

DOSI Intervention regarding Item 10: Draft Regulations on exploitation of mineral resources in the Area: Fourth meeting of the Informal Working Group on the Protection and Preservation of the Marine Environment

**Annex IV Section 5 - Description of the Biological Environment
#24 Delivered 22 March 2023 by Sonigitu Ekpe**

Thank you, Madame Facilitator. Regarding Section 5, the Deep-Ocean Stewardship Initiative recommends that guidance should also require descriptions of the biological environment within the Preservation Reference Zones, for monitoring purposes.

With regards to section 5.2, DOSI recommends that the reference to protected areas, and areas of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and national areas of adjacent countries, is reinstated. The new BBNJ High Seas Treaty requires States to strive for integrated ocean governance through cooperating in international fora.

DOSI supports the inclusion of ALT 5.4.1. that gives more guidance on connecting to the Regional Environmental Management Plan.

With respect to section 5.4.2, DOSI recommends the inclusion of microbial communities in the midwater too. Further, DOSI notes that requirements for the biological description between the surface, midwater and benthic sections differ and should be streamlined. Across all habitats, the microbial community and fauna need to be described and should consider specific richness, biodiversity, faunal density, community structure and connectivity. Currently, this is only explicitly mentioned for the benthic section. DOSI supports the text of ALT 5.4.4 for providing a robust description of ecosystem and community level studies.

Thank you, Madame Facilitator.