

**Statement by India on 'Report on the outcome of the intersessional dialogue and the briefing note of the facilitator, with a view to adopting a council decision'**

Mr. President,

We thank the co-facilitators namely Belgium and Singapore for the second briefing note to the council on the informal intersessional dialogue.

As per the PMN and PMS exploration contracts, Indian efforts are focused on survey, exploration, environmental studies, development of mining technologies and metallurgical processing technologies. We also are intensely engaged in studying the deep sea environment of the polymetallic nodule bearing provinces to develop a holistic understanding of the seabed, oceanic environment and biodiversity.

India strongly supports the efforts for protection and preservation of global marine environment while harvesting deep sea mineral resources.

While we understand the legitimate rights and interest of the sponsoring states and the contractors in undertaking commercial deep sea mining operations as the convention and the agreement at the earliest, India strongly believes that for such an exploitation robust rules, regulations and procedures, acceptable to all concerned, are required.

It is evident that the common view or concern at multilateral level is the lack of sufficient scientific knowledge and data to evaluate the environmental impact and to develop ecofriendly technologies.

The exploratory mining activities of the contractors shall continue as the primary way for generating more knowledge and information needed to fill the gaps.

India believes that sustainable harnessing of mineral resources of the ocean while ensuring the environmental protection is of the interest to the entire mankind.

In relation to the general view of the Government of India on the deep sea mining a formal statement will be made at a later stage.

For the present we advocate the following approach:

- UNCLOS and 1994 agreement provide mechanisms for the amicable settlement of disputes related to the interpretation of the Convention. All such avenues have to be explored and exhausted before taking an extreme stand. Out of the box thinking is required.
- Council should continue its efforts to develop regulations and guidelines for the commercial exploitation of the deep sea resources in a time bound manner
- Members states and the stake holders may be encouraged to collect and collate the information on the impacts of the deep sea mining as per the best practices
- Continue the efforts on exploratory mining. Without this the information required for arriving at a meaningful conclusion on the technical, commercial and environmental viability of deep sea mining will never be established.

- Deliberations and consultation between all the stake holders need to be continued.
- We extend our support to the efforts of the authority and the council in developing a robust exploitation code and will be glad to actively engage and participate in the consultative process.

Thank you Mr. President.