



Council

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Agenda item 11

Draft regulations on exploitation of mineral resources in the Area

Draft decision of the Council of the International Seabed Authority relating to the development of binding environmental threshold values

Submitted by the delegation of Germany

The Council of the International Seabed Authority,

Recalling article 136 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea,¹ which provides that the Area and its resources are the common heritage of mankind,

Recalling also article 145 of the Convention, which establishes that necessary measures shall be taken in accordance with the Convention with respect to activities in the Area to ensure effective protection of the marine environment from harmful effects that may arise from such activities,

Appreciating the draft exploitation regulations and the draft standards and guidelines prepared by the Legal and Technical Commission,

Considering that members of the Council of the International Seabed Authority recognized the need for the development of binding threshold values for the protection of the marine environment by an intersessional expert group of the Council, taking into account the input of all stakeholders,

Decides:

(a) That binding environmental threshold values will be developed to define substantially what is required to ensure effective protection of the marine environment pursuant to article 145 of the Convention and to set measurable requirements with regard to the maximum level of harm from activities in the Area that can be considered acceptable;

¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1833, No. 31363.



(b) That these threshold values should be developed as binding standards and, as far as feasible, within phase 1 of the ongoing development of standards and guidelines;

(c) That, given the limited time and resources, an initial set of such standards should focus on the main pressures potentially caused by deep-sea mining operations;

(d) That the work will be led by the Legal and Technical Commission and supported by the scientific expertise of an intersessional expert group for the development of binding environmental threshold values; as an initial step, the intersessional expert group should work in three subgroups, primarily on the following topic areas, as outlined in document [ISBA/27/C/30](#):

(i) Toxicity;

(ii) Turbidity and settling of resuspended sediments;

(iii) Underwater noise and light pollution;

(e) That the intersessional expert group and its subgroups will:

(i) Be coordinated by members of the Legal and Technical Commission;

(ii) Be open to experts nominated by member States, observers and stakeholders of the Authority, including contractors, to engage in the expert group;

(iii) Apply virtual formats and work by correspondence;

(iv) Develop proposed threshold values and compile a report to the Commission, to be published on the website of the Authority, presenting all available options discussed by the expert group and outcomes of its deliberations, while also reflecting any diverging opinions;

(f) That the Legal and Technical Commission will consider this report and submit, after formal stakeholder consultation, its recommendations to the Council;

(g) That the Legal and Technical Commission will prepare, based on the outcomes of the intersessional expert group, draft standards on environmental threshold values to be submitted to the Council for consideration and adoption.
