



SERVICE DE PRESSE

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Nice, Monday June 9<sup>th</sup> 2025

## JOINT STATEMENT

### **For a Preserved Ocean: Protecting the Deep Sea on the High Seas from Mining**

Since 2022, 33 States in Europe, Americas and the Pacific have committed themselves to applying the precautionary principle, **and to supporting at least a precautionary pause on deep-sea mining**. This position is based on the many reports and scientific analyses published in recent years: the deep sea is home to a rich array of species that is still largely unknown, and must be preserved.

We want to reaffirm a principle: **protecting deep-sea ecosystems is not only a legal imperative but above all a scientific, environmental and economic one.**

**Compliance with the international legal and environmental framework applicable to the deep sea is essential**

**Deep-sea mineral resources on areas beyond national jurisdictions (the Area) are the common heritage of humankind** under international law, as reflected by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and must therefore be collectively and responsibly managed only by the International Seabed Authority (ISA), which has the exclusive regulatory and administrative mandate, on behalf of humankind as a whole.

Any potential deep-sea mining on areas beyond national jurisdictions outside the international legal framework, as reflected in UNCLOS, would be contrary to international law.

### **Science must guide our actions**

The deep seabed accounts for nearly 54% of the ocean. Yet only 5% of these environments have been explored.

We are only just beginning to understand the role that these deep-sea ecosystems play in the ecological functions of the ocean, including their role in mitigating climate change and their potential benefits for humanity. While the economic benefits of potential deep-seabed exploitation are still very theoretical, recent scientific studies and reports indicate that:

- Deep sea ecosystems are home to **thousands of unknown species**, many of which do not exist anywhere else. **Genetic resources** of the deep sea can support scientific progress and innovation in areas as varied as health, nutrition and the fight against climate change.
- **These ecosystems are fragile: the regeneration of deep-sea habitats is extremely slow.** Polymetallic nodules, coveted for their rare metals, grow at the rate of 1-10 mm per million years, on a time scale that exceeds that of human generations, making it difficult to ensure the sustainability of their exploitation.
- **Deep sea plays a key role in carbon storage and global climate regulation.**
- **The risks of mining could materialise on a very large scale**, as mining activity would generate sediment plumes that could affect the deep sea's wildlife and species' behaviour in the water column. These plumes carry heavy metals that can impact the entire food chain, right up to us.

Our scientific knowledge is not yet sufficient to understand the **potential direct and indirect impacts** of such an exploitation. The **precautionary principle** is therefore necessary.

**The international community must take action to ensure the protection of the deep sea and its resources**

**Any deep-seabed-related activity in areas beyond national jurisdictions must be based on a fully operational and universally respected multilateral legal framework**, on independent and thorough scientific assessments of environmental impacts, and on the principles of transparency, international cooperation and prevention.

We are committed to contributing actively to the ongoing negotiations of the Rules, Regulations and Procedures of the ISA in order to ensure effective protection of the environment and respect for the principle of the common heritage of humankind.

In the run-up to the United Nations Ocean Conference in Nice (9-13 June), **we reaffirm our commitment to protect the deep sea, and we call on all our partners to**

- 1. promote the respect for international law**
- 2. accelerate scientific research on the deep sea** so that humanity can fully benefit from its wealth while preserving it
- 3. join their voices to call for at least, a precautionary pause on the exploitation of the deep seabed.**

This statement has been endorsed by:

1. Austria
2. Chile
3. Costa Rica
4. Ecuador
5. Denmark
6. Finland
7. France
8. Germany
9. Greece
10. Guatemala
11. Honduras
12. Ireland
13. Latvia
14. Luxembourg
15. Malta
16. Monaco
17. Palau
18. Panama
19. Peru<sup>1</sup>
20. Portugal
21. Spain
22. Sweden
23. Switzerland
24. Vanuatu

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<sup>1</sup> The Republic of Peru is not a Party to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).