

# GMUNC XIII



## THE LAW OF THE SEA

## UNCLOS

**The global race to extract and control  
deep-sea Polymetallic Nodules**



## I. Conference Information

It's our immense pleasure to welcome all delegates to the Gunn Model United Nations Conference XIII! Before delegates start reading this background guide, please remember position papers are due on October 17 to be considered for a research award. With the final deadline on October 23 for general awards (all awards except research awards). If you do not submit a position paper by this date by 11:59, you will **NOT** be eligible for any committee awards. For questions on position paper requirements please check out the position paper writing guide on the GMUNC website (<https://gmunc.org/conference>). In addition we will not tolerate any use of AI, if a sufficient detection of AI is found you will be disqualified from **ALL** awards and your Delegation will be made aware. Please send position papers in **PDF format** (we will not accept sharing of google docs or any other methods) and committee-specific inquiries to the committee email address [gmuncxiiiunclos@gmail.com](mailto:gmuncxiiiunclos@gmail.com).

Please feel free to email us any questions!

## II. Chair Bios

Head Chair Bio:

Dear Esteemed Delegates,

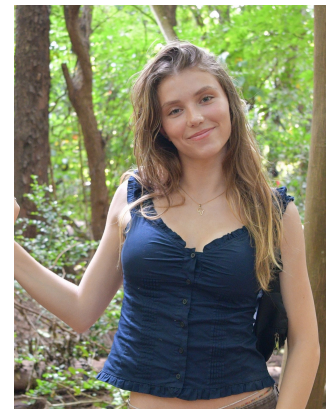
My name is Alina Fleischmann, and I'm honored to serve as your Head Chair for GMUNC XIII 2026. I'm currently a senior at Gunn High School, and this will be my 14th MUN conference and, sadly, my last time chairing at GMUNC after four years.

Over the years, MUN has become a huge part of my life. From conferences in New York to Hawaii, and now serving as my Club's Secretary General, I've had the opportunity to grow as a delegate and leader while meeting some truly amazing people. More than anything, MUN has given me a community that has become like a second family.

Outside of MUN, I'm passionate about science, especially neurodevelopment, neurodiversity, and mental health advocacy. When I'm not working on clinical research, I'm usually reading, baking, or spending time with my two cats, Mia and Max.

It's a privilege to chair again this year, and I'm looking forward to fostering a welcoming, thoughtful, and engaging committee. Whether this is your first conference or your tenth, I hope you leave having gained something new, challenged yourself, and learned to stay passionately curious. Best of luck with your position papers, and I can't wait to meet you all this October!

Warmly,



## GMUNC XIII, Committee UNCLOS, Background Guide

Alina Fleischmann

Co-Chair Bio:

Dear Delegates,

My name is Arielle Hallinan and I am so excited to be your Co-Chair for GMUNC this year! I am currently a senior here at Gunn, and this will be my second year participating in Model UN.

Last year when I began going to conferences, I found that every single one felt vastly different.



GMUNC, my very first conference, was particularly unique. On top of the intense debating and complex discussion, there was also an open friendliness that created a sense that everyone was improving together. My GMUNC experience gave me a greater confidence to grow as a delegate, which is one of the reasons I am excited to return as a Co-Chair. I hope to help create an environment where delegates feel encouraged to think critically, and to share and build off each other's ideas.

In my free time I love to try interesting food places, travel and be in the sun, and do DIY projects. I will also never shy away from a long conversation about the world around me. I believe that staying educated about international affairs as well as having a willingness to talk to people with differing views from yourself are extremely important (another reason why I got into MUN!).

Ultimately, I hope that this committee is both challenging and fun for you all, and that you gain skills that will help you for years to come. The GMUNC staff are dedicated to making sure your experience is great. So please feel free to reach out with questions about procedures, the topic, position papers, or anything else. Good luck and I am looking forward to meeting you all in October!

### III. Introduction

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) was founded as the “constitution of the sea.” It was tasked with the responsibility of deciding and mandating law about how far a nation “owned” its waters, and also what happened in the high seas that nobody owned (International Maritime Organization, [26]). UNCLOS met across three separate conventions in 1958, 1960, and from 1973 to 1982, finally creating a treaty for its establishment in 1982, but it wouldn't be ratified until 1994 by the required larger nations, all of which is further discussed more in depth in the next section. The history of how this committee was established is elaborated upon in the background information because a central backbone of this committee's creation was the debates about deep-sea mining of Nodules and the ideologies behind who should own them. The key idea is that UNCLOS has the power to define maritime borders, regulate fishing and mining, protect the marine environment, and resolve disputes between nations (International Maritime Organization [26]).



Arguably what is most important, though, is that through the UNCLOS establishment of the International Seabed Authority (ISA) with its treaty of 1982, it created a legal framework that actually holds executive power. The International Seabed Authority was established primarily to dictate laws about deep sea mining and has the power to enforce its regulations and contract terms directly against operators in international waters (International Seabed Authority [15]). It can suspend or terminate contracts, impose financial penalties, and conduct compliance inspections. However, it lacks a dedicated police force, so it must rely on member countries to monitor and execute enforcement actions at sea (International Seabed Authority [15]). So as members of this committee, it is important to remember the actual scope of your abilities and powers. Every member of UNCLOS is automatically a member of the ISA (International Seabed Authority [1]), and your delegation will have executive power to create and mandate laws in this committee, where for this conference we will be focusing on deep-sea mining.



## IV. Background Information

The ocean covers over 71% of Earth's surface, yet less than 5% of it has been explored. Resting in sediment nearly 5 kilometers below the surface are element-dense balls of metal that have become the focus of growing global interest. Polymetallic nodules, first discovered in 1868, have been developing as long as the planet has. Starting with a small common nucleus, originating from shark teeth, follicles or volcanic rock (Polymetallic Nodule Research Alliance [58]), the nodules begin to grow as aqueous solutions of metals precipitate around the surface in a redox reaction. Over millions of years, this process forms concentric layers through either hydrogenetic, or diagenetic growth (Impossible Metals [25]). This process happens at an incredibly slow rate, however, with it taking typically a million years for a Nodule to grow 1-10 millimeters (Impossible Metals [25]). As such most Nodules are usually only about 5-10 cm in diameter (roughly the size of a potato).



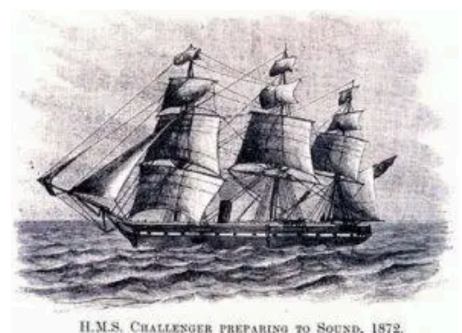
These Nodules also contain a wide variety of valuable metals, consisting mainly of manganese, iron, silicates, and hydroxides, while also containing nickel, copper, and cobalt. This unique combination of highly sought-after minerals makes polymetallic nodules extremely valuable, as these metals are essential for many modern technologies, including renewable energy systems, batteries, electronics, and defense technologies (International Seabed Authority [42]). As demand for these resources continues to grow, so does global interest in collecting them.



Requiring low sedimentation rates, extreme water depths, and constant ocean currents, leads the Nodules to not only form incredibly slowly but also in very limited areas. The most abundant and famous area being off of the coast of Mexico in the Pacific, known as the Clarion Clipperton Zone, where these Nodules cover over 70% of the sea floor (The Pew Charitable Trusts []). It is this area that has gained significant global attention in recent years and also where these Nodules were first surfaced in 1872 (Rmg.Co.Uk [23]).

Funded by the British government and led by captain George Nares, the mission traveled nearly 69,000 nautical miles across 4 major oceans, laying the groundwork for the beginning of modern oceanography (Rmg.Co.Uk [23]). While exploring the seabed, the HMS Challenger dredged up the polymetallic nodules that would mark their first scientific recognition. It was the expedition's chemist, John Buchanan, who noted the manganese within these nodules, stating it "held significant commercial value" (Polymetallic Nodule Research Alliance [22]). Despite this claim however, polyatomic noodles wouldn't gain any mainstream academic curiosity for another 80 years.

