

## Agenda item 11 – WWF International

Thank you, Mr. President.

Thank you also to Jamaica, our host country, as well as to Madam Secretary-General and all the Secretariat staff for your hospitality and assistance to us visitors.

As we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the ISA, we should acknowledge the scientific progress of seabed knowledge. It is now clear that the deep ocean is not just vast and remote, but essential to planetary health, biodiversity, and climate stability. The available science also showed the vulnerability of the deep ocean ecosystem.

As one of the leading international conservation NGOs, and a observer to the ISA since 2007, WWF would highlight the linkage between the seabed regime to a few other important multilateral developments taking place during this period when ISA exist, which have implications for the discussions here and to which member states are committed or legally bound.

In 2015, the Agenda for Sustainable Development with the 17 SDGs was adopted. However, as our *2025 WWF report* shows, deep seabed mining threatens the VERY goals governments have committed to. 16 of the 17 goals can be undermined by such exploitation.

In 2022 governments agreed to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework aiming to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and pursue a "nature-positive" world. WWF's study shows that deep seabed mining risks undermining 18 of the 23 targets, from biodiversity loss and climate instability to increased global inequality, loss of marine living resources, and cultural harm. The consequences are far-reaching.

WWF would also remind that in 2007, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We welcome the repeated calls made at this Assembly to ensure that their voices and traditional knowledge are meaningfully included in ISA decision-making. This is closely linked to not only the SDG and GBF, but also to the BBNJ Agreement, reasonably to expect entry into force in early 2026.

As Sir David Attenborough wrote in his latest book "Ocean", where he speaks of the International Seabed Authority: *"The deep" functions on a completely different timescale to the modern human world—growth takes centuries; restoration is essentially unknowable. Perhaps, then, our approach to the deep" requires not just a change in policy, but a change in perspective."*

This Assembly has the opportunity—and responsibility—to be part of that shift. A future, grounded in knowledge, multilateralism, and inter-generational stewardship is a great birthday present for the future for all ISA member states.

Thank you.