



## **Deep Sea Mining: Artisanal Fishers call for the protection of their livelihoods against deep sea mining**

The International Seabed Authority (ISA), meeting in Kingston (Jamaica) from 18 to 29 July, will be looking at proposing regulations for deep sea mining worldwide, which, if adopted, could see mining operations licensed by this time next year.

The Locally Managed Marine Areas network (LMMA) and the African Confederation of Professional Artisanal Fishing Organisations (CAOPA), representing artisanal fishing communities from Africa and the Pacific want to [reiterate](#) that **deep-sea mining, like other destructive polluting activities promoted as part of the blue economy, should not be allowed or supported under the current circumstances as it will jeopardise the future of coastal communities. In particular, our fishing zones, our EEZs, are too precious to be ever exposed to the risks posed by deep sea mining.**

Even if commercial deep-sea mining has not started anywhere in the world, exploration contracts have been provided by the ISA to more than 20 companies in the Atlantic, Indian, and the Pacific oceans. Given the potential impacts of these operations, this is already provoking 'blue fear' amongst our fishing communities, we call on governments not to sacrifice the future of our fishing communities. Indeed, in Africa, inland small scale fishers have already been facing ruin because of the pollution caused by under water mining activities. We don't want our coastal communities to meet the same fate.

In the Pacific, [experts](#) recently looked at the impacts of deep sea mining for manganese nodules, and concluded that this will have severe and long-lasting impacts on the seabeds mined and the species they support, and may pose significant risks to marine ecosystems more broadly. They highlighted that the potential impacts on fisheries, communities and human health are largely unknown and thus pose risks. They found that the relationship of Pacific islanders to the ocean is not well integrated into discussions about nodule mining and that social and cultural impacts are yet to be meaningfully explored. Lastly, the social and economic benefits are questionable, particularly when compared to the social, economic and nutritional benefits of fisheries.

Furthermore, beginning of this month, an analysis by US scientists, published in the journal Science, has found that noise from one deep sea mine alone could travel 500km under water. This is likely to have an impact on the behaviour of



various fish species, including on the migratory patterns of species like tuna, which some of our fishing communities rely on for their livelihoods, and which is so important for many developing countries' economies.

During the UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon, which our organisations attended, Pacific countries representatives, from Palau, Fiji, Samoa, Tuvalu and Solomon Islands, argued that deep-sea mining should be discouraged to the greatest extent possible as it compromises the integrity of ocean habitat. In the last days, they were joined by [countries](#) like Chile, Costa Rica and France, which, like Fiji, sit on the ISA Council. We support their position: seabeds, their diverse ecosystems, the coastal communities that depend on these eco-systems should not be exposed to deep sea mining destructive and polluting impacts.

Countries are set to decide the fate of deep-sea mining, behind closed doors, at the ISA meeting in Kingston. We hope they listen to the most numerous users of the ocean, the artisanal fishing communities, rather than to mining companies eager to scrape the seabed, five to six thousand meters below sea level, for manganese, cobalt, nickel and other materials used to build batteries for electric vehicles.

If allowed, deep sea mining will for sure rake in millions of dollars for these companies, but it also will destroy ecosystems and the livelihoods for our people.

**Gaoussou Gueye**

**President CAOPA**

**Alifereti Tawake**

**Chair LMMA**