Only in 1957 when the Scripps Institution of Oceanography launched a program to evaluate seafloor mining did corporations looking to profit begin to invest. Chief investigator John L. Mero revolutionized the field with his 1965 book, *The Mineral Resources of the Sea* (Nytimes.com [57]). He estimated that the Pacific floor alone held over one trillion metric tons of Nodules, describing it as an "inexhaustible" supply growing faster than humanity could ever



## GMUNC XIII, Committee UNCLOS, Background Guide

exploit it. With his mathematical models providing the first evidence that vacuuming these minerals from the ocean floor could be far more profitable than traditional land-based mining (Nytimes.com [57]).



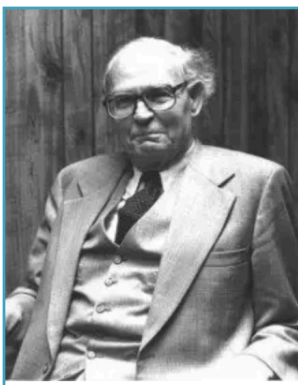
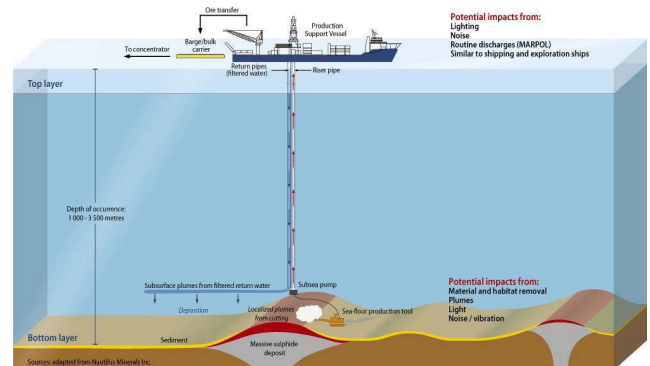
Polymetallic nodules lie on the Blake Plateau near the old mining site. This photo was taken as part of the 2019 Southeastern U.S. Deep-sea Exploration.

This economic promise, combined with the post-war industrial boom of the 1960s and 1970s, triggered a global rush for ocean resources (Cronan, David S [10]). This momentum was only amplified by widespread fears that land-based mines were running out of high-grade copper and nickel, or that geopolitical instability could choke off critical supply chains. And in this climate of greed hungry urgency, Mero's book "literally launched a hundred ships" (Cronan, David S. [10]).

However, because deep-sea engineering was completely unproven and incredibly expensive, individual corporations could not navigate the financial risks alone. To share the immense burden, they pooled their resources into massive international consortia, funneling billions of dollars in corporate capital into powerful joint ventures by the 1970s (Nytimes.Com [57]). Among these was the **Kennecott Consortium**, led by Kennecott Copper alongside Rio Tinto, Consolidated Gold Fields, and Mitsubishi. Similarly, **U.S. Steel**, Union Minière, and Ilmenite spearheaded Ocean Mining Associates, while **Ocean Management Incorporated** brought together Canada's Inco, the American firm SEDCO, and a prominent group of German and Japanese industrial partners (Nytimes.Com [57]).

It was through this pooling of money that the groundbreaking research needed to collect the nodules could be spearheaded across different corporations. One such company was Deepsea Ventures, which in July 1970 conducted a proof-of-concept test on the Blake Plateau off the coast of South Carolina. Using a vacuum-like hydraulic system, they sucked up approximately 60,000 baseball-sized lumps from the ocean floor, marking the first successful commercial deep-sea mining test (Environment & Society Portal

[13]). However, this historic milestone did not come without its consequences.



Arvid Pardo advocated designating seabed resources as "the common heritage of mankind." Photo by [MSacerdoti](#), 1975.

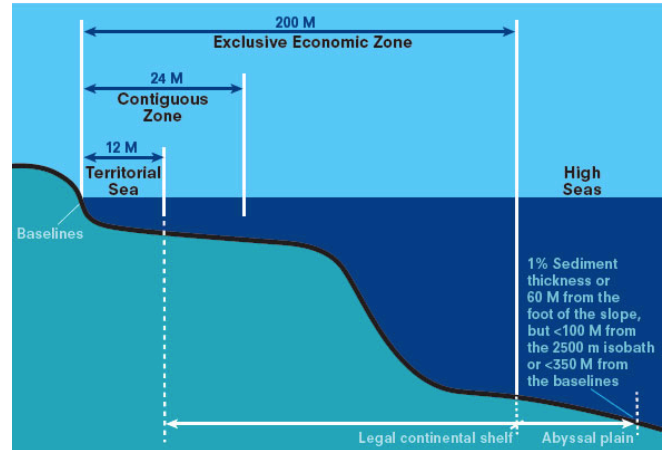
In this echo chamber of money-driven companies rushing to collect their capital, smaller nations with a fraction of the capacity and resources to keep up with their already wealthy counterparts began to question the morals behind deep-sea mining. The query of "Who claimed this vast untouched land and resource?" repeated in almost every UN hall. Arvid Pardo, the Maltese ambassador representing a small island in the middle of the Mediterranean, was the most notable in the discussion of this question. In 1967, he offered his assessment of seabed mining in his famous [three-hour speech](#) before the UN General Assembly, arguing that the seabed should be treated as the "common

## GMUNC XIII, Committee UNCLOS, Background Guide

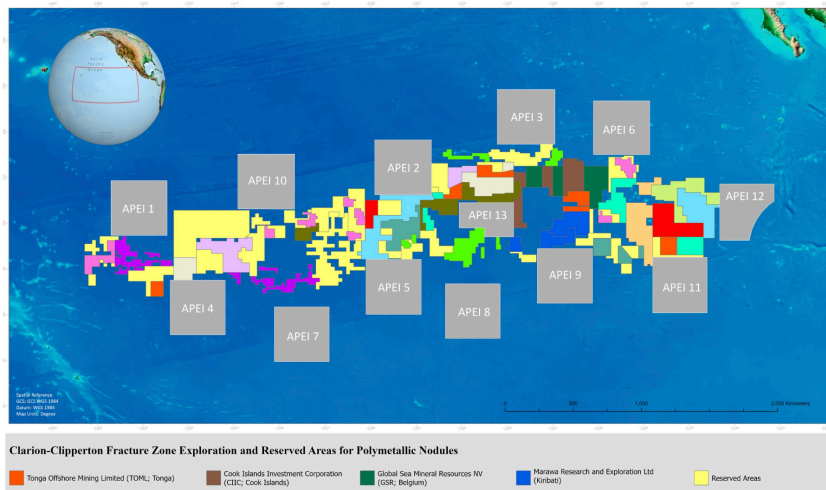
**heritage of mankind.”** And after an ad-hoc committee study of three years, the United Nations adopted this principle that still holds today (Scarminach, Shaine. [45]).

A combination of the growing cries of smaller nations opposing deep-sea mining, the UN gaining a greater involvement in the discussion and morals of who can extract these nodules, and the discovery of new land-based mines ultimately caused commodity prices to plummet. This sudden market collapse made seabed extraction financially unviable, causing the first wave of ocean exploration to abruptly crash in the mid-1980s and frustrating investors who had pooled millions of dollars (Sparenberg, Ole. [47])

Continued debates fueled by ideologies like Arvid Pardo's led the UN to get more involved. The Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (1973 to 1982), brought together over 150 countries to create global ocean rules, discussing territorial waters, scientific research, marine conservation, and most notably deep-sea mining, which created the backbone of the conference's heated discussion (Keating-Bitonti, Caitlin [28]). This conference founded the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea as an official treaty in 1982. However, it did not enter into force until 1994 because several industrialized nations, including the United States, objected to the convention's provisions that dealt with deep-seabed mineral resources (Keating-Bitonti, Caitlin [28]).



