

28th Session, Part I - Open session for general statements, March 27.
Statement from Brasil, delivered by Ambassador Elza Moreira Marcelino de Castro

Brazil believes the current level of knowledge and best available science are insufficient to approve any seabed mining projects in areas beyond national jurisdiction. States parties should therefore refrain from sponsoring any plans of work for exploitation until further research on deep-sea ecosystems and the impacts of mining activities over them are available, and until exploitation regulations with sound environmental standards are in place, including monitoring and compliance provisions in order to ensure that the marine environment is not seriously harmed.

In this regard, Brazil sees significant merit in the proposal of a call for a precautionary pause in deep sea mining, without prejudice to the continuity of discussions and negotiations of the Mining Code, in good faith and in accordance with the institutional mandate of the International Seabed Authority.

At this point in time, priority must be given to the protection of the international seabed, until conclusive and comprehensive studies referring to the potential environmental impacts of mining activities in the Area are available, including loss and damage to marine biodiversity; production of extensive plumes of sediments, metals and toxins that affects marine species and ecosystems; damages to carbon retention in the seabed and its consequences related to climate change; noise pollution due to the activity of industrial machines; and introduction of toxic metals into marine food chains, among others.

A precautionary approach, as understood by Brazil, does not undermine the development of new markets and technologies, nor the mandate of the Authority. Our goal is to ensure that the rules for future exploitation of deep-sea marine resources meet high standards of environmental protection, social responsibility and governance, in line with the wider

efforts in the fight against climate change, loss of biodiversity and pollution in all its forms.

A precautionary pause relating to exploitation activities, as we understand, would bring ISA in line with the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, adopted at the “1992 Earth Summit”; with the Advisory Opinion No. 17 of the Seabed Disputes Chamber of the International Court of the Law of the Sea, which deals with the responsibility of the State sponsoring activities in the Area; as well as with the agreement on the preservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ), recently concluded within the framework of the United Nations on March 4, 2023.

Brazil will continue to play an active role in the negotiations of the Mining Code, given its well known expertise in both mining and deep-sea oil drilling within its own lands and territorial waters. But we renew our calling for us all to take into account the need for effective regulations with strict environmental standards and robust means of inspection, as well as the needs of further advancing scientific knowledge about the deep-sea and the potential impacts of deep-sea mining.

Thank you.