

**ITEM 12: ISBA/27/C/27 - IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION OF THE COUNCIL IN 2021 RELATING TO THE REPORTS OF THE CHAIR OF THE LEGAL AND TECHNICAL COMMISSION (Delivered on 18.07.2022)**

Thank you mr president.

**III Activities of Contractors - In regard to PARA 16:** As noted by Belgium, recent environmental impact assessments conducted during the exploration phase have been grossly unfit for purpose, including limited environmental baseline information and stakeholder consultation. The Deep-Ocean Stewardship Initiative, like others, also looks forward to engaging with the working group being established to review the EIA procedure.

**IV Developments Regarding REMPs**

**With regard to PARA 17:** DOSI congratulates the Authority on the revised draft plan for the regional environmental management plan for the area of the northern Mid-Atlantic Ridge. DOSI experts are thankful to have been able to contribute to this process, and acknowledge that much of the discussed science is reflected in this REMP. However, we note that this draft REMP still needs further significant improvement in order to be effective for its purpose. Main gaps include the determination of necessary data to be provided for the REMP and the location and manner for their access by all stakeholders, as well as the assignment of responsibility for providing the data. Definitions of management measures such as buffer zones for Sites/Areas in need of protection, thresholds, benthic and pelagic indicator species, cumulative impacts and scenario forecasting are very much still needed but are currently lacking. Further, the concept of networks of protected sites, and associated criteria for the design, has not yet been even considered in the REMP. Our detailed scientific assessment and commentary on the nMAR REMP is available online. Further collaboration with stakeholders will be necessary to fill the current gaps. DOSI is ready to assist the ISA in accessing global scientific collective expertise.

**With regard to PARA 18:** While DOSI applauds the Authority undertaking the development of a standardized approach and a general template for the development and review of regional environmental management plans, we suggest that this is duplicative given the delegations of Germany, the Netherlands, and Costa Rica made similar submissions in ISBA/C/26/6 and ISBA/C/26/7, that were drafted via inclusive and transparent processes.

**V Data Management Strategy**

**PARAS 19, 20, 21, 23:** The Deep-Ocean Stewardship Initiative applauds the Authority on the progress made on data management, including via updated reporting templates for Contractors' geological and environmental and metadata. We hope these reporting templates will be made available to all stakeholders in a timely fashion and query how this will interact with the ISA's environmental database, DeepData. We further note the secretariat is continuing its scientific work and interpretation from DeepData, with the assistance of experts from developing countries, under the Africa Deep Seabed Resources project. DOSI would therefore also be grateful for an update on any improvements to DeepData given it was launched since 2019 but still has limited



functionality. As mentioned by Costa Rica, the database is only useful if the data is accessible and usable for management decisions. The accessibility of data collected by contractors in the Area is essential for independent and regional analyses that will guide REMPs, so we hope for quick resolution to these matters, including a data quality control system, the integration of this platform with global observing efforts and adoption of best practices, interoperability, and accessibility. Publication of the ISA's data management strategy would be an important step in helping relevant stakeholders understand how the ISA is approaching these essential issues. Likewise, DOSI proposes that an organ of scientific expertise should oversee the regular efforts to synthesize contractor data sets and evaluate impact assessment at a regional scale mentioned in this document.

Thank you, Mr. President.