

# HASALMUN'24



## The International Maritime Organisation Study Guide

*"Youth will shape the world"*

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## 1. Letter from the Secretary-General

Dear delegates,

It is my utmost pleasure and honor to welcome you all to the 11th annual session of Hüseyin Avni Sözen Model United Nations Conference. I, Haktan Keskin, consider it a priceless and flattering opportunity to serve as the Secretary-General in HASALMUN'24, a platform for dialogue, collaboration, and innovative problem-solving on pressing global issues.

It is my desire to create an environment in which you will find the chance to put your negotiation and critical thinking abilities into action and have a greater awareness of societal issues. As we convene in the spirit of cooperation this May, I kindly urge each and every one of you to listen with an open heart and leave room for understanding while respecting differing viewpoints. I believe it is through constructive debate that we can work towards finding viable solutions to the challenges we are facing today. What will be expected of you is to exhibit an unmatched sense of collaboration, think outside the box, and step into the shoes of bureaucrats during the conference

I would like to express my most heartfelt gratitude to any and every one of you attending our conference. Finally, I wish you the best of luck in your committee, and I hope that we were successful in generating the finest possible conference for you. With our guidance and assistance, you will be expected to complete the work that we began.

Once again, I welcome you all to the 11th edition of Hüseyin Avni Sözen Model United Nations Conference. We cannot wait to meet you!

All the best,  
Haktan Keskin

## 2. Letter from the Under-Secretary-General

Fellow participants to the committee,

First of all, it is a pleasure for us to welcome you all to HASALMUN'24. As your Under Secretary-General, I am delighted to do my best to make sure that the participants of this committee will have a one-of-a-kind and the most entertaining experience of their MUN carriers. Despite the fact that this committee's preparation process took much time and effort, I am so happy to be able to organize such a committee in such a conference.

I wish that this conference results in fruitful debates and sustainable solutions. As your Under-Secretary-General, I would like to put emphasis on the complexity of our topic, it is why I recommend you to do further researches and readings upon the subject to augment your and committees productivity.

Once again I would like to welcome you all to HASALMUN'24, may this conference be the experience of a life-time.

And for any possible need of information, you may send this address an email;

brsyvs0013@gmail.com

Barış Yavaş

Under-Secretary-General

### 3. Introduction to the Committee



Since its establishment in 1948, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) stands as the beacon of security, prosperity and order in international waters. Being one of the specialized agencies of the United Nations (UN), IMO is responsible with the safety and security of shipping and prevention of marine and atmospheric pollution by ships.<sup>1</sup> The organization is the sole authority to set standards in the global shipping industry with its 174 membering countries and multiple bodies including the Assembly, the Council and many committees; to decide the rules and to pave the way for a more secure and sustainable environment in maritime activities.

The industry of shipping has been alive and well since the ancient times. From Phoenicians to Ancient Greeks, Romans to Carthaginians, South Asia to the Pacific's; this industry has always been the primary way for nations to augment their trade, technology, knowledge and share their cultures.

It is clear to see that, starting from the ancient times, the nations who were engaged in maritime activities were the nations who were the most rapidly improved ones regarding the aspects of prosperity, military power, culture, and trade. If we look at the great empires of the past, we can see that all are heavily engaged in maritime activities such as Romans, Carthaginians, Persians, Spanish, Portuguese, Ottomans, French and of course the Great Britain.

Being the primary sector for nations to improve their growth throughout the history, maritime activities were also the field of chaos, death, war, and uncertainty. Acknowledging that, sea nations always had laws regarding this matter, whether their own laws or laws that were agreed upon with the collective will of different nations. For example, the Rhodian Maritime Law at the time of 800 BCE was one of the early examples of maritime law, ensuring the well being of shipping practices in the Mediterranean region. Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494, signed between Portugal and Spain, was one of the most important and most influential treaties of the history, deciding the scope of maritime and other types of activities in the so called ‘‘New World’’, or America. Or the Declaration of Paris in 1856, which was signed by the greatest nations of Europe during the Crimean War to establish the principles of maritime warfare including the abolition of privateering, the neutral status of enemy merchant vessels, and the protection of neutral shipping during wartime.

History brought us to the 20<sup>th</sup> century with countless and ever-changing treaties and accords regarding the maritime activities without an actual central authority. After the devastation of the Second World War, every understanding of a ‘‘traditional system’’ regarding any aspect of the world was shifted. For this, the nations of the world came together and started to rearrange them. After the war, the maritime traditions, ways and habits around the world shifted as well. To assess this problem, nations gathered in Geneva, Switzerland in 1948 at the United Nations Maritime Conference and created the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO) to decide the way of shipping around the world. Re-named in 1982 as the International Maritime Organization, the organization continues to ensure the safety, fairness, security and sustainability of shipping and to guarantee the protection of marine life and sea habitats from the pollution of ships.

#### **4. Introduction to the Agenda Item**

##### **4.1. Deep Sea Mining, the Definition**

Deep Sea Mining (DSM), a newly developing industrial activity, involves the extraction of minerals from the seabed which typically ranges from 200 meters to 6,500 meters below the ocean’s surface. DSM aims to tap into valuable mineral deposits found in various forms, including polymetallic nodules, polymetallic sulphides, and cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts, which are abundant in certain regions of the ocean floor. The potential of DSM has garnered significant attention due to the increasing demand for metals such as cobalt, copper, nickel, and

rare earth elements, driven primarily by the growing demand for clean energy technologies, electric vehicles, and consumer electronics. The exploration and exploitation of deep-sea mineral resources offer the potential to diversify global mineral supply chains and reduce reliance on land-based sources, particularly in regions where terrestrial deposits are scarce or economically inaccessible.

The process of DSM involves the utilization of specialized equipment and technologies designed to withstand the harsh conditions of the deep ocean environment. Innovations in robotics, autonomous underwater vehicles, and deep-sea drilling systems have facilitated exploration and resource assessment in remote and inaccessible oceanic regions. These technologies allow for precise mapping of mineral deposits, characterization of geological formations, and targeted extraction of resources with minimal environmental impact.

## **4.2. History of Deep Sea Mining**

In 1872, the British ship HMS Challenger embarked on a pioneering scientific expedition, conducting the first systematic study of the deep ocean floor. The discoveries made during this expedition sparked interest in the mineral wealth of the seabed, laying the foundation for future exploration and research.

The mid-20th century saw significant technological advancements in oceanography and marine engineering, enabling deeper exploration of the ocean floor and the development of equipment capable of extracting minerals from the seabed. In 1965, American engineer John L. Mero published *Minerals from the Sea* in which he proposed the idea of mining manganese nodules from the deep ocean floor. Mero's research sparked interest among governments and private companies, leading to increased investment in deep sea mining research and development.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea was opened for signature at Montego Bay, Jamaica, on 10 December 1982. It entered into force on 14 November 1994 and is presently binding for 154 States, as well as the European Community, providing a legal framework for the exploitation of mineral resources in international waters. However, concerns about the environmental impact of deep sea mining began to emerge, prompting calls for stricter regulation and environmental assessment.

In 2000s, companies such as The Metals Company began developing innovative mining technologies and securing exploration licenses for seabed mineral deposits even though environmentalists and indigenous groups continued to oppose DSM, citing concerns about biodiversity loss and ocean pollution.

In 2019, the ISA faced criticism for its decision to grant exploration licenses for DSM in the Clarion-Clipperton Zone (CCZ), a region rich in polymetallic nodules. Environmental groups, including the Deep Sea Mining Campaign, condemned the move, calling for a moratorium on all deep sea mining activities until comprehensive environmental assessments could be conducted.

