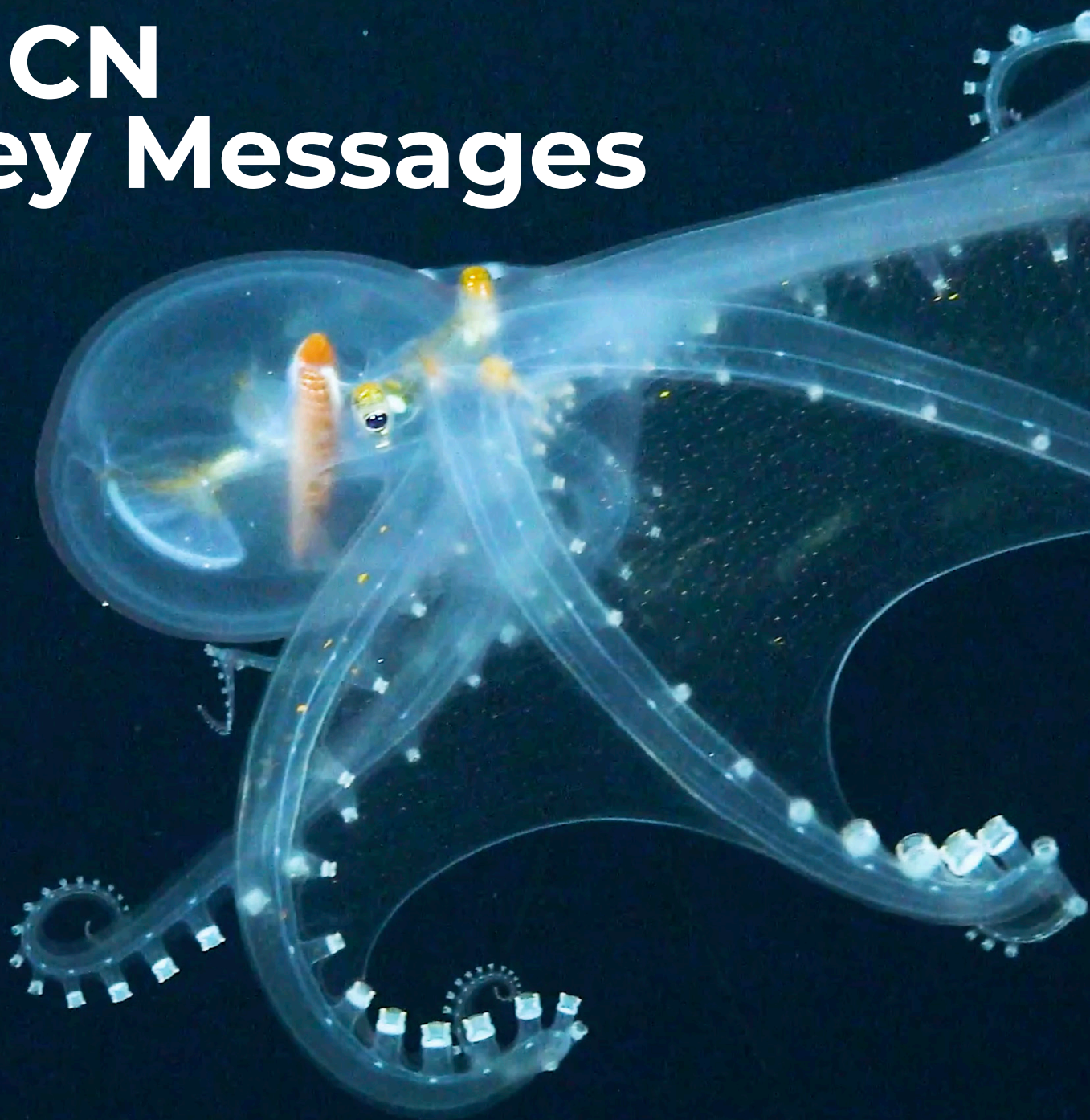




IUCN Key Messages



**International Seabed Authority
31st Session (Part II)**

Kingston, Jamaica | July 2026

Photo credit: Schmidt Ocean Institute

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) welcomes the opportunity to engage in the second part of the thirty-first session of the International Seabed Authority (ISA). As the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it, IUCN remains committed to supporting Member States and the Authority through independent science, international environmental law and evidence-based policy.

