

Press Release Greenpeace International

Deep sea mining moratorium support surges to 46 countries but ISA fails to tackle US unilateral mining

Kingston, Jamaica, 1 August 2026 – The 31st Session of the International Seabed Authority (ISA) Assembly concluded in bitter disappointment as governments failed to set a clear direction that unlawful deep sea mining will not be tolerated.

The courageous leadership of African nations – with Mauritius, Mozambique and the Republic of Congo joining a growing block of 46 countries demanding a moratorium – stood in stark contrast to the ISA's failure to fend off a corporate group that deploys controversial strategies to evade scrutiny. Instead, the Council rewarded The Metals Company by extending the exploration contract for its subsidiary, Nauru Ocean Resources Inc. (NORI), [despite the company's ties to unlawful US mining plans](#). The inquiry into companies connected to unilateral mining will continue, but without the Council setting a clear deadline.

The Council also made the highly controversial decision to open the door for contractors to participate as observers at the ISA, [further strengthening industry influence](#) in an organisation already riddled with corporate capture.

Haldis Helle, Greenpeace International Ocean Campaigner, said:

"While governments buried their heads in the sand over illegal US unilateralism, the ISA has actively rolled out the red carpet for rogue corporations. Rewarding The Metals Company and its subsidiary despite their clear disregard for international law and opening the ISA's doors to let commercial contractors participate as observers is an outrageous conflict of interest. It cements corporate control over an organisation that was supposed to safeguard the common heritage of mankind."

In the face of the ISA's lack of direction, Greenpeace urges countries to take immediate responsibility at home and act against any company or national connected to unilateral mining, to disrupt and limit unlawful deep-sea mining supply chains.

Helle, continued:

"Any government that permits its corporations to bankroll, engineer, or enable unilateral deep sea mining is directly violating international law. Under UNCLOS, nations like the Netherlands, Canada and the UK have a non-negotiable legal obligation to step in. Governments must now urgently act to discharge their obligations to block corporate rogue actors from using their ports, capital, and workforce to fuel this lawless, destructive race to the bottom."

Simultaneously, a draft decision sponsored by the Republic of Vanuatu to strengthen the role of scientific evidence and traditional knowledge in ISA decision-making led to sound discussions throughout the week. While governments failed to reach consensus on the decision, the initiative led to strong statements about the urgent need for more deep sea

research from a range of states, who also supported the continuation of discussions on the topic during the 32nd session of the Assembly. \

African and Pacific nations stand to be the most severely prejudiced [by current benefit-sharing proposals under negotiation at the ISA](#). The economic model under consideration would leave Global South governments with mere token payments while forcing them to absorb catastrophic risks to their fisheries, coastal economies, ocean health, and deep cultural ties to the marine environment.

Rae Bainteiti, Pacific Political Coordinator at Greenpeace Australia Pacific, said:

"Rather than falling for the illusion of financial windfalls from a predatory industry, these nations are redefining true global leadership. By putting science, ocean health, and multilateral governance ahead of short-term exploitation, Mauritius, Mozambique, Republic of Congo and Vanuatu, and their allies are taking a stand against more reckless extraction and showing the world that true prosperity lies in protecting the marine ecosystems."

Contact

Sol Gosetti, Media Coordinator, Stop Deep Sea Mining campaign, Greenpeace International, +34 633 029 407, sol.gosetti@greenpeace.org

Greenpeace International Press Desk, +31 (0) 20 718 2470 (available 24 hours), pressdesk.int@greenpeace.org