

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **Nautilus seabed mining experiment falters**

**Dispute with PNG government, opposition by Pacific and Canadian citizens, financing woes**

TORONTO. Today Canadians are standing in solidarity with civil society in the Pacific against deep sea mining. Canadian company, Nautilus Inc, is leading the rush to mine the sea floor in the Pacific. If it goes ahead, its Solwara 1 project in the Bismark Sea of Papua New Guinea will be the world's first commercial deep sea mine.

However, a growing call from Pacific communities to stop seabed mining, the PNG Government's refusal to contribute to development costs and the breakdown of a financing agreement with an European ship builder questions the viability of an already uncertain venture. Not a good look as Nautilus faces its AGM in Toronto today. Nautilus stocks have already dropped dramatically over the past couple of weeks.

Dr. Catherine Coumans, Mining Watch Canada said, "Canadian mining companies operate around the world and dominate the sector in number. But Canada does not regulate their activities to prevent them profiting from weak protection for the environment, workers, and human rights in some host countries."

"Now, in spite of very serious concerns that have been raised by scientists and local citizens, we have Nautilus proposing to mine environmentally, socially and culturally significant seabeds in the Pacific, an activity that would not be allowed in Canadian waters."

Wences Magun, national coordinator for Mas Kagin Tapani in Papua New Guinea said, "At this point local communities have NOT sanctioned this project. We can't rely on our governments or companies like Nautilus to tell us that seabed mining is good, is safe."

"No one knows what the impacts of this form of mining will be. We are being used as guinea pigs in a sea bed mining experiment."

Sharon Diave-Nerius from the East New Britain Social Action Committee said, "The recent blows to Nautilus are welcome news for communities in Papua New Guinea. But there are plenty of other companies and governments pushing for this experimental industry in the Pacific to get started."

"The speed with which the PNG Government approved the EIS and granted the licence to Nautilus did not pay respect to the customary norms and cultural heritage of the indigenous people of the Bismarck Archipelago.

"Experimental mining of our seabeds is not going to provide any direct services or benefits for local communities."

Dr. Helen Rosenbaum, campaign coordinator for the Deep Sea Mining campaign in Australia and author of [\*Out of Our Depth: Mining the Ocean Floor in Papua New Guinea\*](#) said, "The Nautilus EIS is deeply flawed. Even the company admits to moderate environmental risk. Independent analysis of the EIS indicates far higher risks."

“Investors should be aware that contiguous nature of the ocean means that impacts will not be isolated to the 11 ha area of the Solwara 1 site. They will spread far and wide with liabilities to match. For example, stocks of tuna and other migratory species are likely to be contaminated by heavy metals and health of communities and ecosystems across the Pacific could be affected.”

Groups across the Pacific have a [petition](#) calling for Pacific governments to stop experimental seabed mining. Pacific women are currently promoting the 'stop experimental seabed mining' message at the international [Rio+20](#) conference in Brazil. In New Zealand community have come together to [campaign](#) against seabed mining of their black sands. Meanwhile [local groups](#) and [fishing industries](#) opposing marine phosphate mining off the coast of Namibia have started to make links with people in the Pacific region.

**For more information contact:**

**Wences Magun (Papua New Guinea), +675 7195 9665, [magun.wences@gmail.com](mailto:magun.wences@gmail.com)**

**Sharon Diave-Nerius (Papua New Guinea), + 675 658 7893, [sdiave@yahoo.com.au](mailto:sdiave@yahoo.com.au)**

**Dr. Catherine Coumans (Canada), +613 569 3439, [catherine@miningwatch.ca](mailto:catherine@miningwatch.ca)**

**Dr. Helen Rosenbaum (Australia), +61 413 201 793, [hrose@vic.chariot.net.au](mailto:hrose@vic.chariot.net.au)**