

My name is **Blair Nelsen**. I am UN representative for the **Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace** and Executive Director of their sponsored ministry, Waterspirit. My comments today will reflect the calls to action from the **Faith in the Ocean coalition** as well as the **NGO Mining Working Group**. Both coalitions mobilize faith-based organizations for ocean protection across UN mechanisms.

As representatives of diverse faiths and spiritual traditions, we recognize the profound relationship between humanity and the ocean. To quote from my organization's tradition, in *Laudato Si'*, "to commit a crime against the natural world is a sin against ourselves and a sin against God." The time has come for us to repent of our ecological sins and to prevent future harm to our beautiful blue planet.

At this conference, we are circulating the Faith in the Ocean Declaration, an international, multifaith call to action for ocean flourishing. To share an excerpt from the Declaration:

We recognize how economic exploitation undermines the health of the ocean and erodes a values-based relationship with it. The unchecked extraction and commercialization of marine resources threaten biodiversity, disrupt ecosystems, and diminish the ocean's ability to sustain life. We must restore a relationship with the ocean that is guided by respect, responsibility, and sustainability.

Additionally, the Zero Draft's recognition that we must employ the precautionary principle when approaching deep sea mining is commendable. However, it does not take a strong enough stand. There is no safe level of deep sea mining. Treating this threat credibly would be in alignment with the 2025 report on the ocean and human rights by the Special Rapporteur on the human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment. I urge the member states to use this conference to ban deep sea mining today. Thank you.