

GSR (part of DEME group)'s response to Caritas Oceania Report 2017
11/12/17

GSR is a subsidiary of the DEME Group. We have started looking at seabed mining activities since 2010. Our group is dedicated to finding a responsible solution as an alternative to terrestrial land-based minerals and metal supply. The quality of ore on land is declining, thereby increasing the amount of energy and water required for exploitation. Future land-based deposits will be more difficult and expensive to extract. Decreasing the world's dependence on fossil fuel increases dependence on minerals. A 2017 World Bank Report highlights those minerals expected to see heightened demand include (amongst others): cobalt, copper, manganese, nickel and molybdenum.

In 2013, the International Seabed Authority (ISA) and GSR signed a 15-year contract for the prospecting and exploration for polymetallic nodules. Under the contract, GSR has exclusive rights to explore 76,728 square kilometers of seabed in the Central Pacific Ocean. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) calls for the development of these resources for the benefit of mankind by attracting investment and technology, but it also notes that all measures shall be taken to ensure effective protection of the marine environment.

With regard to our activities in the Cook Islands, we are in a prospecting phase. Environmental data on biodiversity, spatial distribution and eco-system parameters for the development of a robust baseline, in addition to oceanographic, geological and mineral resource information will need to be gathered before exploitation will take place.