In recent years, global environmental initiatives such as the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals have underscored the importance of protecting marine biodiversity and promoting sustainable ocean management. Environmental advocacy groups continue to campaign against DSM, advocating for alternative approaches to meet the demand for critical metals while safeguarding marine ecosystems.

The future of DSM remains uncertain, with ongoing debates over its environmental, social, and economic implications. While proponents argue that deep sea mining offers a solution to growing resource demands, opponents caution against the irreversible damage it could inflict on fragile marine ecosystems. As technological advancements continue and regulatory frameworks evolve, the need for informed decision-making and responsible governance becomes increasingly critical in shaping the future of DSM.

### **4.3. Types of Deep Sea Mining**

#### **4.3.1. Polymetallic Nodule Mining**

Polymetallic nodules, also known as manganese nodules, are potato-sized concretions rich in metals such as manganese, nickel, cobalt, and copper. Nodule mining involves collecting these nodules from the ocean floor, typically at depths ranging from 4,000 to 6,500 meters. One common method for nodule mining is using remotely operated vehicles equipped with suction devices or mechanical arms to collect the nodules.

#### **4.3.2. Polymetallic Sulphide Mining**



Polymetallic sulphides are hydrothermal vent systems formed by the deposition of minerals from hot fluids released by volcanic activity on the ocean floor. These systems contain high concentrations of valuable metals, including copper, zinc, gold, and silver. Sulphide mining involves extracting ore deposits from hydrothermal vent fields, which can be located at depths ranging from 1,000 to 4,000 meters. Mining operations typically use specialized equipment, such as dredges or cutting machines, to remove ore from the seabed. Sulphide mining presents unique technical and environmental challenges due to the remote and extreme conditions of hydrothermal vent ecosystems.

### **4.3.3. Cobalt-rich Ferromanganese Crust Mining**

Ferromanganese crusts, also known as cobalt crusts or manganese crusts, form on the surfaces of seamounts and other underwater features over millions of years. These crusts contain high concentrations of metals such as cobalt, nickel, and rare earth elements. Mining operations targeting ferromanganese crusts involve cutting or scraping the crusts from the seabed.

## **4.4. The Importance of the Fair Distribution**

The ISA depicts their goal very basically ; to ensure that the international waters stays as the heritage of all mankind and the benefits work for the well-being of all nations of the world. In order to ensure that, ISA has developed suitable payment and distribution mechanisms, which takes the needs and interests of developing States into particular consideration. The State Parties or other contractors need to fulfill certain necessities to be given operation licenses.

When it comes to the topic of ‘equal distribution’, certain questions arise for there are multiple factors determining the revenues that we get from deep sea mining such as the number of mines in operation, the royalty rates imposed on contractors, administrative costs incurred by the ISA, payments to land-based mining countries, and potential reimbursement of States' past contributions and market conditions for extracted minerals. Recent studies by the ISA such as the Technical Study 31 have attempted to guess the potential revenues and propose distributions to ensure benefit-sharing based on parameters like population size and income per-capita. But all of the factors that affects the revenue that get makes it difficult for us to determine the final amount.

Making the distribution regarding the population size and income per capita may prevent ISA from reaching its goal for in this way certain big countries will get disproportionate shares of benefits while many others will receive minimal shares. For another option, there has been talks to establish a fund named ‘‘Seabed Sustainability Fund’’ that will collect all the revenues from the deep sea mining ,after taking out the expenses of course, then using it to conduct researches to examine the proposed areas for deep sea mining, funding scientific and technological researches, run capacity building programs that will engage in searches and training programs, engage in programs that will contribute to the infrastructure of primarily the developing nations and taking care of the natural problems that have caused by mining activities. Even though this proposal seems promising, it has raised some eyebrows for it does not align with ISA’s goal which is to use the revenues for all the mankind, rather than that it focuses on the regional actions. Another critique is for the natural restoration aspect of the fund, for many think that it is the responsibility of the contractors, not ISA’s or IMO’s. It will be crucial for delegates to take into account all the aspects, possibilities and criticism upon proposed ideas in order to find more sustainable possible solutions to the question.

## 5. Key Words

- **Seabed Mining:** Seabed mining refers to a process that extracts valuable minerals and metals from the seafloor through the usage of different mining techniques.
- **International Seabed Authority:** The International Seabed Authority (ISA) is an autonomous United Nations affiliated organization that has been established under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). It is the sole authority to determine the frameworks and regulations in the matter of mineral-resources related actions in the sea.
- **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ):** As described in the UNCLOS in 1982, EEZ is the area of a sovereign state in which they have the right to conduct exploration activities and the usage of the fund resources.
- **Deep Sea Ecosystems:** The deep-sea floor is covered with many mounds and depressions formed by benthic animals such as worms, mollusks, crustaceans, starfish, brittlestars, shrimps, fishes sea cucumbers and sea urchins. Because the deep-sea floor is poor in food resources, it cannot support large populations of large animals.  
[https://www.coastalwiki.org/wiki/Deep\\_sea\\_habitat#:~:text=The%20deep%2Dsea%20floor%20is,large%20populations%20of%20large%20animals.](https://www.coastalwiki.org/wiki/Deep_sea_habitat#:~:text=The%20deep%2Dsea%20floor%20is,large%20populations%20of%20large%20animals.)

- **Sediment Plumes:** A sediment plume is basically a cloud of suspended sediment particles in the ocean. They are capable of smothering the nearby species, and destroying habitats and disrupting deep sea ecosystems.
- **Benthic Species-** Benthos is the name of the animals that live on the seafloor. Most of them don't have a backbone and are called invertebrates. This familia consists of sea anemones, sponges, corals, sea stars, sea urchins, worms, bivalves, crabs, and more.
- **Seamounts:** A seamount is an underwater mountain with steep sides rising from the seafloor of the oceans.
- **Polymetallic Nodules:** Polymetallic Nodules which contain cobalt, nickel, copper and manganese in a single ore with similar shape to potatoes, are found in the sea floor of oceans and are a hub of interest for the mining industry.
- **Polymetallic Sulphides:** Polymetallic Nodules are mineral resources that can be found in the bottom of the sea, rich in minerals like copper, gold and silver. They are formed with a special process with the hydrothermal vents, supporting nearby species with their mineral rich water and floor.
- **Ferromanganese Crust:** Similar to Polymetallic Nodules, but in big chunks, Ferromanganese Crusts are mineral resources that can be find in the seafloor, containing mostly iron and manganese.
- **UNCLOS-** The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, or UNCLOS, is the international treaty that governs and regulates the management of the world's oceans.
- **Moratorium:** Moratorium refers to the suspension of a certain activity for a determined time.
- **Seabed Sustainability Fund:** The Seabed Sustainability Fund is the name of the fund that was argued upon to use as a way to utilize the revenues of deep-sea mining for the benefit of all human kind.

## **6. Environmental Concerns**

### **6.1. Effects on the Sea Life**

Operations for deep-sea mining put marine life and biodiversity at a constant risk. Numerous organisms have evolved special adaptations to withstand the harsh circumstances that can be found living in the deep ocean. These creatures are extremely sensitive to disturbances because their rates of growth and reproduction are frequently restricted.

Large machinery is being used in mining operations, including dredging, to scrape the bottom and to remove the minerals. This process may physically harm fragile ecosystems, leading to the loss and fragmentation of many habitats. These disturbances are particularly dangerous for species that depend on certain seabed characteristics for survival, a state of home and reproduction.