It was the agreement of 1994 that eventually allowed the major signatories needed to approve the treaty and create the permanent UN body. While the original 1982 treaty treated the seabed like a socialist commune where all technology and profits had to be shared, the 1994 Agreement pivoted the treaty toward a capitalist model by making four major changes (Congress.Gov [24]). It removed mandatory technology sharing so private Western companies wouldn't have to hand over their newly patented technology (State.Gov [52]), shifted to a free-market system by stripping away strict production limits, and gave wealthy investor nations veto power so developing nations couldn't outvote them, and cut down on UN bureaucracy to protect companies from expensive fees before digging (Congress.Gov [24]). Crucially, passing this agreement also allowed for the creation of the International Seabed Authority (ISA), the independent, UN-mandated organization that still controls all deep-sea mining exploration leases and environmental regulations on the international ocean floor today (Scarminach, Shaine. [45]).



Under this new framework, the International Seabed Authority was tasked with overseeing exploration and exploitation contracts, alongside distributing a portion of the mining profits to developing nations. The ISA split up the ocean into different sectors



## GMUNC XIII, Committee UNCLOS, Background Guide

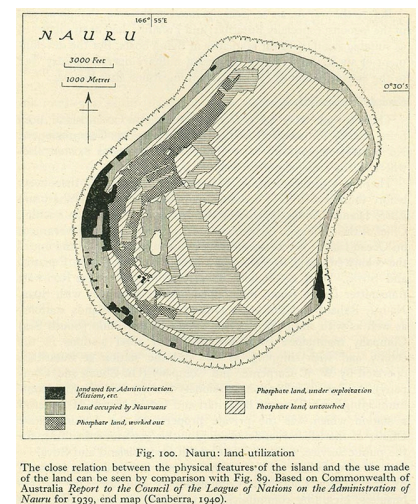
and reserves that could be given out to different nations, and while it has issued 29 exploration contracts, mostly centered in the Pacific Clarion Clipperton Zone, large-scale mining has not yet begun (Scarminach, Shaine. [45]). To support developing nations through seabed mining, the ISA invoked two main strategies. First, for every larger developed nation granted an area to explore and mine nodules from, they had to explore a separate area specifically set aside for a developing nation. Second, any developed nation taking part in deep-sea mining had to pay a tax percentage of their findings to the ISA, which would then redistribute the wealth to partnered developing nations (Johnny Harris [21]). Many developing countries saw this framework as a way to reduce global inequality and bridge the massive wealth and resource gap. Conversely, larger nations viewed these rules as just more frustrating restrictions on the capitalist ocean economy they were fighting so hard to preserve.

To further ensure developing states weren't left out of the ocean's wealth, the ISA initiated another rule known as the **"Sponsorship" rule**, which created a parallel system (Congress.Gov [46]). Under this system, private companies could not apply for deep-sea mining contracts on their own; they had to be officially sponsored by a nation that was a signatory to UNCLOS. A specific allocation of the ocean floor, called "Reserved Areas," was set aside exclusively for developing nations or corporate entities sponsored by them (Congress.Gov [46]). However, this layout quickly birthed the **small-island loophole**. Large scale corporations looking for sponsors realized that small Pacific Island nations held the exclusive rights to the UN's Reserved Areas, but lacked the billions of dollars required to build the actual infrastructure to mine them. By partnering

with and getting sponsored by a smaller nation, these wealthy corporate organizations could automatically gain access to a massive mining reserve area. Even better for the companies, doing this completely bypassed the requirement to explore additional areas or pay the steep taxes, because on paper, the venture was classified under a "developing nation." Unfortunately for many smaller states, this "collaboration" with larger powers ultimately ended up being a repeat of an oppressive history all over again. One such nation is the island of Nauru.



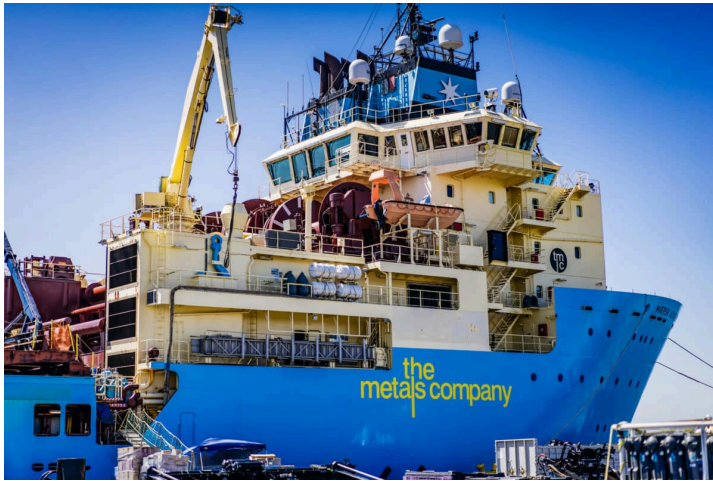
The Island of Nauru, famous for its “Rags to Riches” story, is now deep in international debate about the mining of Nodules. Formed by the erosion of a large volcanic seamount millions of years ago, Nauru is one of many small islands in the middle of the pacific ocean. Its extreme isolation, however, made it a popular resting spot for migrating birds, whose millennia of accumulated excrement created vast phosphate deposits (Ludewig, Jasper. [31]). Human settlement first occurred by Micronesians an estimated 3,000 years ago, where they established a complex political system with 12 tribes, a distinct language, culture and way of life. Because of its isolation European settlement was delayed. It wasn't until 1887 that Nauru was colonized and incorporated into the German Marshall Islands Protectorate (Ludewig, Jasper. [31]). European interest escalated dramatically in 1900 when Albert Ellis discovered these massive rock phosphate deposits, leading to the creation of the Pacific Phosphate Company under joint British and German backing. Within a decade, the company was using thousands of indentured





## GMUNC XIII, Committee UNCLOS, Background Guide

laborers to extract nearly 300,000 tons of phosphate annually, shipping the island's wealth away to its other colonies with industrial markets like Australia and New Zealand (Ludewig, Jasper. [31]). Some even attribute Australia's agricultural success to its importation of phosphate as a crucial fertilizer (Johnny Harris [21]). Following WWI, the British Phosphate Commission controlled Nuru's resources until 1967 when the nation gained its independence. After Nuru brought back the mining assets and briefly became one of the richest countries per capita in the world (Dingwall, Doug. [11]). However, after completely mining out their own island interior and rendering it a wasteland, severe financial mismanagement forced Nuru to turn to desperate avenues for economic survival, including selling diplomatic recognition and hosting a controversial offshore detention center for Australia. More recently, facing economic ruin and looking for a way out, Nuru has turned to the ocean floor, aggressively pushing to jumpstart its own deep-sea mining as their next economic lifeline (Ludewig, Jasper. [31]).

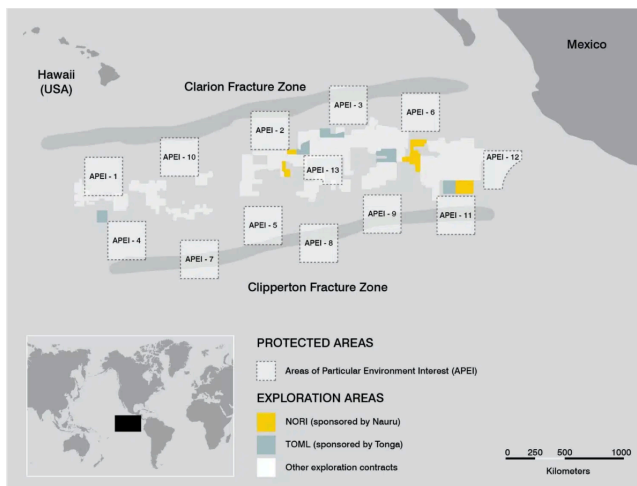


This is exactly where Australian entrepreneur David Heydon stepped in to exploit the small island loophole. Recognizing both Nuru's desperate financial situation and the UN's strict national sponsorship rules, Heydon founded DeepGreen Metals in 2011, a company that would later rebrand as [The Metals Company \(TMC\)](#) (NORI Project [39]). DeepGreen targeted the tiny, economically isolated island nation of roughly 12,000 residents and established a subsidiary called [Nuru Ocean Resources Inc. \(NORI\)](#) (NORI Project [39]). Under the ISA's sponsorship rules, the sponsoring nation holds full legal

responsibility for monitoring operations, conducting surprise inspections, and holding the corporation strictly accountable (Legal Adviser Oceans [9]). Nuru, like many developing nations, however, lacks the maritime resources and administrative infrastructure required to monitor a complex operation like TMC, and the island nation would be powerless to enforce penalties against such a massive corporate entity if violations occurred (Johnny Harris [21]). Consequently, while Nuru serves as the official legal shield on paper, the entire operation is effectively controlled by DeepGreen. This power dynamic is a key backbone to discussions today,

sparking widespread criticism that the small island loophole has simply paved the way for the corporate exploitation of vulnerable nations, a brutal repeat of history that is tragically familiar to Nuru.

