



Council

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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 Poland

The Council of the International Seabed Authority,

Recalling that, on 12 February 2018, the Government of Poland entered into a contract for exploration for polymetallic sulphides in the Mid-Atlantic Ridge with the Authority,

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

Noting that, according to the schedule, the Government of Poland is required to relinquish at least 50 per cent of the original area allocated to it by 11 February 2026, being the end of the eighth year from the date on which the contract was signed, and at least 75 per cent of the original area allocated to it by 11 February 2028, being the end of the tenth year from the date on which the contract was signed,

Noting also that, by a letter dated 30 April 2025, the contractor requested a two-year deferment of the first relinquishment to 11 February 2028 and of the second relinquishment to 11 February 2030 to enable it to better examine and understand its contract area and fulfil its contractual obligations,

Recognizing that the contractor has cited exceptional circumstances necessitating the deferment, including residual impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on its exploration activities, as well as the ongoing armed conflict in Ukraine along the eastern border of Poland and its effects on the Polish economy and government priorities,²

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

¹ ISBA/16/A/12/Rev.1, annex.

² ISBA/30/LTC/7, paras. 4–10.



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 Poland qualify as “unforeseen exceptional circumstances arising in connection with the operational activities of the contractor” and has recommended deferring the schedule of the first relinquishment to 11 February 2028 and of the second relinquishment to 11 February 2030,

Acting upon the recommendation of the Commission,

1. *Determines* that the reasons presented by the Government of Poland qualify as “unforeseen exceptional circumstances arising in connection with the operational activities of the contractor”;

2. *Defers* the first relinquishment to 11 February 2028 and the second relinquishment to 11 February 2030, as recommended by the Legal and Technical Commission;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to communicate the present decision to the Government of Poland.

*335th meeting
14 July 2025*