The behavior and communication of marine life can be affected by both noise pollution from mining equipment and disruptions caused by sediment plumes. Whales, dolphins, and deep-sea fish are a few of the creatures that use sound for communication, navigation, and prey detection. Marine life is also at risk from pollution and heavy metals resulting from mining activities. These pollutants can accumulate in the food chain and have harmful impacts that endanger the health and stability of the ecosystem and its members.

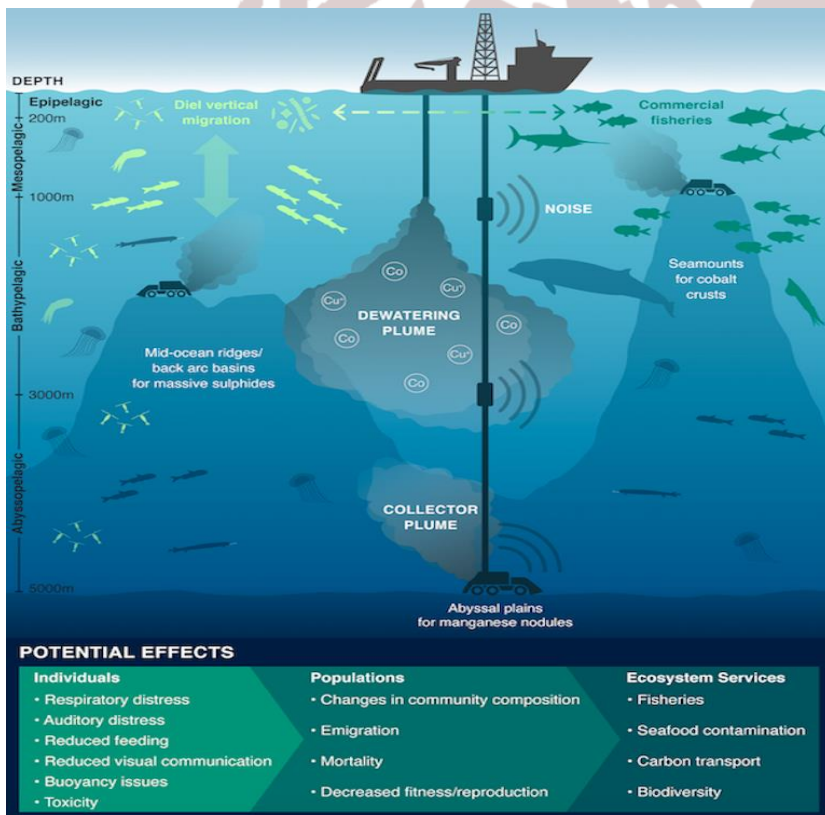
## 6.2. Sediment Plumes

Sediment plumes are a significant environmental danger associated with deep-sea mining activities. Clouds of suspended particles are discharged into the water column by mining equipment, and these particles have the potential to travel quite far. This is main the process that makes these plumes.

The consequences of sediment plumes on the marine environment are diverse. They can, first and foremost, suffocate benthic species—that is, sponges, corals, and other sessile organisms—thereby making it difficult for them to

breathe and feed. Furthermore, several types of mollusks and crustaceans that feed on filters may find it more difficult to successfully get food because sedimentation increases turbidity.

Additionally, sediment plumes block sunlight from penetrating the water column, which prevents algae and marine plants from photosynthesis. This changes the dynamics of



ecosystems and food webs with downgrading impacts on primary output and reduced primary production that may have a negative effect on the variety and number of species in the marine environment.

Moreover, contaminants, heavy metals, and other dangerous elements can travel great distances in sediment plumes. These pollutants may come from natural sources found in the seabed or from the mining operation itself. Once distributed, they could accumulate in the tissues of creatures and cause long-term harm, endangering marine life and the overall health of the ecosystem.

Sediment plumes can have an impact much beyond the mining site, by further contaminating marine habitats that are situated outside of the operational region. This endangers both local species and migratory populations, which may have an effect on their behavior, general health, and capacity for reproduction. Combating the formation and spread of sediment plumes is essential to minimizing the detrimental environmental effects of deep-sea mining operations and preserving the stability and health of marine ecosystems.

### **6.3. Destruction of the Habitats**

Deep-sea mining operations pose a major danger to a number of fragile and unique ecosystems found in the deep ocean, including seamounts, hydrothermal vents, and cold-water coral reefs. These environments are hotspots for biodiversity for they are home to a wide variety of species, many of which are still poorly understood and recognized.

Two physical mining techniques that have the potential to seriously impair these ecosystems are dredging and excavation and the usage of these methods may have effects of pollution and sediment disturbance which can include creature suffocation and chemical composition changes in the water.

Pollution of deep-sea ecosystems hinders vital ecological functions and processes in addition to decreasing biodiversity. After habitat loss, it is difficult for populations to recover, since many deep-sea creatures are suited to particular environmental conditions and have a restricted ability to disperse. In addition, these habitats are essential for the cycling of nitrogen, the sequestration of carbon, and the provision of safe havens and breeding grounds for marine species. Because of this, the stability and well-being of the deep ocean ecosystem may be significantly impacted by the loss of these habitats. It is essential to take into account the

possible effects of deep-sea mining on these delicate ecosystems and to put strong conservation measures in place to lessen negative effects.

## **7. Legal Frameworks**

### **7.1. ISA and UNCLOS**

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) was adopted in 1982. It lays down a comprehensive regime of law and order in the world's oceans and seas establishing rules governing all uses of the oceans and their resources.<sup>3</sup> In 1982, contrary to general understanding of open access and freedom in the high seas, UNCLOS declared that any area that is outside of the national waters of countries and their resources will become the “common heritage of mankind” and they would be used only for the benefit of mankind as a whole. In addition to that; they stated that every act of exploration and exploitation of minerals from seas will be conducted by a state that is a party to UNCLOS and must be approved by the International Seabed Authority (ISA).

The main aspect that these frameworks underline is the protection of nature and prevention of possible harms to the habitats in regions under explorations. In order to assess this issue the UNCLOS have put certain regulations and rules that depict the process and necessities of these explorations and the conditions that may cause the operative party to receive penalties. Every contractor is responsible with ensuring that the mining process does not harm nature or destroy habitats and conducting the operation within the the limits of ISA regulations.

The operation licenses given to contractors by ISA, can only decide their actions in the international waters, ISA cannot decide solely who will conduct operations in the Exclusive Economic Zone's (EEZ) of the countries. Any operations outside these zones, are heavily controlled and regulated by ISA.