Recognising the mandate of the ISA under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) to organise and control activities in the Area while ensuring the effective protection of the marine environment, IUCN encourages continued progress towards transparent, science-based and inclusive governance of the international seabed for the benefit of present and future generations.

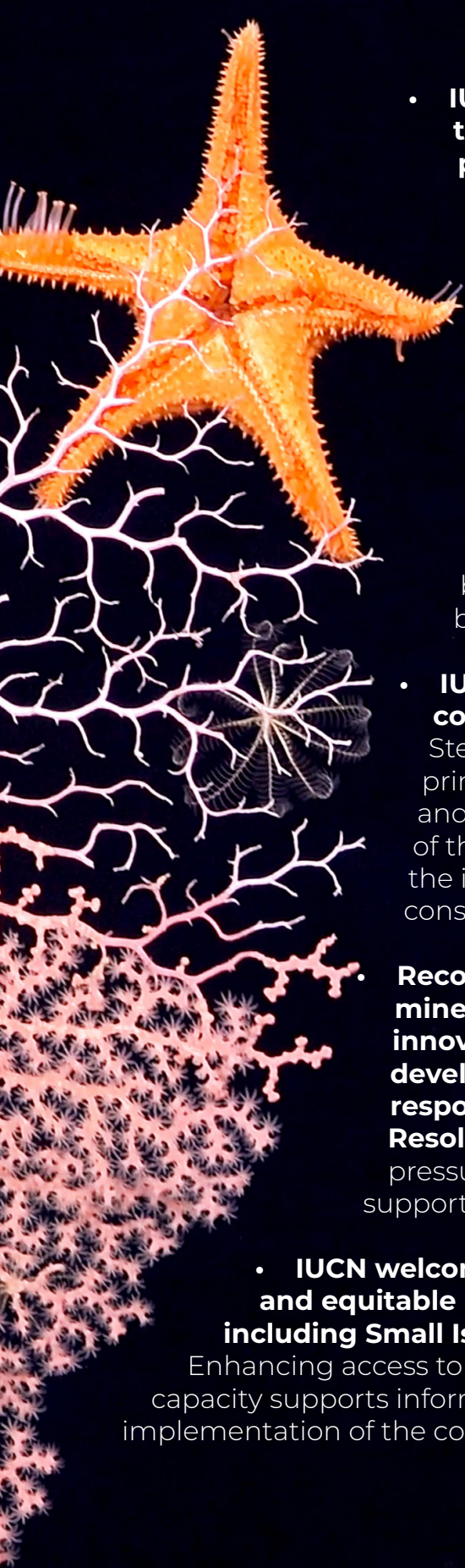
Consistent with [**IUCN World Conservation Congress Resolution 122 \(2020\)**](#), IUCN continues to support a moratorium on deep seabed mining unless and until the conditions set out in the Resolution have been met, including the implementation of the precautionary principle, the ecosystem approach and the effective protection of the marine environment.



IUCN Key messages:

- **IUCN recalls that UNCLOS places the effective protection of the marine environment at the centre of the Authority's mandate.** As discussions on the draft exploitation regulations continue, environmental protection should remain the guiding objective across all aspects of the regulatory framework, including environmental standards, monitoring, compliance, inspection, adaptive management and institutional accountability.
- **IUCN welcomes the continued strengthening of the scientific basis for decision-making.** The recent update to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ highlights both the remarkable biodiversity of the deep ocean and the significant scientific uncertainties, knowledge gaps and increasing pressures facing deep-sea species and ecosystems. Continued investment in independent marine scientific research remains essential to improve understanding of deep-ocean biodiversity, ecosystem functioning, **ecological connectivity between the seabed and the water column**, and cumulative impacts before decisions with potentially irreversible environmental consequences are taken.
- **IUCN encourages Member States to continue ensuring that the development of the exploitation regulations is guided by the best available science and accompanied by adequate opportunity for careful consideration of the remaining substantive issues.** The quality, effectiveness and credibility of the regulatory framework will be fundamental to its long-term implementation and legitimacy.
- **IUCN recalls the 2024 Advisory Opinion of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), to which IUCN experts contributed,** affirming that “the development of an effective common regulatory framework presupposes the existence of adequate information on the state of the marine environment based on updated scientific criteria and methods.” This reinforces the importance of continuing to strengthen marine scientific research and environmental knowledge as an integral component of the Authority's mandate.
- **IUCN welcomes ongoing discussions to strengthen institutional arrangements,** including compliance, inspection, transparency, environmental oversight and institutional accountability. Effective implementation of any future regulatory framework will depend upon institutions that are adequately resourced, transparent and capable of ensuring environmental protection and regulatory certainty.
- **IUCN recalls that Article 154 of UNCLOS requires a periodic review of the manner in which the international regime of the Area has operated in practice.** Such a review represents an important opportunity to assess the effectiveness of the Authority in fulfilling its mandate and to strengthen transparency, accountability, institutional effectiveness and environmental governance at this important stage in the evolution of the ISA.





- **IUCN encourages continued efforts to strengthen transparency, inclusiveness and stakeholder participation throughout the Authority's decision-making processes.** Open access to information, meaningful public participation and independent scientific engagement contribute to effective governance and reinforce confidence in the Authority.
- **Recognising the entry into force of the BBNJ Agreement, IUCN encourages continued cooperation, coherence and mutual supportiveness across international ocean governance processes.** Strengthening complementarities between UNCLOS implementing agreements and other relevant multilateral environmental agreements will support ecosystem-based management and contribute to achieving shared biodiversity and sustainable development objectives.
- **IUCN recalls that the mineral resources of the Area constitute the common heritage of humankind.** Stewardship of these resources should continue to reflect the principles of equity, transparency, environmental responsibility and intergenerational sustainability. Effective implementation of this principle requires that environmental protection and the interests of present and future generations remain central considerations in decision-making.
- **Recognising the growing global demand for critical minerals, IUCN notes the importance of continued innovation in material efficiency, technological development, recycling, circular economy approaches and responsible consumption and production, consistent with Resolution 122.** Such approaches can contribute to reducing pressures on both terrestrial and marine ecosystems while supporting sustainable resource use.
- **IUCN welcomes continued efforts to strengthen capacity-building and equitable participation, particularly for developing States, including Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries.** Enhancing access to scientific knowledge, legal expertise and technical capacity supports informed participation and is fundamental to the effective implementation of the common heritage of humankind principle.

IUCN recalls that, under UNCLOS and relevant United Nations General Assembly resolutions, the International Seabed Authority is entrusted with organising and controlling activities in the Area on behalf of humankind as a whole, while ensuring the effective protection of the marine environment. As a longstanding observer to the Authority, IUCN remains committed to supporting Member States, the Secretariat and all stakeholders through independent science, legal expertise and evidence-based policy advice, with the shared objective of advancing transparent, inclusive, science-based and environmentally responsible governance of the international seabed for the benefit of present and future generations.

For more information please visit: [Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction \(BBNJ\) | IUCN](#)

Contact:

Minna Epps

Director
Global Ocean Policy
(Head of Delegation)
minna.epps@iucn.org

Clément Chazot

Marine programme officer
Global Ocean Team
clement.chazot@iucn.org

IUCN World Headquarters
Rue Mauverney 28
1196 Gland
Switzerland
Tel: +41 22 999 0000
Fax: +41 22 999 0002
www.iucn.org



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