value left alone.
We implore you. Make that decision.

Thank you Mr. President