

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland – 14/7

“Thank you Mr President. It is good to see you presiding over this important discussion. We are grateful to the delegations of Singapore and Belgium for leading the intersessional work on this issue in a comprehensive and inclusive manner, for providing their written report in advance and for their oral reports today. Although no application for a plan of work has been received - consistent with the commitments made by the Sponsoring State it is right for the Council to consider the possibility in the event that such an application is made before the regulatory framework is in place

The United Kingdom approaches this matter without regard to any particular terminology or the nuances which may lie behind the use of particular terms.

The UK will maintain its policy position of not sponsoring or supporting the issuing of any exploitation licences for deep sea mining projects until there is sufficient scientific evidence about the potential impact on deep sea ecosystems. In this regard the UK notes that you don't get such scientific evidence by stopping or disrupting the science.

Nor will the UK support such a licence until strong enforceable environmental Regulations, Standards and Guidelines have been developed by the International Seabed Authority (ISA) and are in place. In this regard you don't get a strong Regulatory Framework by stopping or delaying negotiations, or by diverting from the objectives we have set ourselves.

As a responsible international actor and Party to UNCLOS, the UK remains fully engaged in the negotiations underway at the ISA and will work closely with partners on providing the legal certainty and security provided by early elaboration of a consolidated text of the draft regulations – ideally by November - and by the timely adoption of an environmentally sensitive and commercially viable mining code and accompanying Standards and Guidelines.

The United Kingdom's policy approach to deep sea mining is both precautionary and conditional – it has the precautionary principle at its core. The elaboration and adoption of the regulatory framework must be the Council's top priority.”