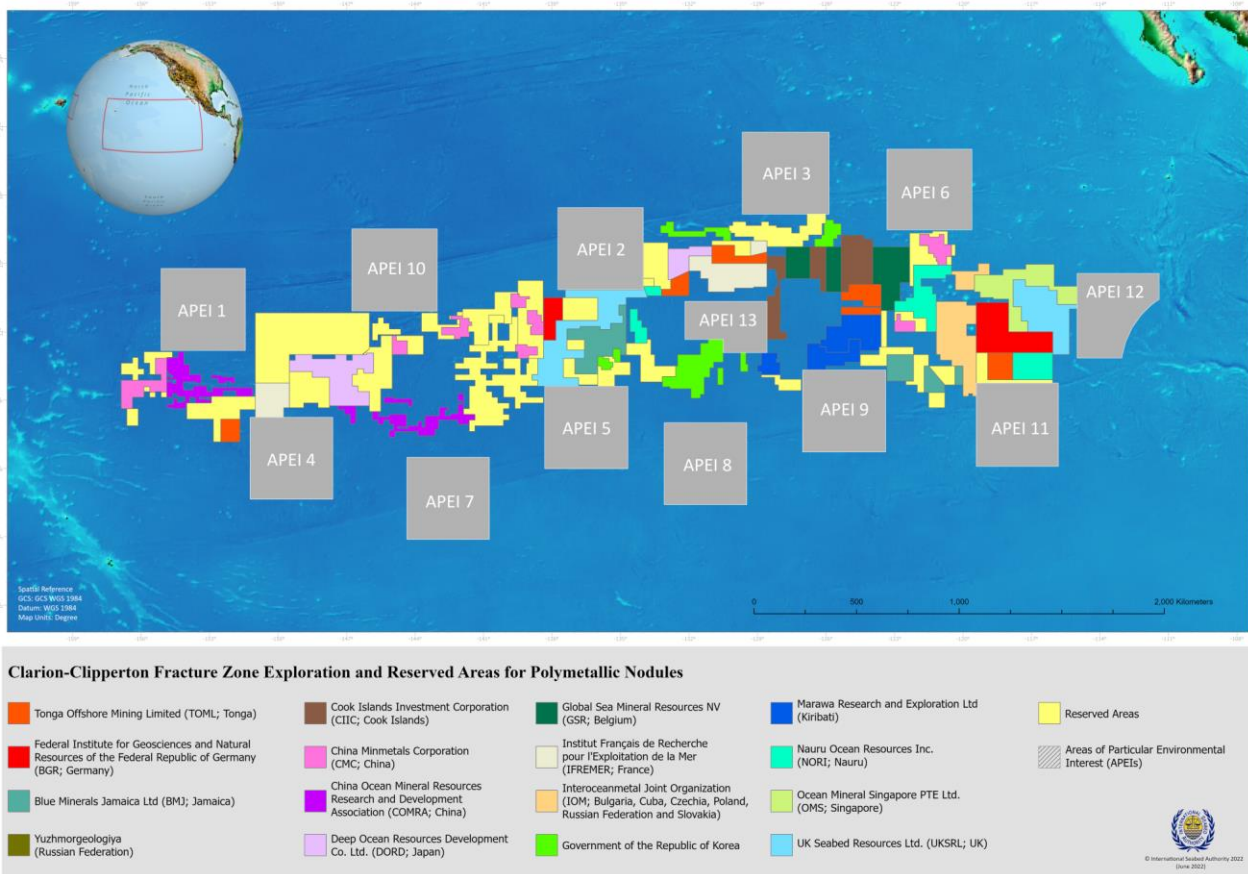
### **7.2. Stances of Other Countries**

With so many countries being so keen to delve deeper in this newly emerging field such as; The United States (USA), Russia, China, Canada, Norway, small island nations like Nauru, Kiribati and private or state own companies; many countries have a very clear stance over the deep sea mining issue in their EEZ'S, they don't want it. Countries like Canada, New Zealand, Switzerland, Mexico, and the United Kingdom have raised a moratorium to suspend the

activities of deep sea mining, further improving their researchers to come to a conclusion upon the matter. Whilst countries like Brazil, Costa Rica, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Kingdom of Denmark, Monaco, Panama, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Vanuatu have put precautionary pauses, waiting for the matter to evolve until they act upon it. Other than individual moratoriums, there is also an alliance of small island nations that raised a moratorium ensemble and it consists of Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Palau, Samoa. Lastly the only country to ban deep sea mining completely is the Republic of France, banning all DSM activities on January 17, 2023. It is absolutely important for the longevity of the debate that delegates know their countries and their neighbors or partners stances upon this crucial issue.

## 8. Regions Under Discussion

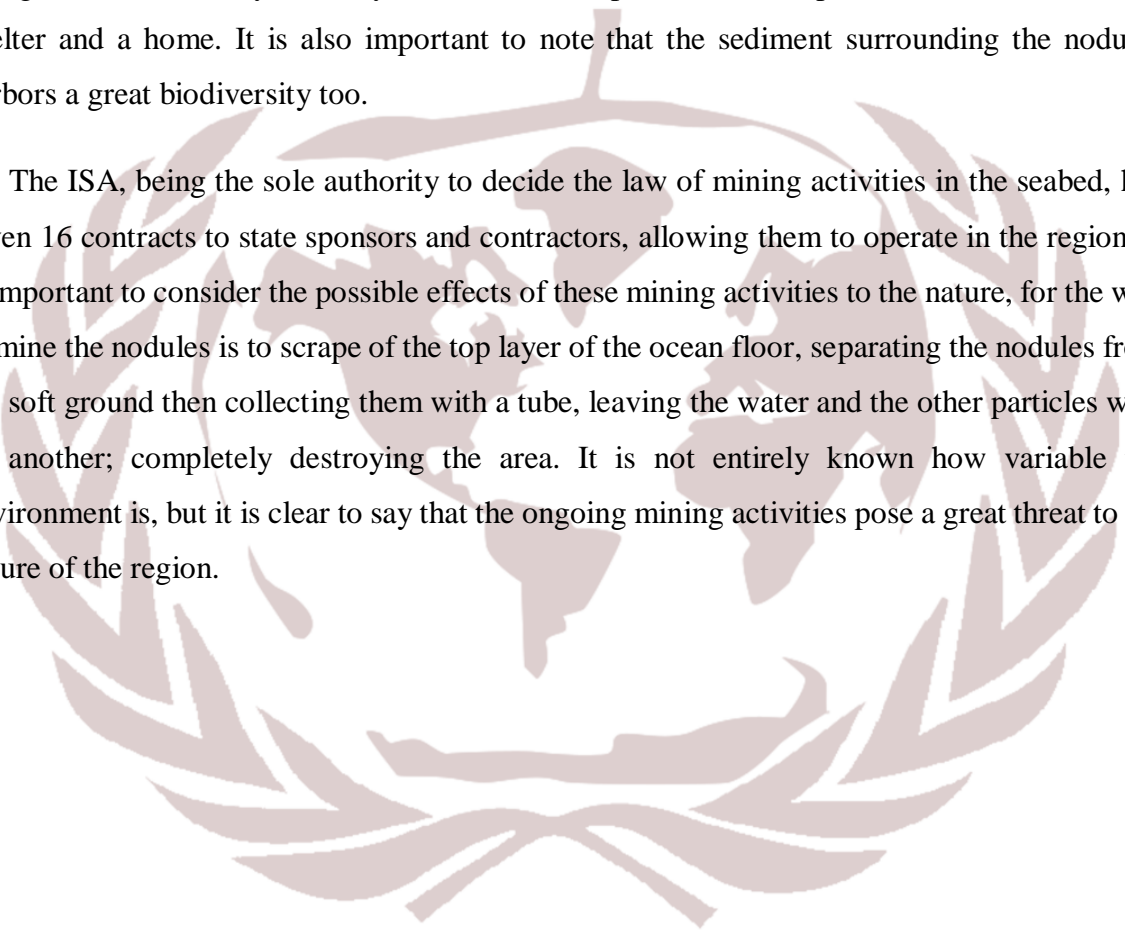
### 8.1. Clarion-Clipperton Zone



The Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone is situated in the Northeastern Pacific and stretches all the way from Hawaii to Mexico, the area where the Clipperton and Clarion islands stand. The area it contains is 4.5 million kilometers in total. The thing that makes this area so special is the little rock sized polymetallic nodules which lie under the seabed. These rock sized nodules contain precious minerals such as nickel, manganese, copper, zinc, cobalt, and other minerals.

