



Nusrat Ghani MP
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Rt Hon Sir George Howarth MP
House of Commons
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Dear Sir George,

Thank you for your correspondence of 25 May to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs), regarding her Majesty's Government's position on deep seabed mining. I am responding as this matter falls within my portfolio.

I am grateful for you raising these important issues and for highlighting your constituents' concerns regarding this area of policy.

The UK recognises the growing pressure to extract resources from the sea and therefore must act carefully and cautiously in coming to a conclusion about this important area of policy.

The UK is fully engaged in the ongoing negotiations at the International Seabed Authority (ISA) Council and Assembly. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office leads the UK delegation to the ISA.

At present, UK Government has sponsored licenses so that UK Seabed Resources (UKSR) can conduct a range of exploration activities in two areas of the Pacific, including establishing environmental baselines, but there are no mining (exploitation) activities taking place in either UK national waters or areas beyond our national jurisdiction. Further and detailed environmental impact assessments would be required in advance of any exploitation licence being issued, including a public consultation.

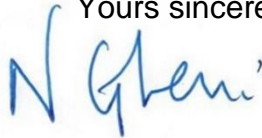
We recognise the growing pressure to extract deep-sea resources and are concerned about the potential impacts of mining activities on the fragile marine environment. This is why the UK will maintain its position of not sponsoring or supporting the issuing of any exploitation licences for deep sea mining projects unless and until there is sufficient scientific evidence about the potential impact on deep sea ecosystems, and a strong, enforceable environmental regulatory framework has been developed at the ISA and is in place. This approach is both precautionary and conditional.

The UK is continuing to develop a better understanding of the impacts of deep-sea mining. Through Government sponsorship of academic research and existing exploration licences,

over 70 peer-reviewed publications supporting a greater understanding of environmental issues have already been produced, with more to come. We have also commissioned an independent evidence review into the potential risks and benefits of deep-sea mining, and this has been [published](#) in line with our commitment to transparency and developing the global evidence base in relation to deep-sea mining.

Thank you once again for your correspondence. I hope this letter is of reassurance to your constituents.

Yours sincerely,



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