



Distinguished delegates,

As a faith-based NGO, we are grateful for the opportunity to provide written comment as part of the proceedings of the 2022 UN Ocean Conference on the topic of “Scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation of Goal 14”. As a distinguished Catholic order with a 138-year history, we take seriously our moral obligation to care for Creation and practice integral ecology, as Pope Francis has called on us to do through the encyclical *Laudato Si’*. We join the conference organizers in raising alarm about the crises that our oceans face in the immediate future.

As people of faith who believe in the sacredness of all life, we believe that all conference proceedings and documents need to reflect worldviews grounded in interconnectedness, interdependence and relationship. Without such perspectives, the proceedings will fail to speak to the sacred wisdom and experiences of many people whose voices might otherwise be obscured, including indigenous peoples, spiritual communities, and faith groups.

In order to fully realize the potential of this conference, we encourage all delegates to use this opportunity to address a pressing issue that poses a significant threat to ocean well-being: deep seabed mining (DSM). There are alarming gaps in our knowledge about DSM’s impacts that potentially pose a significant risk of causing severe harm to marine biodiversity, coastal communities, and the entire planet through the disruption of the carbon cycle. DSM would likely lead to increased ocean pollution as it disturbs the sea floor, causing habitat loss, seafloor compaction, and substrate loss. This harmful practice could threaten the livelihoods of coastal communities, and it would stymie the future of marine scientific discoveries. **Most alarmingly, deep seabed mining threatens to disrupt the global carbon cycle, accelerating climate change at the worst possible moment in history.** The oceans are in urgent need of safeguarding as our most valuable carbon sink, and the time to protect them is now.

This practice threatens to undo much of the good that could emerge from this historic conference unless delegates take a strong stance against it. **We call on parties to endorse a global moratorium on deep seabed mining.** Through technological innovation and incentivizing the recycling of minerals, we can meet our future mineral and energy needs while building a circular economy that forefronts the land-sea linkages needed for a future that is as blue as it is green.

Thank you.

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