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## United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea Montego Bay, 10 December 1982

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**Presentation**

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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 (as of 24 July 2008). It is considered the “constitution of the oceans” and represents the result of an unprecedented, and so far never replicated, effort at codification and progressive development of international law. The more than 400 articles of the text and of the nine annexes that are an integral part of it are the most extensive and detailed product of codification activity States have ever attempted and successfully concluded under the aegis of the United Nations.

The historic circumstances that brought about the decision to engage in this codification endeavour are complex. They consist, on one side, in a process within the United Nations General Assembly concerning a specific aspect of the law of the sea, and, on the other side, in momentous changes in the structure of international society and in the uses of the sea. These two aspects merged in the decision taken by the General Assembly in 1970 (resolution 2750 (XXV) of 17 December 1970) to hold the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea.



The process within the United Nations General Assembly started in 1967 with the well known speech of the Maltese Ambassador Arvid Pardo. It focused on the mineral resources of the seabed beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, in particular the