

Implementation of the decision of the Council in 2022 relating to the reports of the Chair of the Legal and Technical Commission

Thank you, Mr President for giving me the floor.

Good morning Excellencies and colleagues

My delegation thank the Secretary-General for the preparation of this report. We find its content helpful in progressing the work of this Council and as an invaluable tool in keeping track of Council decisions to ensure their full and effective implementation, and in working toward a transparent regulatory process.

We value the work being undertaken by both the Commission and the Secretariat in their constructive dialogue with contractors with regard to consistencies in annual reporting and in meeting their contractual obligations. We support the continuation of this dialogue to address those areas where there has been inadequate or incomplete performance against an approved plan of work for exploitation. We also support the full engagement of sponsoring States in this matter to assist the Authority and to ensure a consistent approach to the administration and regulation of exploration contracts.

We note matters raised by the Secretary-General as to the late submission of annual reports and periodic review reports and as noted by the Secretary-General any excessive delays are also problematic in the effective administration of the contract as well as matters of efficiency given the workloads of the Commission and Secretariat. We would welcome the Commission revisiting the periodic review process and in considering the issue of recommendations.

We have no fundamental objection to the Secretary-General being given the necessary authority by the Council to impose administrative penalties as an *interim* measure with accountability through to the Council and until such time as the ICE mechanism is finalised. Such penalties should be in line with national regulatory practices, and we ask, to this end whether a desktop review has been undertaken for this purpose.

As to matters of inadequate or incomplete performance versus matters of possible non-compliance we do take this opportunity to raise the need for a coherent approach to regulation by the Authority, and the necessary processes and procedures to support such approach. It has been suggested on several occasions that the Council adopt a compliance assurance policy which sets out the fundamentals of what and how it will regulate, respective organ responsibility in the compliance assurance process and the all-important interface with States sponsoring activities in the Area. Those fundamentals need consideration now in order to deliver “fit-for-purpose” regulator of activities as an

expected outcome of the Authority's strategic plan. We do acknowledge, however that further work must be done on the ICE mechanism in the negotiation of the draft exploitation regulations, and the such mechanism will be of relevance to exploration activities.

My delegation stands ready as a sponsoring State to work with the Council, Commission and the Secretariat on matters relating to the interface with sponsoring States and welcome input and support from other sponsoring State.

Finally, my delegation welcomes the continued work on the Authority's data management strategy and enhancements to the functionality of the DeepData platform. This is a critical area for the Authority both in terms of it propagating the results of marine scientific research and as a base for evidence-based decision-making.

I thank you.