



IRELAND

**Statement to the meeting of the Assembly of the
International Seabed Authority on
Item 16 General Policy on the Environment
25 July 2025**

Thank you Mr. President,

Ireland is very grateful to Chile for its proposal for the Assembly to establish an informal intersessional dialogue to facilitate further discussion on a general policy for the protection and preservation of the marine environment. Ireland strongly supports this proposal.

The Assembly is the supreme organ of the Authority and it has the power to establish general policies on any question or matter within the competence of the Authority, as long as these policies are in conformity with UNCLOS. Considering that one of the main objectives of the Convention is the protection and preservation of the marine environment, to which Part XII is dedicated, it should not be controversial for the Assembly to informally discuss a general policy to give effect to this obligation.

In Ireland's view, a future general policy for the protection and preservation of the marine environment would give effect to the provisions of Article 145 of the Convention and, would facilitate coordination and harmonisation between the provisions of the Convention and the activities of the Authority.

A general policy would also enable consistency and mutual supportiveness between the organs of the Authority.

While Ireland acknowledges that any decision of the Assembly to establish a general policy shall be in collaboration with the Council, Ireland is of the view that the adoption of the draft decision would be consistent with the distribution of powers and functions among the organs of the Authority.

This decision, rather than establishing a general policy, simply provides time and space for member states to exchange views on the necessity and content of a potential general policy.

Moreover, the draft decision specifically provides for engagement with the Council, consistent with the requirements of the 1994 Agreement.

Various arguments have been put forward by some states in opposition to this proposal: that it trespasses into matters that are the responsibility of the Council, that it risks distracting from work on the mining code, that it will prejudice the mining code.

Ireland does not accept any of these arguments.

In any event, these are all issues that can be further discussed within the intersessional dialogue, which I reiterate, does not provide for the adoption of a general policy, merely a process to consider one.

At a time when the Authority is under considerable international scrutiny, when we are moving towards a potential exploitation phase, and when widespread concerns persist about the environmental impacts of deep-sea mining, it would be highly regrettable if this proposal were to be blocked once again by some states.

Such an outcome would call into question the credibility of the Authority as a regulator committed to the protection of the marine environment.

It sends a lamentable signal to the outside world, that not only will the Authority not adopt a general environmental policy, it will not even consider it.

This is not a good look.

Ireland urges the members of the Authority to support the draft decision.

Thank you Mr President.