

**Intervention of the Kingdom of Tonga Delegation on Draft Regulation 17 –  
The Exploitation Contract  
International Seabed Authority Council Meeting  
Part I of the Council Session – 17-28 March 2025**

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**Thank you, Mr. President,**

The Kingdom of Tonga welcomes this discussion on **Draft Regulation 17 – The Exploitation Contract** and supports a **clear, efficient, and transparent** process for finalizing contracts following the approval of a Plan of Work.

Tonga **does not support** the newly introduced requirement for the **Council to separately request the Secretary-General to prepare an Exploitation Contract** after approving a Plan of Work. This **adds an unnecessary administrative step** and is **inconsistent with past practice**. Furthermore, **Article 153(3) of UNCLOS** clearly states that an **approved Plan of Work shall be issued as a contract**, making an additional Council request redundant.

On **Regulation 17(3)**, Tonga supports the requirement that **Exploitation Contracts be published within 7 days** in the **Seabed Mining Register**, ensuring **transparency and public accountability**, while appropriately **redacting confidential information**.

Tonga remains committed to a **streamlined and predictable regulatory framework** that ensures **legal certainty for contractors and Sponsoring States**, while maintaining strong governance standards. We look forward to continued discussions on this important regulation.

**I thank you Mr. President.**