Additionally because Nuru held developing-nation status under UN rules, this corporate partnership successfully unlocked massive, highly coveted mining blocks across the Clarion-Clipperton Zone (CCZ). Proving this was a repeatable business model rather than a one-time fluke, DeepGreen pulled off the exact same strategy with the Kingdom of Tonga, acquiring a second subsidiary known as TOML to capture even more of



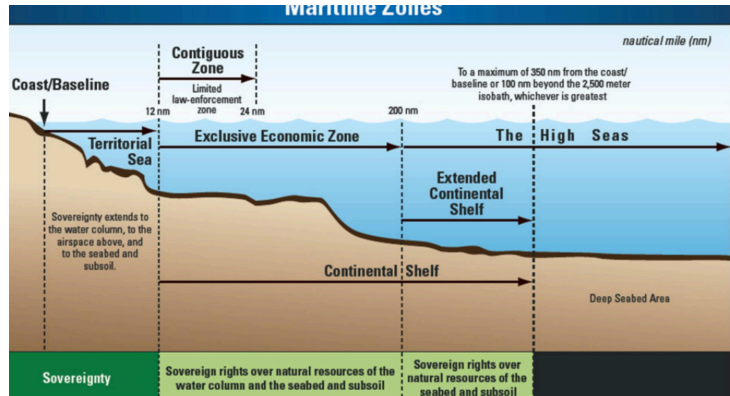
## **GMUNC XIII, Committee UNCLOS, Background Guide**

the ocean floor (Greenpeace International [2]). Leading many to question the morals behind TMC and whether this dynamic of "collaboration" is simply just a repeat of an oppressive history.

The corporate alliance between The Metals Company and the Nauruan government has faced intense international debate as they lead the push to jumpstart deep-sea mining. Central to this global discussion are mounting concerns over the catastrophic and potentially irreversible environmental impacts of stripping the ocean floor. While large-scale commercial extraction remains on hold because the ISA has yet to finalize its official regulatory mining code, the deadlock is growing increasingly tense. As global demand for critical transition metals skyrockets, so too does the corporate pressure to harvest the deep sea for its very small yet highly coveted polymetallic nodules.

## V. Past International Actions

As global interest in deep sea mining grew, intensifying international debates over ocean sovereignty led Arvid Pardo, Maltese diplomat, in his 1967 speech to the UN general assembly, to call for the recognition of the high seas (water not recognized as the territory of a specific state) as the Common Heritage of Mankind (Un.Org [12]). The UNGA formally adopted this principle in 1970 in resolution 2749 (Kröger, Kerstin, et al [29]), the same year as the first commercial mining of polymetallic nodules off the coast of Florida (Jones, Daniel O. B., et al [27]). Around the same time, a series of conventions in Geneva and New York spanning from 1958 to 1982, named UNCLOS I, II, and III, established provisions for the governing of internal, territorial, and international waters. Their resolution was the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, an international treaty detailing a “legal order of the seas” while aiming to ensure the peacefulness, equitableness, and environmental sustainability of maritime activities.



The UNCLOS also put into force the International Seabed Authority (ISA) in 1994, which regulates the mining of the high seas through exploration contracts. Organizations aiming to mine deep sea deposits, such as those with an abundance of polymetallic nodules, must agree to abide by the ISA’s governing Mining Code. The Mining Code comprises exploration regulations and exploitation regulations. Currently in place as exploration regulations are required reports by contracting organizations on exploration activities to promote collaboration, and regulations ensuring that ocean ecosystems are protected (International Seabed Authority [49]). The ISA has been drafting the exploration phase regulations since 2014. These laws will be most significant in establishing profit-sharing provisions for the purpose of preventing the unfair exploitation of seabeds close to under-resourced nations (International Seabed Authority [49]). As the only international body authorized to regulate deep sea mining in transboundary waters, most nations are waiting on the ISA to legally begin commercial mining



## VI. Current Situation

The current situation of deep-sea Nodule mining has turned into a massive geopolitical and legal showdown, particularly between the United Nations framework and the United States. Right now, the international debate revolves around the ongoing ISA standstill, where severe concerns about environmental damage and the fair representation of developing nations have completely stalled negotiations. Frustrated by this deadlock, the United States has attempted to bypass the UN system entirely to jumpstart its own operations, a move that is sparking intense international backlash on the global stage (Samaniego, Juan F. [44]). And capitalizing on this US bypass, money hungry enterprises have shifted towards collaborating with the US's system, most notably among the companies is The Metals Company.



As the International Seabed Authority (ISA) continues to lag behind in finalizing its legal rulebook, the entire global debate has shifted heavily toward the environment. Many scientists warn that harvesting these Nodules could destroy an ecosystem we barely understand. A major issue is that the ocean floor five kilometers below the surface is incredibly under-researched due to its extreme depth leading to its limited accessibility (Why Ocean Exploration Matters [60]). In this pitch-black, dead-silent world, most of the local animals aren't properly researched and understood if discovered at all.

Disturbing a part of the ocean that has been completely untouched for millions of years is a huge risk, especially since scientists expect it to cause massive dust clouds, artificial light, loud noise, and heavy vibrations to an area that has never been exposed to these elements (Johnny Harris [21]). The unique creatures that actually live on the nodules or the seabed would simply be vacuumed up and killed, and disrupting these deep-sea minerals could even mess with the earth's global carbon cycle (Johnny Harris [21]). In addition, a recent 2025 study looking at a test-mined site in the Clarion-Clipperton Zone proved just how long-lasting Nodule mining damage is. Researchers found that the ecological impacts from a small 1979 mining experiment were still clearly visible over 40 years later (Stanway, David [48]). This decades-old experiment left behind permanent sediment disturbance, heavily reduced populations of larger seabed creatures, and a completely stalled ecosystem recovery (Stanway, David [48]). Because we know so little about the deep ocean, this study has become a massive talking point on the international stage, with dozens of countries citing it as a definitive reason to pause or entirely cancel deep-sea mining. Other recent research backs this up: a Natural History Museum trial found a 37% drop in animal populations and a 32% reduction in species variety directly inside old mining tracks (Natural History Museum [35]), while a University of Hawaii study showed that mining deep sea water ruins the nutritional value of food particles floating in the midwater "twilight zone," threatening up to 60% of the local zooplankton (University of Hawai'i System News [36]). Together, this growing wave of scientific evidence has been used to warn the ISA and international community about the potentially very harmful effects of mining these nodules as many nations call for a moratorium or complete ban.



