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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Statement: Obscure International Body Could Open Floodgates for Deep Ocean Mining, Despite Opposition by Scientists, Governments, Companies and NGOs

#### *Evidence Shows Ocean Mining Threatens Biodiversity, Climate, Fishing and More*

*Editor's note: Please see a [factsheet](#) and [pressroom](#) for background information about the International Seabed Authority meeting (December 6-15), which will be livestreamed [here](#).*

Critics are sounding the alarm that an upcoming meeting of the International Seabed Authority (ISA), the international body that regulates and controls mining activities in the world's ocean that lies beyond national jurisdictions, could push through ocean mining regulations in as little as two years.

Scientists, governments that are party to the ISA, businesses and NGOs have harshly criticized the meeting to take place in Kingston, Jamaica--and have even called for its delay due to the coronavirus pandemic. The two-week hybrid gathering starts December 6.

Critics of ocean mining, citing a growing body of evidence, have expressed concern that too little is known about the climate, biodiversity, fishing and other impacts of extracting minerals from the ocean floor to let the regulations move forward. A recent study, for example, showed that areas earmarked for ocean mining overlap with tuna and other lucrative fishing areas critical to local and global food security.

Though the ISA meeting has flown under the radar, its massive global significance is reflected in increasing opposition to the meeting in particular, and ocean mining in general.

- Stern letters issued by the [Deep Ocean Stewardship Initiative](#), a group of [Africa nations party to ISA](#), and members of the body's [Latin America and Caribbean group](#) have called on ISA to delay any decision about ocean mining,
- A global group of more than 600 leading ocean scientists have now signed a [scientist statement](#) calling for a moratorium, and members of IUCN World Conservation Congress voted against ocean mining.
- Several businesses have also supported a moratorium on ocean mining. These include BMW, Volvo, Samsung, and Philips, which recently signed a [Business Statement Supporting a Moratorium on Deep Seabed Mining](#). **This week three more businesses, Volkswagen Group, Triodos Bank and Patagonia, joined the statement.** Additionally, in a [report on responsible sourcing](#), Microsoft states: "Microsoft has

established a moratorium on using minerals sourced through deep seabed mining until the proper research and scientific studies have been completed.”

- NGOs and civil society are also [sounding the alarm](#) around ocean mining.

**Dr. Douglas McCauley, a professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara, said:**

*“Decisions made at the International Seabed Authority may shape the next few centuries of ocean health. If ocean mining is green-lighted it could let the genie out of the bottle and significantly threaten important species, inflict irreversible damage to sensitive ocean habitats, source toxins into seafood via contaminated water plumes and disrupt key carbon stores in the deep ocean critical to combating climate change. Those headed to these meetings in Jamaica must know that hundreds of ocean scientists have warned that more research is desperately needed to understand these impacts before mining is allowed to begin. It’s remarkable that the future of such a vast area of our ocean will be decided in a meeting that almost nobody knows is happening.”*

**Dr. Diva Amon, a deep-sea biologist and co-lead of the Deep-Ocean Stewardship Initiative's Minerals Working Group, said:**

*“Will we have the science needed to comprehensively understand deep-sea environments and deep-seabed mining’s likely impacts within the next two years? Unfortunately not. Despite an increase in deep-sea research, publicly available scientific knowledge comprehensive enough to enable evidence-based decision-making regarding environmental management in regions where exploration contracts have been granted by the International Seabed Authority does not yet exist. Closing these scientific gaps is a monumental task that requires clear direction, substantial resources, robust coordination and collaboration, and most importantly TIME, likely on the scale of decades.”*

**Sian Owen, Deep Sea Conservation Coalition, said:**

*“The adoption of Motion 069 at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in September is a ringing endorsement of the need for caution and respect in managing our ocean. Governments and civil society alike voted overwhelmingly in favour of an indefinite moratorium on deep-sea mining. This is a signal that the world is simply not ready to permit a massive new industrial frontier in one of our planet’s last wildernesses before we have even fully understood the wonder and the many benefits to humankind of a healthy deep ocean.”*

**Joachim Claudet, a researcher at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) in Paris, France, said:**

*“The deep-sea encompasses some of the most vulnerable ecosystems on earth, with recovery time, if any, longer than anywhere else. Mining would alter these ecosystems in ways that are in full contradiction with the sustainable pathways our societies should take to ensure peoples’ well being in the long term.”*

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