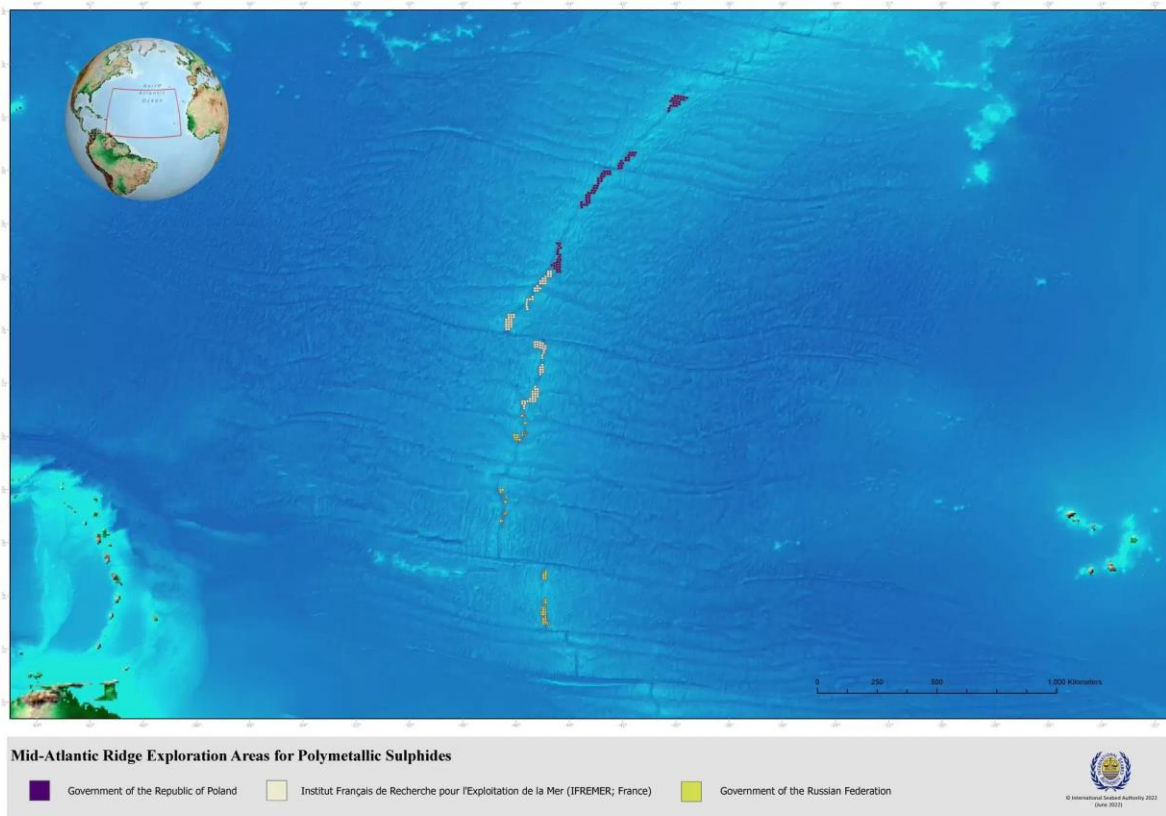
These polymetallic nodules are often found in the very depth of the ocean, where there is no light and it is mostly soft clay, which makes it perfect for the species there to use them as shelter and a home. It is also important to note that the sediment surrounding the nodules harbors a great biodiversity too.

The ISA, being the sole authority to decide the law of mining activities in the seabed, has given 16 contracts to state sponsors and contractors, allowing them to operate in the region. It is important to consider the possible effects of these mining activities to the nature, for the way to mine the nodules is to scrape of the top layer of the ocean floor, separating the nodules from the soft ground then collecting them with a tube, leaving the water and the other particles with an another; completely destroying the area. It is not entirely known how variable the environment is, but it is clear to say that the ongoing mining activities pose a great threat to the nature of the region.





## 8.2. Mid-Atlantic Ridge



The Mid-Atlantic Ridge is a massive underwater mountain that goes all the way from the Arctic Sea and the South Sea. The characteristic aspect of this is that it consists of moving tectonic plates which lead to the formation of new oceanic crust.

In the depths of the Pacific Ocean, thanks to the tectonic plates, there are many hydrothermal vents, fueled by high-temperature, leaking mineral-rich magma soup. As these vents aspire, this soup comes out from the vents; forming a tower shaped figure that is named polymetallic sulphides and is full of valuable minerals such as copper, gold, silver, and zinc; minerals that can be used in the production of electronics and infrastructure. For example; mobile phones and computers and in cars, appliances, and bridges. There are a total of 4 contracts issued by the ISA to conduct exploration and exploitation.

The vents create habitats for many species, mostly bacterias, that get their life sources from the mineral rich vent-waters. These bacterias form thick, moldy and nutrient-rich mats allowing shrimps, mussels, benthic species, worms, snails and fish to utilize livestock.

The mining process removes all the bacteria mats, cutting off the living stock of nearby species and creates sediment plumes that can suffocate all the sea creatures in the area. The sound and vibration that the process will create can also spread the harms of it to even further areas.

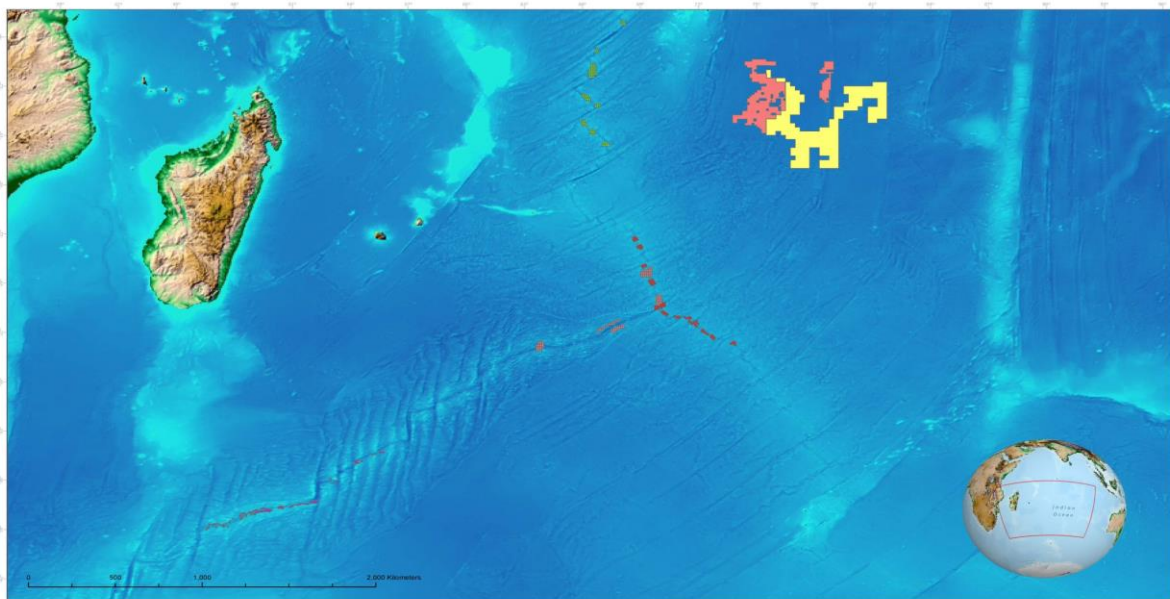
### 8.3. Indian Ocean

Vast enormous plains and seamounts lies under the Indian Ocean with each area being home to countless numbers of species that have taken the region as a home and evolved according

to its conditions. This area has, with its vast coverage, multiple types of deep-sea mineral sources such as polymetallic nodules, polymetallic sulphides and hydrothermal vent deposits. These multiple sources contain minerals and rare elements including copper, cobalt, nickel, zinc, gold and manganese.