## GMUNC XIII, Committee UNCLOS, Background Guide

In addition, many nations are concerned about the representation and fair treatment of developing nations, with a fear of historical patterns repeating themselves leading over 40 countries (from the UK to Palau) to demand a moratorium on collecting nodules (Center for Biological Diversity [5]). Many view the



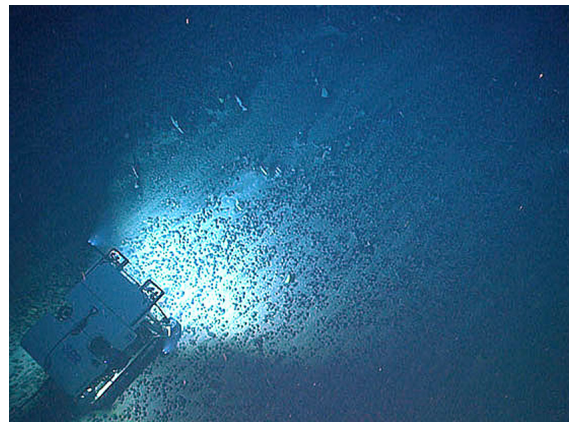
draft rules as a continuation of historical resource colonialism, reminiscent of past exploitation in island nations like Nauru, which favors wealthy industrial economies and foreign corporations while leaving developing island states with empty promises (Pecoraro, Alberto, and Nidhi Shah [40]). Furthermore, SIDS have observed how sponsorship rules create a "small island loophole," where lack of infrastructure means they retain no real power in the extraction process, while Western corporations structure operations to leave minimal financial payouts for the host nation (Pecoraro,

Alberto, and Nidhi Shah [40]).

A critical breaking point for the International Seabed Authority (ISA) is the growing belief among SIDS that the system is systematically rigged against them by the influential Legal and Technical Commission (LTC), which ignores their input (McMillan, Luke [34]). Because these nations lack the deep-pocketed lobbying power of global superpowers, private interests like The Metals Company have heavily influenced friendly states to force fast-tracked voting (International Seabed Authority [49]). Frustrated by this pressure, an anti-mining coalition of island nations is now blocking consensus, demanding the UN restructure rules to provide developing nations with a real, un-bypassable veto over commercial agendas (International Seabed Authority [49]).

Finally, this push is directly driven by local tribal and Indigenous communities who view the ocean floor as a sacred, living entity to be protected for future generations under principles such as the Māori concept of kaitiakitanga (Mathieson, Andrew [33]). Indigenous coalitions are fighting to ensure governments respect their right to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent, arguing that commercial mining threatens crucial fisheries and violates cultural heritage (Mathieson, Andrew [33]). This powerful domestic pressure has forced leaders in countries like Fiji, Palau, and Vanuatu to take a hardline stance, using their diplomatic weight to veto the Mining Code in defense of their heritage (Mathieson, Andrew [33]).

By the 2020s, the surging global demand for electric vehicle batteries completely reframed deep-sea mining as a "green energy" necessity rather than speculative potential mineral alternative. In 2021, DeepGreen merged with a blank-check company and went public on the Nasdaq as The Metals Company (TMC), raising hundreds of millions of dollars (The Metals Company [8]). Frustrated by years of slow UN regulatory drafting, Nauru (though many speculated the move was pushed entirely by TMC) triggered a legal clause known as the "Two-Year Rule" in July 2021. This forced the ISA to either finalize commercial deep-sea mining regulations within 24 months or consider mining applications under whatever rules existed at the time (Feichtner, Isabel, and Harald Ginzky [16]). This essentially gave the UN an ultimatum: finish the rules, or mining will simply begin without them.



## GMUNC XIII, Committee UNCLOS, Background Guide

However, when the silent two-year countdown concluded without any finalized regulations in July 2023, things didn't go as smoothly as TMC hoped (Niels-Juergen Seeberg-Elverfeldt, and Andreas Kaede [37]). Legally, the expiration meant a sponsoring state like Nauru could finally submit a commercial mining application that the ISA was obligated to "consider," even with the official Mining Code unfinished (Aten, Travis [4]). But this wasn't an automatic green light. The ISA's governing council insisted it still held the power to review any application using whatever rough draft guidelines were available, and they flatly rejected Nauru's push for a fast-tracked processing mechanism (Aten, Travis [4]). Frustrated by the roadblock, TMC demanded a hard deadline for the UN to approve their mining contract by mid-2025 (Noaa.Gov [38]). Yet, despite that deadline rolling around with still no definitive action from the UN, an even more drastic shift occurred all due to the United States.

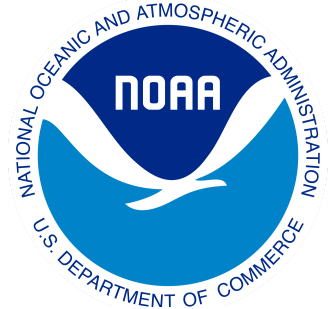
Unlike most countries involved in deep-sea mining negotiations, the United States is not a member of the International Seabed Authority (ISA) because it has never ratified the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the treaty that created the organization (Congress.Gov [24]). Although the U.S. helped negotiate parts of UNCLOS, concerns over national sovereignty, mandatory revenue sharing, and giving an international body authority over seabed resources prevented the Senate from ratifying the treaty (Congress.Gov [24]). As a result, the United States does not have a vote in ISA decisions and instead relies on its own domestic laws, particularly the Deep Seabed Hard Mineral Resources Act of 1980, to regulate deep-sea mining activities (Congress.Gov [24]).



This difference, though historically not that relevant, has become increasingly important over the past year. In April 2025 (right when TMC's second deadline ended), President Donald Trump signed an Executive Order 14285 directing federal agencies to accelerate the development of a domestic permitting process for deep-sea mining (The White House [53]). The order was seen as a matter of "National Security" and was intended to strengthen U.S. access to critical minerals such as nickel, cobalt, copper, and manganese, which are essential for electric vehicle batteries, renewable energy technologies, and defense systems. The administration argued that relying solely on the ISA's

negotiations would leave the United States vulnerable to supply chain disruptions and geopolitical competition, particularly from China (The White House [53]). This enraged much of the international community who were trying to create a system fair to all, but to money hungry companies this opened a shortcut that was quickly capitalized upon. The Metals Company became the first company to apply for commercial mining licenses through the U.S. system rather than waiting for ISA approval (The White House [53]). This move has sparked a huge international debate once again, with supporters saying it's the only way to get these critical metals quickly, while critics argue it completely goes around the ISA and tears down international law.

As the current situation stands, there is a fierce battle between nations fighting for and against mining these nodules. Right now, China holds the most **exploration** contracts given out by the ISA, running five of the 31 total approved permits (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace [59]). This positions China as a massive force trying to dominate the industry and lock down these valuable minerals (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace [59]). At the same time, the U.S. is also advancing toward



## **GMUNC XIII, Committee UNCLOS, Background Guide**

large scale deep sea mining. In July 2026, the U.S. Marine Minerals Administration announced a massive proposed lease sale covering 31 million acres of the seabed near American Samoa, with bidding for these sectors set for November 19, 2026 (Noaa.Gov [38]). Which comes right after fast-tracked permitting rules from NOAA are set to be released (Noaa.Gov [38]).

Despite all of this, as of early-to-mid July 2026, no large-scale Nodule/ Commercial deep-sea mining is happening anywhere in the world (Ashford, Oliver, et al [3]). Instead, the whole world is stuck at a total deep-sea mining standstill while the UN splinters into heated debates over the environment and representation. Meanwhile, the U.S. is doing everything it can to justify its own legal workaround as it races against China to become the economic powerhouse for these small mineral dense balls, which are only growing in importance to the world.



## VII. Country/Union Positions

### United States

The United States is the only major power which has not ratified the UNCLOS, and is not part of the ISA. The US's deep sea mining plans are regulated by internal groups such as the Department of the Interior (DOI) and Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (OCSLA). The US congress gave these groups the power to license the exploration and exploitation of international waters, which overlaps and conflicts with the ISA's jurisdiction (congress.gov [46]). Furthermore, the Trump administration is now actively pushing to obtain mineral supply chains, beginning with deep sea extraction which has not yet been authorized by the ISA. This approach has created major tensions between the US, nations funding the ISA like China, and nations calling for a moratorium or ban on deep sea mining like those of the EU (CNN [7]).

