

IUCN Statement
ISA 30th Session, Part II
Council and Assembly
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ISA HQ, Kingston, Jamaica

Delivered on 24th July 2025 – Item 8: Annual report of the Secretary-General under article 166, paragraph 4, of the Convention: statements.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Your Excellencies, distinguished delegates and colleagues,

As this is the first time our delegation takes the floor, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) joins others in expressing our support to you, Mr. President, and in thanking Madam Secretary-General and the Secretariat for their dedicated work. We also acknowledge the recent efforts deployed by delegations during the past couple of weeks, and welcome the new observers.

IUCN, welcomes the opportunity to address the Assembly and would like to deliver the following key messages.

IUCN strongly support the proposed inclusion of a dedicated agenda item on the development of a general policy for the protection and preservation of the marine environment, Art 145. In the face of scientific uncertainty and regulatory complexity, general policy offers a unifying compass to guide responsible stewardship of the deep ocean. We urge Member States to engage constructively to shape its scope and parameters, in line with our collective responsibility.

IUCN also supports the long-overdue second periodic review (Art 154) of the ISA as a critical opportunity to enhance transparency, inclusivity, and institutional effectiveness.

In that context, we call for strengthened mechanisms for public participation and consultation at all stages of ISA decision-making. Transparent and inclusive processes are the foundation of good governance and essential to building trust and accountability in the Authority's work. In that regard, IUCN is encouraged by the expressed support of the first Deep Sea Dialogues co-convened with Dona Bertarelli Philanthropy and Oceano Azul Foundation, which offered a timely, respectful, and multi-disciplinary space for reflection, convergence, and constructive dialogue. The co-organizers are **grateful to the ISA for the time allocated to report key messages and reflections back to Assembly.**

We heard several references to the BBNJ Agreement which entry into force is within reach following the political momentum demonstrated at UNOC3. The interactions between the ISA regime and the BBNJ Agreement are numerous, and it is paramount that member states ensure that legal responsibilities and political ambition for the protection and preservation of the marine environment are not compromised by the decisions taken by the Authority and, to ensure coherence and complementarity between these two vital instruments.

IUCN underscores the importance of ensuring that any future payment regime under the Mining Code is robust, precautionary, and equitable. It must fully internalise environmental and social externalities, in line with the precautionary principle, the ecosystem approach, and the polluter pays principle, as reaffirmed in IUCN Resolution 122 and UNCLOS obligations. Environmental, legal, and financial risks must not fall to the ISA or its Members, and a substantial share of financial benefits should meaningfully reflect the Common Heritage of Humankind.

IUCN continues to advocate for a moratorium until the six conditions of Resolution 122 are met. Current scientific evidence shows these have not been fulfilled. The risks are significant and well-documented; seabed mining remains technically and economically unproven; impacts cannot be effectively assessed, managed, or compensated; and the regulatory framework remains inadequate. The recent UN Ocean Conference reflected growing political momentum for a moratorium, with an increasing number of States joining this call.

Finally, Mr. President,

We recall that the legal foundation for the Area as the Common Heritage of Humankind stems from UNGA Resolution 2749 and is now part of customary international law. The ISA, as the steward of the Area on behalf of all humanity, must exercise this responsibility with utmost care, foresight, and accountability to future generations.

IUCN will continue supporting its Members—States, civil society, Indigenous Peoples, and academia—through independent scientific assessments and inclusive dialogue, to ensure the Authority's work meets the highest environmental and human rights standards.

Thank you, Mr. President.