

A discussion on whether phosphate mining and fishing can coexist

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The matter at hand needs impartial acknowledgement of the common effects of fishing and dredging of marine phosphate sediments in order to fully come to a conclusion. The proposed method is said to take phosphorus “ directly out of the sea, sucking it up from the seabed (Uugwanga, 2012). In his description of the proposed method, it is delineated as though the disruption of the seabed is not a detrimental effect the nation should be perturbed about. It would then appear that Uugwanga’s elucidation cannot account for abundant discernment this type of mining is the first of its kind and by virtue of this, the impact is unknown.

The most imperative and logical explanation for the sudden and rising desire to mine phosphorus has engrossed on using the mineral to make fertilizers for crop production. Phosphorus is essential for normal growth and maturity in plants and deficiency in this resource can lead to poor crop yield (Young and Davis, 1980). Albeit the fact that the mining sector contributes much more to Namibia’s Gross Domestic Product in comparison with the mere 3.5% that the fishing sector contributes (Duddy and Jo-Mare, 2012), it is worth noting that fishing also contributes to food security and labour, amongst others, and it would be preposterous to neglect it like that by disrupting fish habitats with marine mining.

The question at issue is how seabed mining could destabilise the marine ecosystem. Currie (2016), however, pointed out that mining will remove seabed sediments that contain phosphorus, making an inclusion of all the living organisms that live on and/or in the sediments. Moreover, she clearly states that the living organisms being disrupted play crucial roles in the

functioning of the Benguela ecosystem in the proposed areas of the Atlantic ocean that is important to Namibia. It is also important to acknowledge that water currents are not restricted to a mining site located at a specific area in the ocean and for this reason, it is impractical to erect boundaries that confine such mining activities. Apart from all this, toxins and menacing metals suspended in the water during mining disperse and build up in food chains which can then lead to eutrophication. Additionally, it is strenuous to determine if the benefits of phosphate mining outweigh the damages. The obvious counter argument could be that local phosphate production will assist with agricultural productivity (Weikard, 2016) but it is not sufficient reasoning to lead to the disregarding of the fishing and tourism sector. The tourism sector is at stake which contributes the most to the country's GDP because the coastal areas are a tourists attraction place. Despite the fact that fishing contributes less as compared to the other sectors in question, it still remains absurd for it to be superseded.