### China

China is recognized as a global leader in the deep sea mining industry. They currently hold 5 of 32 exploration contracts issued by the ISA, providing 17% of the available area for China to mine. Within the ISA, China has shown itself to be the most active in council participation and negotiations, and the largest financial contributor to the organization (CNN [7]). While already holding 95% of the world's rare metals and leading the globe in renewable energy technology, China aims to further capitalize on metals sourced from polymetallic nodules which can be used in computer chips, fast batteries, and other highly valuable commodities (Kuo, Lily [30]).

### European Union

The EU is majority opposed to deep sea mining because of its harmful environmental impacts. France and Germany, primary political and economic drivers of the EU, believe more research on both deep sea ecosystems and how to safely explore those areas is needed before considering them fair for exploitation. They currently have exploration contracts with the ISA in efforts to fully address the scientific gaps in deep sea mining (Environmental Justice Foundation [14]). France's president, Macron, has repeatedly called for bans on deep sea mining. He became the first major head of state to reject seabed mining in 2022 at the Climate summit in Egypt, and later reaffirmed his stance along with 33 other nations in 2025 at the United Nations Oceans Conference in France (Hance, Jeremy [20]). Since then, there has been growing support for a complete precautionary pause on the industry.

### G77

The Group of 77 greatly supports the idea that the sea is the "common heritage of mankind", and therefore that profits from the seas should be shared equitably. Prominent nations in this group, such as India and Brazil, support strict ISA authority and regulations ensuring fair profit sharing mechanisms (Friedman, Aan, and Liams [17]).

### SIDS

Nation states in SIDS are particularly influential because despite their relatively small land areas, they have vast Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ). Within these zones - which can be up to 200 nautical miles - coastal states have rights to explore, exploit, conserve, and manage natural resources, including fishing and

### **GMUNC XIII, Committee UNCLOS, Background Guide**

seabed minerals. They may also implement pollution prevention regulations. The member states of SIDS occupy over 30% of the world's oceans in this way, despite making up only 1% of total land mass. On top of this, SIDS comprises the majority of Pacific Islands states which surround the area in which polymetallic nodules are found. SIDS has long-time ensured that the UNCLOS is informed on and recognizes the special circumstances of island countries to create mechanisms that promote their equitable participation in ocean governance established under the “common heritage of humankind” (Gerretsen, Stephanie [18]).

While in a similar economic position to nations in G77, members of SIDS are more split on whether to support or reject deep sea mining. Nauru is one of the largest advocates for commercial mining. As a sponsor of their own mining company, Nauru officials were frustrated by the decades-long wait on the ISA to approve commercial mining. In 2021 Nauru invoked the “2 year rule” under the UNCLOS, which meant to force the ISA to finalize mining regulations (Pickens, Chris, et al [41]). Despite the ISA failing to meet this deadline and being allowed to continue talks, Nauru’s pressure accelerated the industry towards exploitation (Reid, Helen [43]). Other island nations such as Palau and Samoa, who are without funding to launch state-backed exploration teams, and whose ocean ecosystems are most nearby to these areas, support a moratorium on deep sea mining (Deep Sea Conservation Coalition [19]).

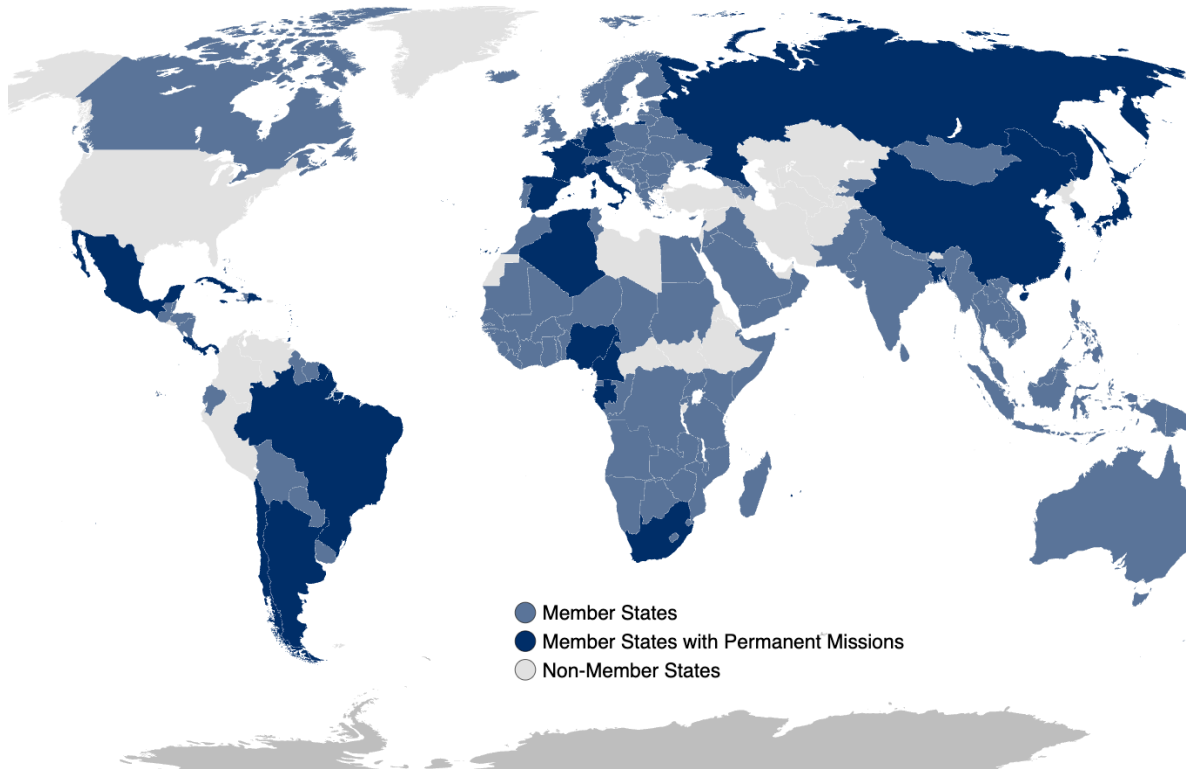
## VIII. Questions to Consider

- How do we hold countries in check who are not a part of the UNCLOS committee (like the US?)
- If a country issues domestic mining permits outside the UN framework, what concrete diplomatic or economic sanctions can the international community actually enforce?
- How can the ISA pressure private corporations (like TMC) when they use loophole state sponsorships to dodge regulatory penalties?
- If you are a developing nation, how do you balance the immediate need for economic sovereignty and climate funding with the risk of permanent environmental damage to your own waters?
- How (if at all realistic) should a sponsoring nation hold a large corporation accountable and what ISA regulations could be made to make this more feasible?
- How can pro-mining nations guarantee that seabed extraction won't permanently disrupt global carbon cycles or ruin midwater fisheries?
- If a country holds the majority of exploration contracts (like China), what mechanisms should be in place to prevent a total monopoly over the global transition-metal supply?
- What specific, binding liabilities should a sponsoring state face if their corporate partner causes a massive environmental disaster on the ocean floor?
- Is a total moratorium realistic as global demand for electric vehicles and green technology skyrockets, or does it just push the environmental damage back onto land-based mining?
- How do we legally define "sufficient scientific understanding" to know when a precautionary pause should end?
- How can Indigenous perspectives and cultural connections to the ocean be legally protected within a corporate, text-heavy international law framework?

**Suggested reading:** <https://www.isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/eng7.pdf>

## IX. Delegate list

For this conference, all delegates represent a country within the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) committee. Critically, every state party to UNCLOS is automatically a member of the International Seabed Authority (ISA). Because membership is legally tied directly to the convention, any treaties, resolutions, or directives passed within this UNCLOS committee will take immediate effect within the context of the ISA. This dual-jurisdiction structure expands the committee's mandate, granting it the explicit enforcement capabilities of the ISA.



