

**IUCN Statement**  
**ISA 29<sup>th</sup> Session, Part II**  
**Council and Assembly**  
*July 2024*  
*ISA HQ, Kingston, Jamaica*

***Delivered on 25th July 2024 – Agenda item 15: Report of the Finance Committee***

Mr. President,

As this is the first time the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is taking the floor at this meeting, we would like to reaffirm our confidence in your leadership. We thank our host, Jamaica for welcoming us. We also express our gratitude to the Secretariat for all administrative and logistical support for this meeting, and we thank the Chair and all members of the Finance Committee for their hard work. We also join our colleagues to mark the African Day of Seas and Ocean.

IUCN would like to intervene on the Finance Committee recommendation that “the Council and the Assembly consider the issue of payment of financial contributions by observers”. We would like to provide some specific comments as follows:

1. We do not see how the participation of observers in the meetings of the Council and Authority impose substantial financial pressure on the budget of the Authority.
2. If that is the case, we seek clarification on the estimated amount of such costs that causes an increased pressure on the budget of the Authority.
3. We also query if this recommendation distinguishes between the different categories of observers that participate in the meetings of the Authority, for instance, (i) observer states (or non-member states), (ii) the UN, its specialist agencies and other intergovernmental organizations, and (iii) non-governmental organisations.

As the report of the Finance Committee is very brief on this matter, we hope that some clarity can be provided on the above.

More generally, the IUCN would like to raise the following points. First, we question whether now is the right time to discuss this matter. The Authority is now at a critical point in time where members are undertaking important deliberations on behalf of humankind as a whole. Second, since the Area and its mineral resources are the common heritage of humankind, the Authority should encourage observer participation - not curtail this. Third, observers already incur significant costs relating to travel, accommodation and expenses to attend the meetings of the Authority. Additional financial constraints may inhibit our ability to participate and contribute. Fourth, as an observer, the IUCN contributes to the work of the Authority in many ways, including making interventions, engaging in exchanges with delegates, hosting informative side events, providing support in the form of capacity-building and knowledge-sharing, as well as convening workshops and events on themes related to the work of the Authority. For its part, IUCN as an intergovernmental organization will continue to strengthen its long-standing collaboration with the Authority and its member states - some of which are members of IUCN - as well as to contribute in-kind and voluntarily.

Finally, our delegation would like to underscore that IUCN holds observer status at the UN General Assembly and attends many international negotiations and conferences that are

relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of nature and natural resources. We wish to note that the trend in terms of observation participation is overwhelmingly against requiring observers to make financial contributions.

Mr. President,

We would like to end by suggesting that the Council does not endorse this recommendation for the Assembly to consider the issue of payment of financial contributions by observers. Conversely, IUCN queries whether the Authority should instead encourage member states to actively support the participation of observers that could use such financial support, for example, through the setting up of a voluntary trust fund for this purpose.

Thank you.