The surroundings of these sources are home to great biodiversity too. Being home to mussels, stalked barnacles, scaly-foot snails, sponges, sea cucumbers, fishes and a variety of microbes; all being evolved in the region's specific conditions and ways.

It is crucial to attach importance in this region for its multiple source types may require different mining techniques which can result in immense harm to the habitats and overall environment of the area.



**Indian Ocean Exploration and Reserved Areas for Polymetallic Nodules and Polymetallic Sulphides**

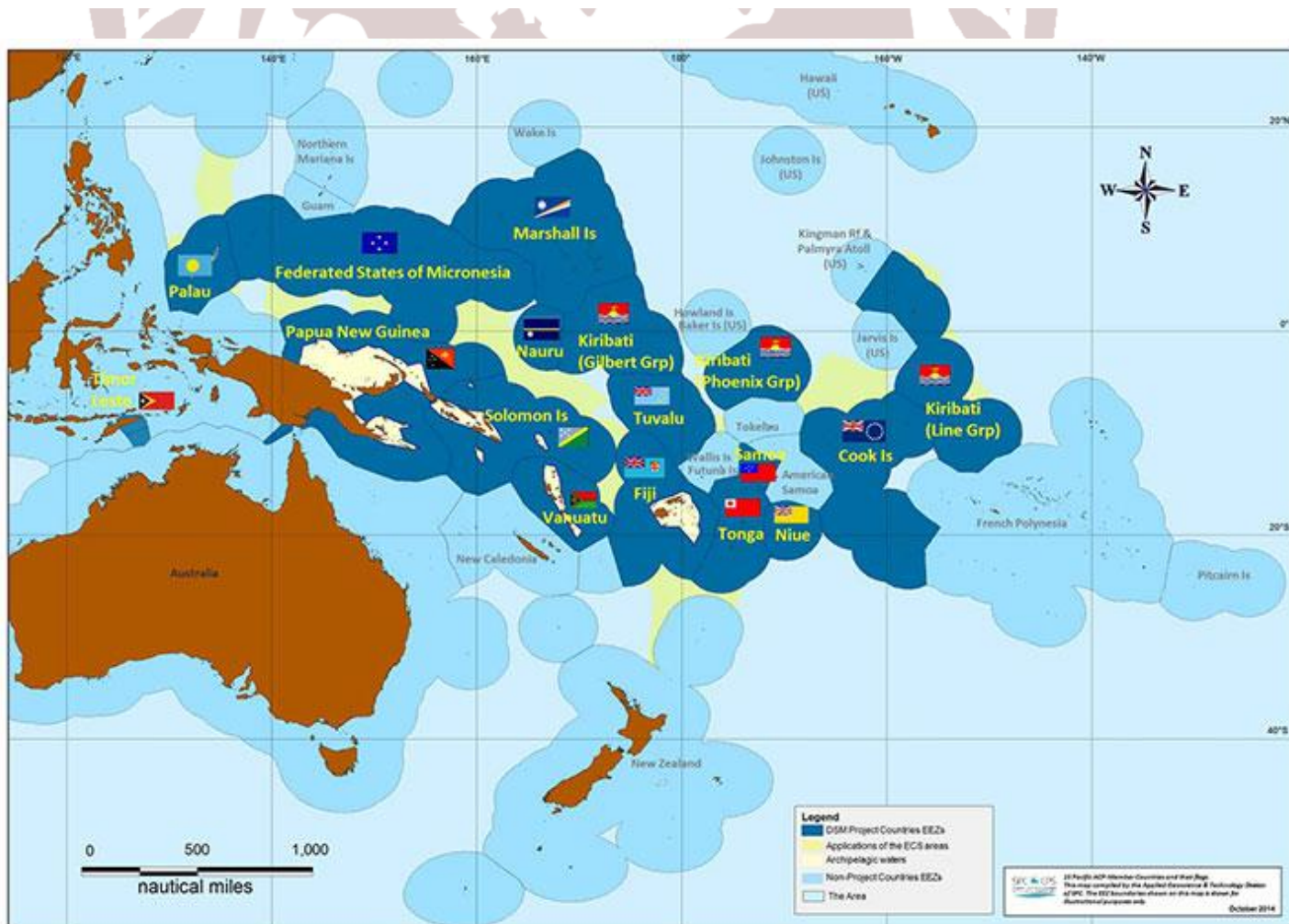
Government of India - MOES (PMN/PMS)	Government of the Republic of Korea (PMS)	Reserved Areas (PMN)
Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources of the Federal Republic of Germany (BGR, Germany; PMS)	China Ocean Mineral Resources Research and Development Association (COMRA; China; PMS)	

Basemap Sources: GEBCO, NOAA

© International Seabed Authority 2012 (June 2012)

## 8.4. Pacific Ocean Islands

The Pacific Ocean is home to vast mineral resources, including polymetallic nodules, polymetallic sulfides, cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts, and hydrothermal vent deposits which contains many valuable elements like copper, cobalt, nickel, zinc, gold and manganese and many more. This fact attracts many eyes into this mostly calm region of the world, making it a gameplay area for great countries and corporations. Every big contractor looks for a way to get a piece of this valuable region. Between these, stands the island nations of the region. Countries like Nauru, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Marshal Islands and many more play a crucial role in this. Their economies are mostly small, agriculture and fishing dependent economies but the resources within their exclusive economic zones makes them a valuable partner for international companies; such as Canadian The Metals Company (TMC) who works primarily with Nauru, the Belgian Global Sea Mineral Resources who holds an impactful amount of areas within its contracts.