Key note: Non-membering states (like the US will not be present in committee)

Shorten delegate list for the case of this conference

Albania  
Algeria  
Angola  
Australia  
Bahamas  
Barbados  
Brazil  
Bulgaria  
Burkina Faso  
Cabo Verde



## **GMUNC XIII, Committee UNCLOS, Background Guide**

Cambodia  
China  
Cook Islands  
Costa Rica  
Côte d'Ivoire  
Egypt  
Equatorial Guinea  
Fiji  
Finland  
France  
Gabon  
Gambia  
Georgia  
Germany  
Guyana  
Haiti  
Honduras  
India  
Indonesia  
Iraq  
Ireland  
Italy  
Jordan  
Kenya  
Lao People's Democratic Republic  
Latvia  
Lebanon  
Malaysia  
Maldives  
Mali  
Malta  
Marshall Islands  
Mauritania  
Mauritius  
Mexico  
Micronesia (Federated States of)  
Naoero  
Nauru  
Nepal  
Netherlands  
New Zealand  
Niue  
Pakistan  
Palau

## **GMUNC XIII, Committee UNCLOS, Background Guide**

Panama  
Papua New Guinea  
Philippines  
Republic of Korea  
Republic of Moldova  
Samoa  
Sao Tome and Principe  
Serbia  
Seychelles  
Sierra Leone  
Singapore  
Slovakia  
Slovenia  
Solomon Islands  
Somalia  
South Africa  
Spain  
Sri Lanka  
State of Palestine  
Sudan  
Timor-Leste  
Togo  
Tonga  
Trinidad and Tobago  
Tunisia  
Tuvalu  
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland  
Uruguay  
Zimbabwe

## X. Bibliography

### Works Cited

- [1] “About ISA - International Seabed Authority.” *International Seabed Authority - International Seabed Authority*, 17 Mar. 2022, <https://isa.org.jm/about-isa/>.
- [2] “Annual Reports.” *Greenpeace International*, <https://www.greenpeace.org/international/about/annual-report/>. Accessed 2 Aug. 2026.
- [3] Ashford, Oliver, et al. “What We Know About Deep-Sea Mining — and What We Don’t.” *World Resources Institute*, Apr. 2025, <https://www.wri.org/insights/deep-sea-mining-explained>.
- [4] Aten, Travis. “Media Release: Deep-Sea Mining Company Plans Met With Global Pushback as International Seabed Authority Meeting Concludes - DSCC.” *Deep Sea Conservation Coalition*, 28 Mar. 2025, <https://deep-sea-conservation.org/media-release-deep-sea-mining-company-plans-met-with-global-pushback-as-international-seabed-authority-meeting-concludes/>.
- [5] Center for Biological Diversity. “Nations Meeting in Jamaica Urged to Maintain Deep-Sea Mining Moratorium.” *Center for Biological Diversity*, 10 July 2026, <https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/nations-meeting-in-jamaica-urged-to-maintain-deep-sea-mining-moratorium-2026-07-10/>.
- [6] “Clarion Clipperton Fracture Zone - International Seabed Authority.” *International Seabed Authority - International Seabed Authority*, 29 July 2022, <https://isa.org.jm/maps/clarion-clipperton-fracture-zone/>.
- [7] CNN. “How Deep-Sea Mining Is Growing China’s Influence in the Pacific.” *Cnn.Com*, CNN, 24 Mar. 2026, <https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2026/03/world/china-deep-sea-mining-military-vis-intl/>.
- [8] “Company.” *The Metals Company*, <https://metals.co/company/>. Accessed 2 Aug. 2026.
- [9] “Contractual Arrangements Between Sponsoring States and Contractors Chilenye Nwapi Legal Adviser Oceans & Natural Resources.” 2019, [https://www.isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/3-\\_nwapi\\_c.pdf](https://www.isa.org.jm/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/3-_nwapi_c.pdf).
- [10] Cronan, David S. “Deep-Sea Mining: Historical Perspectives.” *Perspectives on Deep-Sea Mining*, 2022, pp. 3–11, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-87982-2\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-87982-2_1).
- [11] Dingwall, Doug. “Nauru’s Unorthodox Money-Making Schemes Are a ‘Riches to Rags to Riches’ Story.” *Abc.Net.Au*, ABC News, 2 Sept. 2025, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-09-02/nauru-economy-wealth-sources-of-revenue/105720686>.
- [12] “DR. ARVID PARDO, ‘FATHER of LAW of SEA CONFERENCE,’ DIES at 85, in HOUSTON, TEXAS | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases.” *Un.Org*, 16 July 1999, <https://press.un.org/en/1999/19990716.sea1619.html>.
- [13] “Dreams of Optimizing the Ocean: The 1970 Deepsea Ventures Mining Test and Artificial Upwelling.” *Environment & Society Portal*, Feb. 2024, <https://www.environmentandsociety.org/arcadia/dreams-optimizing-ocean-1970-deepsea-ventures-mining-test-and-artificial-upwelling>. Accessed 2 Aug. 2026.
- [14] “EU Commission Reaffirms Stance Against Deep-Sea Mining in Favour Of...” *Environmental Justice Foundation*, 2024,

## GMUNC XIII, Committee UNCLOS, Background Guide

- <https://ejfoundation.org/news-media/eu-commission-reaffirms-stance-against-deep-sea-mining-in-favour-of-marine-protection>.
- [15] “FAQs - International Seabed Authority.” *International Seabed Authority - International Seabed Authority*, 25 Apr. 2025, <https://isa.org.jm/faq-for-media/>.
- [16] Feichtner, Isabel, and Harald Ginzky. “The Struggle at the International Seabed Authority Over Deep Sea Mineral Resources.” *Npj Ocean Sustainability*, vol. 3, no. 1, Dec. 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s44183-024-00098-y>.
- [17] Friedman, Aan, and ] Liams. “The Group of 77 at the United Nations: An Emergent Force in the Law of the Sea\*.” <https://digital.sandiego.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2042&context=sdlr>. Accessed 2 Aug. 2026.
- [18] Gerretsen, Stephanie. “Small Island Developing States and the Future of Seabed Governance - International Seabed Authority.” *International Seabed Authority - International Seabed Authority*, 24 Apr. 2026, <https://isa.org.jm/news/small-island-developing-states-and-the-future-of-seabed-governance/>.
- [19] “Governments and Parliamentarians.” *Deep Sea Conservation Coalition*, <https://deep-sea-conservation.org/solutions/no-deep-sea-mining/momentum-for-a-moratorium/governments-and-parliamentarians/>. Accessed 2 Aug. 2026.
- [20] Hance, Jeremy. “‘Madness’: World Leaders Call for Deep-Sea Mining Moratorium at UN Ocean Summit.” *Mongabay Environmental News*, 11 June 2025, <https://news.mongabay.com/2025/06/madness-world-leaders-call-for-deep-sea-mining-moratorium-at-un-ocean-summit/>.
- [21] Harris, Hojnny. “The \$16 TRILLION Race to Mine the Ocean.” *Johnny Harris*, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TacOgNeoPMM&t=2505s>.
- [22] “History - PNRA.” *Polymetallic Nodule Research Alliance*, 12 Nov. 2024, <https://noduleresearch.com/introduction-deep-sea-minerals/history/>.
- [23] “HMS Challenger: A Trailblazer for Modern Ocean Science.” *Rmg.Co.Uk*, 2025, <https://www.rmg.co.uk/stories/maritime-history/hms-challenger-expedition-oceanography-trailblazer>.
- [24] “Implementing Agreements Under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).” *Congress.Gov*, 2025, <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF12578>.
- [25] Impossible Metals. “Polymetallic Nodules: The Rocks on the Ocean Floor That Will Power the Future.” *Impossible Metals*, 17 Oct. 2025, <https://impossiblemetals.com/blog/polymetallic-nodules-the-rocks-on-the-ocean-floor-that-will-power-the-future/>.
- [26] International Maritime Organization. “United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.” *Www.Imo.Org*, International Maritime Organization, 2019, <https://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Legal/Pages/UnitedNationsConventionOnTheLawOfTheSea.aspx>.
- [27] Jones, Daniel O. B., et al. “Biological Responses to Disturbance From Simulated Deep-Sea Polymetallic Nodule Mining.” *PLOS ONE*, edited by Kay C. Vopel, vol. 12, no. 2, Feb. 2017, p. e0171750, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0171750>.



