

STATEMENT BY STATES PARTIES FROM LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN TO THE INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY IN ITS 30<sup>th</sup> PERIOD OF SESSIONS, FIRST PART, ON THE CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS OF A DRAFT REGULATIONS ON EXPLOITATION OF MINERAL RESOURCES IN THE AREA.

Mr. President,

1. I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean countries (GRULAC).
2. We appreciate your efforts leading the negotiations during the current period of sessions, that celebrates 30 years since the establishment of the International Seabed Authority.
3. It is our firm belief that UNCLOS is the international legal framework within which all activities in the ocean and seas must be carried out, and the fundamental basis that guides the behavior of States on ocean matters, establishing provisions for the sustainable use and conservation of oceans and their resources.
4. The Group of Latin America and Caribbean States reaffirms its strong commitment to the Authority as well as our willingness to continue contributing with the work of the Council and other Authority's organs.
5. On behalf of GRULAC, I would like to thank all the delegations that have offered to lead informal intersessional working groups, which have been instrumental in pushing the negotiations forward. For this reason, we request that the result from their work is included in the Draft Regulations.
6. We also request that discussions in the room should be reflected as accurately as possible in the following version of the Draft Regulations, meaning that if a text proposal has received substantive support, that circumstance should be reflected in the text.
7. We note that discussions during this session have been more robust and active, and the engagement by delegations has been very constructive and informed, allowing for a clearer identification of existing divergences and consensus. We believe that having had more time in between meetings allowed for intersessional discussions, and having received the revised text well in advance for its review before the meeting contributed to this result. We encourage the Council to continue this pattern.
8. We further note the fact that the President under whose term the revised version was prepared is not the same who led subsequent negotiations. For this, we believe it could be useful to develop a transition process, in which the nominated president could exchange views concerning the revised text in the preparatory process. In this regard we suggest that each regional group, nominates a representative as early as possible, ideally at the end of the previous session.
9. GRULAC is convinced of the need to uphold UNCLOS provisions, recalling that the Convention is the most comprehensive set of norms and principles that govern activities in the Area. The Convention and the Agreement on Part XI provide the legal tools to ensure the mandate entrusted to the Authority. GRULAC is committed to their effective implementation through the development of Rules, Regulations and Procedures.

Promoting and achieving legal certainty is fundamental for the ISA to discharge its mandate in an effective and predictable way.

10. In this regard, we recall that, under UNCLOS, activities in the Area shall be carried out for the benefit of humankind as a whole, and the Authority is the international organization entrusted to act on its behalf. GRULAC strongly believes that multilateralism is the best path to ensuring these principles are met, and is committed to supporting the work of the Authority.
11. GRULAC is also convinced that exploitation from mineral resources in the area should not commence before the Regulations for Exploitation, and a robust, comprehensive, legal and institutional framework are in place, that includes, inter alia, effective and environmentally sound provisions, in accordance with article 145 of the Convention.
12. We emphasize the need to strengthen the exchange of scientific knowledge, the creation and strengthening of capacities and the transfer of marine technology, especially for developing countries, since they are determining elements to effectively implement UNCLOS provisions.
13. Mr. President, we reiterate our commitment to keep engaging in good faith, and in a spirit of cooperation, in the negotiations of a robust, balanced, and effective legal framework, to discharge fully and effectively the mandate provided by UNCLOS, while recalling our obligation to ensure an effective protection and preservation of the marine environment from harmful effects which may arise from the activities in the Area.
14. Finally, we would like to thank the Secretary General, the staff of the Secretariat, the friends from Conference Services and the interpreters for their diligent and essential work.

Thank you