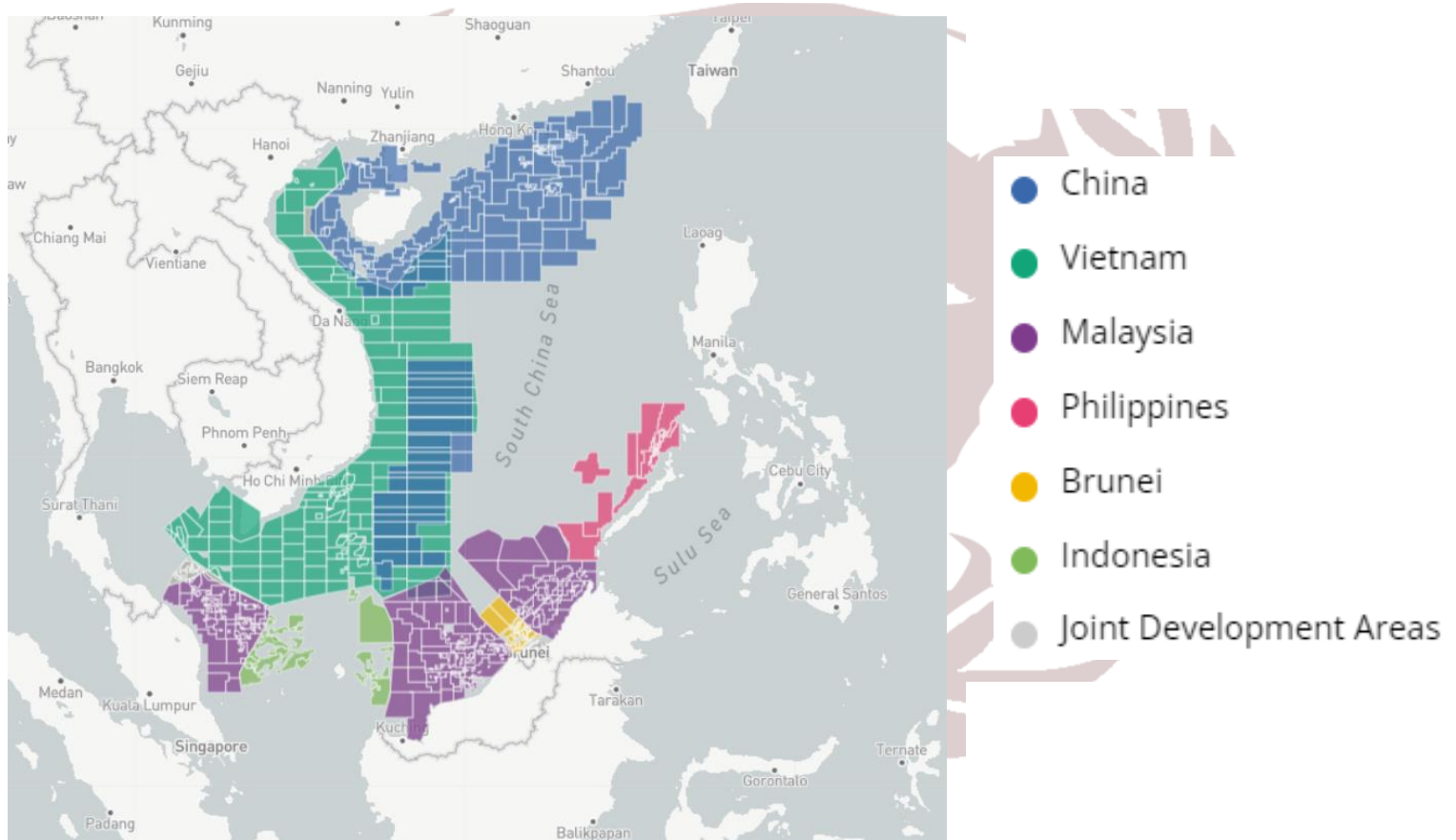


Along with the corporations, countries outside of the region also show interest in the region too. Countries like China, USA, Russia and Canada are trying to be present in the region whether by their own or with their national countries.

With so many business talks are going on in the region, there is going to be some natural and cultural consequences to these activities. The economies of these island nations, as we have discussed before, are small and mostly agriculture and fishing dependent economies with fishing also being a great part of the culture. The natural hazards that will be caused in the region will affect the fishing industry deeply for the sediment plumes and other types of harms will destroy the habitats of fishes. That certainly will have a negative impact on the island's cultures for they have evolved with fishing and the absence of them will cause some problems.

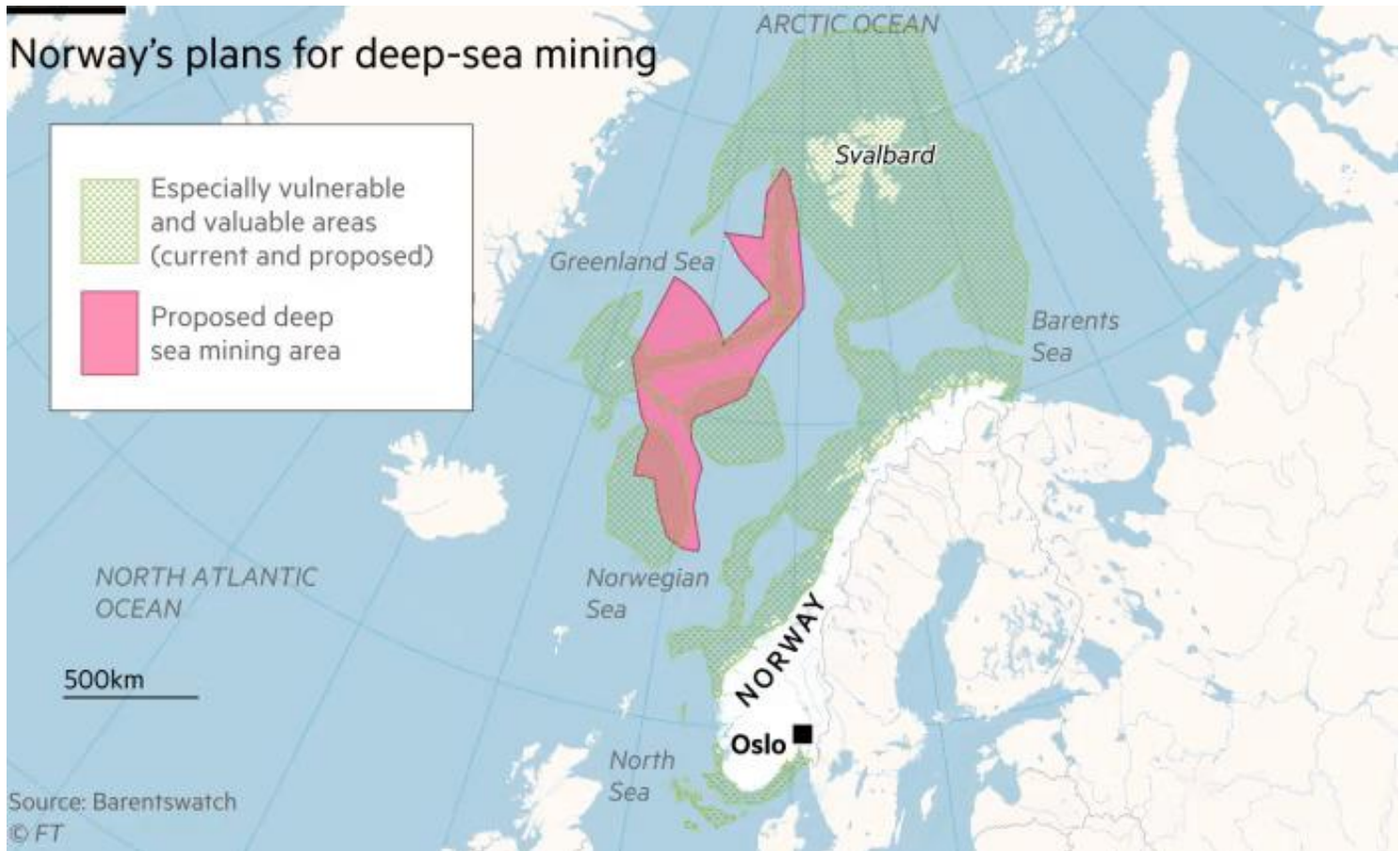
## 8.5. South China Sea

The South China Sea is home to many diverse cultures, traditions and ways to live. But one can argue that the cultural aspect that is the same in every one of them is the reliance and importance of the sea. For centuries people of this region ate, lived, made trade and communicated with the help of the sea. With sea life being a really important part of their lives, they are keen to augment their capabilities in the new emerging field of deep-sea mining too. With China being the banner-bearer in this sector with its companies like China Minmetals Corporation, many of the regional countries and ones from other regions are trying to increase their capabilities in this region regarding deep-sea mining.