## GMUNC XIII, Committee UNCLOS, Background Guide

- [28] Keating-Bitonti, Caitlin. "United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS): Living Resources Provisions." *Congress.Gov*, 2025, <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R47744>.
- [29] Kröger, Kerstin, et al. "The Legal Landscape for Deep-Sea Mining in the Area: A Primer for Practitioners." *Elem Sci Anth*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1525/elementa.2024.00072>.
- [30] Kuo, Lily. "China Is Set to Dominate the Deep Sea and Its Wealth of Rare Metals." *Washington Post*, 19 Oct. 2023, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/interactive/2023/china-deep-sea-mining-military-renewable-energy/>.
- [31] Ludewig, Jasper. "On Territory: Extractive Sovereignty and Australian Empire." *Society of Architectural Historians*, 19 Jan. 2024, <https://sah.org/2024/01/19/on-territory-extractive-sovereignty-and-australian-empire/>.
- [32] Marine Minerals « World Ocean Review. <https://worldoceanreview.com/en/wor-1/energy/marine-minerals/>. Accessed 2 Aug. 2026.
- [33] Mathieson, Andrew. "Pacific Opposition to Deep-Sea Mining Stretches to Indigenous Communities Living in US Territories." *National Indigenous Times*, 7 Jan. 2026, <https://nit.com.au/08-01-2026/22043/pacific-opposition-to-deep-sea-mining-stretches-to-indigenous-communities-living-in-us-territories>.
- [34] McMillan, Luke. "Deep Sea Mining Company Wins Five Year Contract Renewal Despite Open Compliance Inquiry." *Oceanrising.Co*, Ocean Rising, 24 July 2026, <https://www.oceanrising.co/p/deep-sea-mining-company-wins-five>.
- [35] Natural History Museum. "Study Measuring Impacts of Deep-Sea Mining Machine Finds Abundance of Animals at the Site Decreased By 37%." *Phys.Org*, 7 Dec. 2025, <https://phys.org/news/2025-12-impacts-deep-sea-machine-abundance.html>.
- [36] News, UH. "Deep-Sea Mining Threatens Life, Food Webs in the Ocean's Dim 'Twilight Zone' | University of Hawai'i System News." *University of Hawai'i System News*, 6 Nov. 2025, <https://www.hawaii.edu/news/2025/11/06/deep-sea-mining-twilight-zone/>.
- [37] Niels-Juergen Seeberg-Elverfeldt, and Andreas Kaede. "The Long Road to Exploit Deep Sea Minerals: Call to Adopt the Rules on Deep Seabed Mining in July 2025." *Völkerrechtsblog*, 14 July 2025, <https://voelkerrechtsblog.org/the-long-road-to-exploit-deep-sea-minerals/>.
- [38] "NOAA Accelerates Permitting Timeline for Deep Seabed Mining Applications." *Noaa.Gov*, 21 Jan. 2026, <https://www.noaa.gov/news-release/noaa-accelerates-permitting-timeline-for-deep-seabed-mining-applications>.
- [39] "NORI Project – Nauru Ocean Resources Inc.." *The Metals Company*, <https://metals.co/nori/>. Accessed 2 Aug. 2026.
- [40] Pecoraro, Alberto, and Nidhi Shah. "Governance Challenges of Deep Seabed Mining." *United Nations University*, 26 Feb. 2026, <https://unu.edu/publication/governance-challenges-deep-seabed-mining>.
- [41] Pickens, Chris, et al. "From What-If to What-Now: Status of the Deep-Sea Mining Regulations and Underlying Drivers for Outstanding Issues." *Marine Policy*, vol. 169, Jan. 2024, p. 105967, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2023.105967>.

## GMUNC XIII, Committee UNCLOS, Background Guide

- [42] “Polymetallic Nodules - International Seabed Authority.” *International Seabed Authority - International Seabed Authority*, 17 Mar. 2022, <https://isa.org.jm/exploration-contracts/polymetallic-nodules/>.
- [43] Reid, Helen. “Pacific Island of Nauru Sets Two-Year Deadline for U.N. Deep-Sea Mining Rules.” *Reuters*, 29 June 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/business/environment/pacific-island-nauru-sets-two-year-deadline-deep-sea-mining-rules-2021-06-29/>. Environment.
- [44] Samaniego, Juan F. “[EXCLUSIVE] the Metals Company’s Plans to Extract Minerals From the Seabed and Challenge the International Order - Climática, El Medio Especializado En Clima Y Biodiversidad.” *Climática, El Medio Especializado En Clima Y Biodiversidad*, 19 Dec. 2025, <https://climatica.coop/exclusive-the-metals-companys-plans-extract-minerals-from-seabed/>.
- [45] Scarminach, Shaine. “Diving Into the History of Seabed Mining.” *Edge Effects*, 19 Sept. 2019, <https://edgeeffects.net/seabed-mining/>.
- [46] “Seabed Mining in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction: Issues for Congress.” *Congress.Gov*, 2025, <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R47324>.
- [47] Sparenberg, Ole. “A Historical Perspective on Deep-Sea Mining for Manganese Nodules, 1965–2019.” *The Extractive Industries and Society*, vol. 6, no. 3, July 2019, pp. 842–54, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.exis.2019.04.001>.
- [48] Stanway, David. “Deep Sea Mining Impacts Still Felt Forty Years on, Study Shows.” *Reuters*, 27 Mar. 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/business/environment/deep-sea-mining-impacts-still-felt-forty-years-study-shows-2025-03-27/>.
- [49] “Structure and Mandate of the Council - International Seabed Authority.” *International Seabed Authority - International Seabed Authority*, 18 July 2022, <https://isa.org.jm/structure-and-mandate/>.
- [50] The. “The Clarion-Clipperton Zone.” *Pew.Org*, The Pew Charitable Trusts, 15 Dec. 2017, <https://www.pew.org/en/research-and-analysis/fact-sheets/2017/12/the-clarion-clipperton-zone>.
- [51] “The Mining Code - International Seabed Authority.” *International Seabed Authority - International Seabed Authority*, 17 Mar. 2022, <https://isa.org.jm/the-mining-code/>.
- [52] “The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.” *State.Gov*, 2026, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/s/d/2007/92921.htm>.
- [53] The White House. “Unleashing America’s Offshore Critical Minerals and Resources.” *The White House*, 24 Apr. 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/04/unleashing-americas-offshore-critical-minerals-and-resources/>.
- [54] United Nations. “United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.” *United Nations*, 1982, [https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention\\_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos\\_e.pdf](https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf).
- [55] US. “Deep Seabed Hard Minerals Mining.” *Noaa.Gov*, 2025, <https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/deep-seabed-mineral-resources/deep-seabed-mining/>.
- [56] “U.S. Interest in Seabed Mining in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction: Brief Background and Recent Developments.” *Congress.Gov*, 2025, <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF12608>.

## GMUNC XIII, Committee UNCLOS, Background Guide

- [57] “Welcome to Zscaler Directory Authentication.” *Nytimes.Com*, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/1977/07/17/archives/mining-the-wealth-of-the-ocean-deep-multinational-companies-are.html>.
- [58] “What Do We Know About the Composition of Polymetallic Nodules? - PNRA.” *Polymetallic Nodule Research Alliance*, 5 Nov. 2025, <https://noduleresearch.com/key-topics/what-do-we-know-about-the-composition-of-polymetallic-nodules/>.
- [59] “Why China, Not the United States, Is Making the Rules for Deep-Sea Mining.” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 2023, <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2023/12/why-china-not-the-united-states-is-making-the-rules-for-deep-sea-mining>.
- [60] “Why Ocean Exploration Matters - NOAA Ocean Exploration.” *NOAA Ocean Exploration*, 9 June 2025, <https://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/why-exploration-matters/>.