



Address by Michael Henry, Director of CIIC Seabed Resources at the Exploration Licence Granting Ceremony 2022

*Dome, National Auditorium
23 February 2022*

Kia Orana tatou katoatoa,

A little bit like Garth I have a bit of a story going back 50 years, where for me our Cook Islands journey began a journey that led us to today's event for me began in 1974.

It was in June of that year that Premier Sir Albert Henry represented the Cook Islands at the United Nations Law of the Sea conference in Caracas Venezuela.

At that meeting Sir Albert made an impassioned plea on behalf of all small Island states of the world to be given the same rights to the 200 mile economic zones that we enjoy today.

In 1972 Sir Albert had been shown nodules I think by Sir Tom, that were found in Cook Islands waters he was aware that when technology allowed this resource would be of enormous benefit to the Cook Islands people.

As his grandson I am very proud and privileged to be here today as part of that journey. I am also very proud that this Government has through the hard work and dedication of very many people brought us to this exciting milestone where we are about to begin exploration in our EEZ.



For Cook Islands Investment Corporation Seabed Resources Limited, we are extremely proud and excited to be here on this historic occasion representing our Countries Joint Venture (**JV**) with the Belgian company GSR.

It is through this JV our country will not just receive royalties and taxes, but as equal partners our Cook Islands people will participate in all aspects of this new and exciting industry.

Already our CIIC-SR General manager Eusenio Fatialofa has participated in three offshore campaigns alongside some of the world's best engineers and scientists in their fields.



The application process that we've just been through has been a very rigorous and robust we have all been working very hard for this last year and a half to get to where we are today.

We've been working across several different time zones and within the confines of the COVID-19 environment has, at times, made things a little more challenging than normal for everyone involved. However, with this event signing ceremony completed, we can now look forward to commencing our exploration work here in the Cook Islands.



CIIC-SR was born in 2016, from a very special association of two countries located on opposite sides of the world. These countries, the Cook Islands and Belgium, share common values, common ambitions for sustainable objectives for the planet.

After several years of successful offshore exploration campaigns already in the Clarion Clipperton Zone, CIIC-SR has shown that this kind of partnership, mixing different cultures, skills and knowledge and know-how is not only possible, but enjoyable and of mutual benefit.

Unfortunately, due to travel restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 global pandemic, our JV partners GSR Cook Islands and key members of that team are unable to be here in person but I know, have joined us online which for them is somewhere around 2 AM in the morning but to you all out there Kia Orana to Philip one of our directors. Kia Orana to Kris, to François, to Sam and of course to Chris that leads our campaigns offshore in the Clarion Clipperton Zone up until now. Welcome in joining us for this ceremony today.



We feel humbled and very honored as a joint venture to be part of this Cook Islands' historic and history making event. We are aware that with this honor comes a huge responsibility and we want you to know that CIIC-SR is committed to taking great care of the marine environment and our promise to the people of the Cook Islands is that CIIC-SR will conduct its business very much aligned with the Marae Moana principles.

We are acutely aware that the name Ocean for our planet would have been much more apt than what we call it today as Earth and for the Cook Islands this Ocean is home for all of us. As we move forward, we will carry this sentiment of the Ocean with us.

In closing, I really wish to thank Alex Herman and her team at the Seabed Minerals Authority for their hard work and cooperation over the last 16 months, we look forward to continuing to work cooperatively with the Authority for the coming years.

Kia Orana e Kia Manuia.