



A NEW COMPANY HAS BOUGHT OFF NAUTILUS MINERALS ASSETS AND WANTS TO PUSH AHEAD WITH SOLWARA 1.

Community leaders call for a ban on seabed mining and cancellation of all Seabed mining licenses in PNG.

On 4 October 2022 local communities in New Ireland Province discovered that a new joint venture company has bought off Nautilus Minerals assets. These joint venture companies Deep Sea Mining Finance and Sustainable Mining Solutions have been pushing decision-makers in Papua New Guinea to open the Solwara 1 deep sea mining project in the Bismarck Sea.

According to Jonathan Mesulam, Director, of West Coast Development Foundation, and Alliance of Solwara Warriors member, the companies have been in the country and meeting with the government since May this year (2022).

"When is the PNG Government going to make its stance very clear on the issue of seabed mining in PNG and stop secret meetings with deep sea miners behind closed doors?" We are all aware that the Solwara 1 project has cost the people of Papua New Guinea more than K375m. It was declared a failed project by former PM Peter O'Neill back in 2019. Why is the government still silent on this issue?"

"We are raising these questions because it seems that the Marape-Rosso government does not have the guts to come out publicly to share the latest developments surrounding the Solwara 1 project – despite the moratorium at the Pacific Island Forum in 2019." For over a decade, there has been resistance against seabed mining across PNG from civil society, local communities, churches, and educated elites. The Alliance of Solwara Warriors is very concerned that the PNG government and provincial governments of New Ireland and East New Britain have not listened to the people and are risking lives and livelihoods.

"Coastal and low-lying island and atoll communities of PNG are already severely impacted by climate change with rising sea levels and food

security issues. Seabed mining is another additional burden. Our ocean must be protected at all costs," stated Mr. Mesulam.

Caritas PNG, Kavieng Diocesan Coordinator John Momori who also backs the Ban on Seabed Mining stated "Despite Nautilus Minerals going bankrupt in 2019, their existing exploration and mining licenses are still active across the Bismarck and Solomon Seas. Since 2019 we have been calling for the licenses to be canceled and for the government to place a ban on seabed mining."

Currently, the International Seabed Authority (ISA) negotiations are underway in Kingston, Jamaica but the ISA's push to move forward on deep sea mining in international waters has been stymied by the growing call, not only from civil society, scientists, and parliaments globally but a growing number of parliamentarians and governments now calling for a pause, moratorium or complete ban on the industry. "Deep sea mining is not wanted! The PNG Government should be following in the footsteps of other Pacific states like Fiji, Samoa, Palau, and the Federated States of Micronesia which have now been joined by New Zealand, France, Germany, Spain, Costa Rica, Panama, Ecuador, and Chile who are calling for a pause, moratorium, or complete ban."

"The PNG government is lagging behind both Pacific and international leaders," claimed Mr. Momori As concerned PNG citizens and under the banner of the Alliance of Solwara Warriors representing communities in New Ireland, East New Britain, Manus, Madang, Alotau, and Bougainville we now called on the Marape-Rosso government to: 1. Stand with other nations across the world to say no to seabed mining. 2. Make public statements on the government's position at national and high-level conferences like the COP27 taking place in Egypt this month. 3. Cancel all existing seabed exploration and mining licenses in Papua New Guinea. "We also call on our political leaders in our respective coastal provinces to come out publicly and state their position on the issue of seabed mining," concluded Mr. Mesulam

For more information contact

Jonathan Mesulam, mesulamjonathan@gmail.com +675 7003 8933

John Momori, jeymomz50705@gmail.com +675 70620714