



## Council

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### Thirtieth session

Council session, part I

Kingston, 17–28 March 2025

Agenda item 14

**Report of the Chair of the Legal and Technical Commission on  
the work of the Commission at its thirtieth session**

## **Decision of the Council of the International Seabed Authority on the deferral of the schedule of relinquishment upon request by the Government of India**

*The Council of the International Seabed Authority,*

*Recalling* that, on 26 September 2016, the Government of India entered into a contract for exploration for polymetallic sulphides in the Central Indian Ocean with the Authority,

*Recalling also* regulation 27, paragraph 2, of the regulations on prospecting and exploration for polymetallic sulphides in the Area,<sup>1</sup> which refers to the schedule of relinquishments of the area allocated to contractors,

*Noting* that, according to the schedule, the Government of India was required to relinquish at least 50 per cent of the original contract area allocated to it by 26 September 2024, being the end of the eighth year from the date of the contract, and at least 75 per cent of the original contract area allocated to it by 26 September 2026, being the end of the tenth year from the date of the contract,

*Noting also* that the Government of India, by letter dated 11 May 2023, requested a deferment of the schedule of the first relinquishment from 26 September 2024 to 30 September 2026 and the Council considered this request during the twenty-eighth session, acting on the recommendation of the Legal and Technical Commission, and approved the request for deferment,<sup>2</sup> and that, as a result, the contractor would be required to submit its first relinquishment of at least 50 per cent of the original area allocated to it by 30 September 2026, and its second relinquishment of at least 75 per cent of the original area allocated to it by 26 September 2026,

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<sup>1</sup> ISBA/16/A/12/Rev.1, annex.

<sup>2</sup> ISBA/28/C/22.



*Noting further* that the Government of India, by letter dated 28 November 2024, requested a two-year deferment of the schedule of the second relinquishment from 26 September 2026 to 30 September 2028,

*Recognizing* that the contractor has cited residual impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the overlapping schedules of the first and second relinquishments as exceptional circumstances necessitating the deferment,

*Recalling* that, pursuant to regulation 27, paragraph 6, of the regulations, the Council may, at the request of the contractor and on the recommendation of the Legal and Technical Commission, in exceptional circumstances, defer the schedule of relinquishment, and that such exceptional circumstances shall include, inter alia, consideration of prevailing economic circumstances or other unforeseen exceptional circumstances arising in connection with the operational activities of the contractor,

*Considering* that the Legal and Technical Commission has found that the reasons presented by the Government of India qualify as “unforeseen exceptional circumstances arising in connection with the operational activities of the contractor”, and has recommended deferring the schedule of the second relinquishment by two years to 30 September 2028,

*Acting upon* the recommendation of the Commission,

1. *Determines* that the reasons presented by the Government of India qualify as “unforeseen exceptional circumstances arising in connection with the operational activities of the contractor”;
2. *Defers* the schedule of the second relinquishment to 30 September 2028, as recommended by the Legal and Technical Commission;
3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to communicate the present decision to the Government of India.

*330th meeting  
27 March 2025*