Even though all the efforts, the exact amount and places of deep sea mining resources are unknown in the region, but with the Republic of China's dedication in this field, it is clear to see that this area will become one of the most important hubs of the world regarding this matter.

## 8.6. Arctic Ocean



The Arctic Ocean has always been a region that is home to many controversies. Being home to many precious resources like petroleum in the ocean and coal and iron in the land, this area always attracted foreign eyes and hosted competition between the regional powers. In the new emerging sector of deep sea mining, the Arctic has proven itself to be a place of competition also. Norway, for example, is one of the flag bearers of this field in the region. They conduct immense research in the region, looking for suitable places to run deep sea mining operations. They are giving great effort to run these operations as nature friendly as possible, not forgetting to associate with regional stakeholders too, primarily the Arctic Council.

This area is promising for polymetallic nodules which can greatly augment regional nations economic capabilities. As mentioned before, this richness of the region attracts many foreign eyes, such as the USA and China. It is important to take into account the regional power games and relations of all the stakeholders in the region while debating and thinking about the possible natural hazards that can be inflicted during the mining process.

## **9. Major Parties Involved**

### **9.1. The International Seabed Authority**

The International Seabed Authority (ISA) is an autonomous international organization which has established under the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the 1994 Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.<https://www.isa.org.jm/about-isa/>

The organization is the sole authority to mandate and regulate the rules upon sea mining activities in the international waters. It has the authority to give contracts to nations or contractors to conduct deep sea mining operations in the areas which are outside of the exclusive economic zones (EEZ) of the countries.

With its headquarters being in Kingston, Jamaica and its 169 members (168 states and 169th the European Union), the Authority's goal is to be sure that the mining activities in the deep seas result in the benefit of all mankind, not just the contractors and all activities run in manner that prevents the destruction of the habitats of the regional species and the nature as a whole.

### **9.2. China Minmetals Corporation**

Having its headquarters in Beijing, the China Minmetals Corporation was founded in 1950. Being a state owned company, they served their nation for decades by being the biggest of the mining sector in China. After the opening up of China in 1970's, they have opened their business to and became one of the first Chinese companies to go global. Today they have contracts all over the world and they are a crucial player in the China's deep sea mining activities.

### **9.3. Ocean Minerals-Singapore**

Singapore is one of the most important players in the deep sea mining business with its ever-growing interest in the field. But the impact of this country comes from their companies. The Ocean Mineral company of Singapore is probably the biggest in the country regarding

sea mining and is the first company from Singapore to get a license to operate from the ISA. Acquiring a license to conduct operations in the Clarion-Clipperton Zone, they are going to be a big stakeholder in the sea mining industry in the future.

#### **9.4. The Metals Company**

The Metals Company is a Canadian mining company that is mostly known for their deep sea mining activities. Founded in 2011 with its headquarters being in Vancouver, Canada, they conduct deep sea mining operations in multiple regions of the world but the most notable one is their collaboration with the island state of Nauru. Being a small island state, Nauru showed its ambitions regarding sea mining. Their collaboration in the Pacific region sparked new initiatives in the region, making them a pioneer in the sector with their partner, The Metals Company.

#### **9.5. GreenPeace**

Greenpeace is a global network of independent campaigning organizations that use peaceful protest and creative confrontation to expose global environmental problems and promote solutions that are essential to a green, just, and joyful future.

<https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/about/#:~:text=Greenpeace%20is%20a%20global%20network,%20just%20and%20joyful%20future.>

They do protests all over the world to protect nature and prevent harms that can be done to nature by companies of all sorts. In the mining industry, they are known for their fearless acts and protests that make the companies change their policies with more nature friendly ones. A good example of their protests is the one that they did to The Metals Company, regarding their operations in the Clarion-Clipperton Zone.

In the morning of November, 2023, MV COCO, a ship owned by The Metals Company left the port carrying two Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs), to conduct research in the area in which Nauru and TMC were working together. After a while, Greenpeace protestors arrived by small boats and kayaks and got into the ship's deck by using ropes and occupied the crane of the ship, chanting ‘‘Stop Deep Sea Mining’’. This made a



great impact on the international news and created further discussions upon the matter of deep sea mining. The CEO of the TMC heavily criticized the protest and called it ‘‘kayaking and taking selfies’’. Getting great feedback from this protest, The GreenPeace continuous to spark awareness about deep sea mining internationally.

## **10. Conclusion**

The matter of deep sea mining requires great insights and immense research for it covers a variety of topics within itself. Before coming to the equal distribution part, it is important to take into account the topics such as the harm that it can deliver to the nature and sea habitats in the operational regions for it is the most important aspect that the ISA and IMO mentions about in their papers and regulations. Delegates must consider the natural effects of it while giving importance to the rights of nations in the operative regions , most notably the developing ones, for as we have mentioned before the main goal of the ISA is to distribute the revenues of deep sea mining amongst all the nations in the world, again putting the needs of developing countries first.

The main goal of our committee, the way we work, organizations that we cooperate with will determine the process of our debates for all works upon certain regulations to sustain the well-being of deep sea mining operations all over the world.

After discussing the possible harms and regulations, it is important to put emphasis on the possible ways to distribute the revenues amongst countries. As mentioned in the guide, many proposals have been talked about in the Assembly but because of the fact that they are not covering our goals, they were not agreed upon. It is important for delegates to talk about former proposals, understand the areas where they are lacking, and come up with revolutionary solutions to solve our main problem.

It is recommended by the Committee Board to make further researches and readings upon the matter in order to come up with the most possible and sustainable solutions.

## 11. Questions to Be Answered

- How can we assess the harm that can be done to nature by deep sea mining activities?
- Which measures can we implement to ensure the equal distribution of revenues?
- What can the committee do to oversee the actions of the contractors in the licensed areas?
- Which steps can we take to protect the deep sea ecosystem and habitats from mining activities?
- What should we do to come up with a fair solution to the fair distribution problem?
- What are positive and negative sides of deep sea mining and how should we shape the future of it?

## 12. Further Readings

- [https://www.eu-midas.net/sites/default/files/downloads/Briefs/MIDAS\\_brief\\_legal.pdf](https://www.eu-midas.net/sites/default/files/downloads/Briefs/MIDAS_brief_legal.pdf)
- [https://www.itlos.org/fileadmin/itlos/documents/cases/case\\_no\\_17/17\\_adv\\_op\\_010211\\_en.pdf](https://www.itlos.org/fileadmin/itlos/documents/cases/case_no_17/17_adv_op_010211_en.pdf)
- <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0301479720315188>
- <https://www.americansecurityproject.org/drilling-deep-on-chinese-deep-sea-mining/>
- <https://www.greenpeace.org/international/press-release/63856/the-metals-company-threatens-greenpeace-with-injunction-but-activists-continue-protest-and-scale-their-ship-in-the-pacific/>

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11. <https://www.greenpeace.org.uk/news/four-reasons-why-the-international-seabed-authority-shouldnt-be-trusted-to-protect-our-oceans/>
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15. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/308305495> Polymetallic massive sulfides and gold mineralization at mid-ocean ridges and in subduction-related environments
16. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/257928639> The abundance of seafloor massive sulfide deposits
17. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/284138311> Hydrothermal exploration of mid-ocean ridges Where might the largest sulfide deposits be forming
18. <https://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/edu/lessonplans/ferrocrust.pdf>