

IUCN Statement
ISA 29th Session of the Council – First Part

March 2024
ISA HQ, Kingston, Jamaica

Delivered on 18th March 2024 – agenda item 1

Thank you, Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates and colleagues,

On this first day of the first part of the twenty-ninth session of the Council of the International Seabed Authority, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) would like to thank the Government of Jamaica for its usual warm hospitality, and thank the Bureau as well as the Secretary-General and the staff of the ISA Secretariat, for their work in preparing this session.

Regarding the modalities of work and as already heard this morning, IUCN notes with concern the introduction of informal informals on specific topics, as well as the possibility to include further informal informals for the July 2024 meetings, as stated in the Information Note on matters for consideration by the Council. IUCN appreciates that such modalities can help Member States achieve consensus in the final stage of international negotiations. However, we have not approached that final stage. For the current stage of negotiations, we believe broader participation is needed to work towards consensus. Using informal informals at this premature stage in the process would set a worrisome precedent for the negotiations going forward.

In full alignment with the Common Heritage of Humankind Principle, IUCN humbly suggests that a more collaborative and participatory agenda --open to independent scientists and the full range of stakeholders-- should be adopted to ensure a science-based and inclusive process. At the very least, even if the Council decides to sit in informal informals despite the concerns raised today, we trust that these proceedings will continue to be live streamed on the ISA Web TV.

We reiterate the concerns of others regarding the draft consolidated text and we would like to underscore the Council's understanding that "nothing is agreed until everything is agreed". At this stage, it would be useful if all substantive comments were reflected in the text with clear markings of the respective proponents, as this protocol would provide more transparency and allow for more constructive engagement. Obviously, items can be amended, deleted or moved into a suspense document during the negotiations, but they should not be moved there before.

On a separate note, we wish to congratulate Brazil for putting forward a GRULAC candidate in the person of Ms. Leticia Carvalho for the ISA Secretary General election.

Finally, we wish to extend our sincere condolences following the passing of Mr. Raymond Mohammed whom we were lucky to engage with here at the ISA.

We wish all participants constructive, transparent and participatory negotiations for the next two weeks and the year ahead.

With that, we thank you for giving us the floor.