

IUCN Statement
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Delivered on 23rd March 2024 – agenda item 20: Report of the Secretary-General on incidents in the NORI-D contract area in the Clarion-Clipperton Zone.

Mr President,

Since it's the first time our delegation is taking the floor since your election, we wish to congratulate you on your presidency and reassure you of our support.

The loss of global biodiversity, and the triple planetary crisis at large is something that affects us all, and is of great concern to civil society, which is increasingly engaging in peaceful protests.

As recognized in IUCN resolution 115 for the Protection of environmental human and peoples' rights defenders and whistleblowers, peaceful efforts undertaken by environmental defenders provide essential contributions to conservation for present and future generations and as such, should not be hampered. This is particularly true when it comes to the Area and its resources, in view of the Common Heritage of Humankind principle.

IUCN stands behind the right of peaceful environmental protests at sea by ocean defenders and would encourage the uptake of good practice and requirements safeguarding the right to peaceful protests in the context of deep seabed mining.

If the Council deems that there is a need for further rules for flag states operating in the high seas, the matter should, in our view, be raised with the IMO for further action.

IUCN notes with concern that a few delegations have spoken about the need to prevent similar incidents like the one that occurred in the NORI-D contract area. On the contrary, IUCN encourages the Council to consider means to accommodate such peaceful protests.

In conclusion, the IUCN wishes to underscore that a clean, healthy and sustainable deep-ocean is not solely an environmental requirement, it is also a human right that should be respected and defended.

Thank you, Mr. President.