

# 1 THE INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY AT A GLANCE







## At a glance

ISA provides an international and transparent forum to regulate and manage all mineral resources related activities and ensure protection of the marine environment in the “Area”, the deep seabed and subsoil beyond national jurisdiction, for the benefit of all humanity.



The research undertaken as part of exploration contracts in the Area is critical to realizing all aspects of the Blue Economy, including knowledge of marine biodiversity and ecological processes.



**168 members**  
167 States and the European Union

**92 observers**



Budget 2019–2020  
**US\$18,235,850**

- + **Voluntary trust funds** for members of the Council, the LTC and the FC to ensure participation from developing States, and for the Special Representative for the Enterprise
- + **Endowment Fund** for Marine Scientific Research in the Area

ISA was established under the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the subsequent 1994 Agreement.

### ISA MANDATE

The mission of ISA is to organize and control activities in the deep seabed beyond national jurisdiction to ensure the safe and rational management of its mineral resources in line with UNCLOS and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This means ensuring that commercial deep-seabed mining follows the highest environmental standards and that the economic benefits are equitably shared among all States.

## ISA & the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development



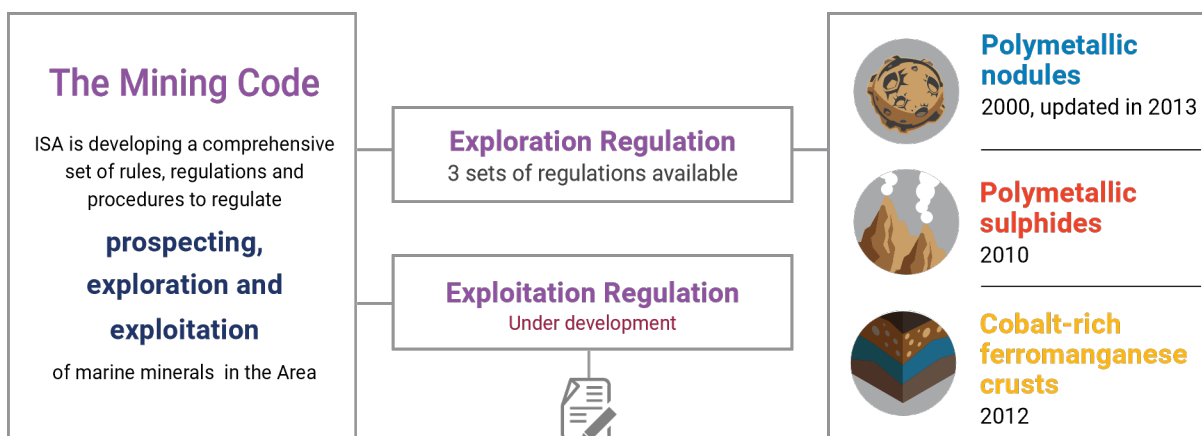
ISA has registered 7 voluntary commitments to support the implementation of SDG 14

- 1 Enhancing the role of women in marine scientific research  
#OceanAction15467
- 2 SG's Award for Excellence in Deep-Sea Research  
#OceanAction15796
- 3 Deep-sea long-term observatories  
#OceanAction17746
- 4 Deep-sea taxonomic atlases  
#OceanAction17776
- 5 Abyssal Initiative for Blue Growth  
#OceanAction16538
- 6 Supporting Africa's Blue Economy  
#OceanAction16374
- 7 Mapping Africa's deep-sea resources  
#OceanAction16494



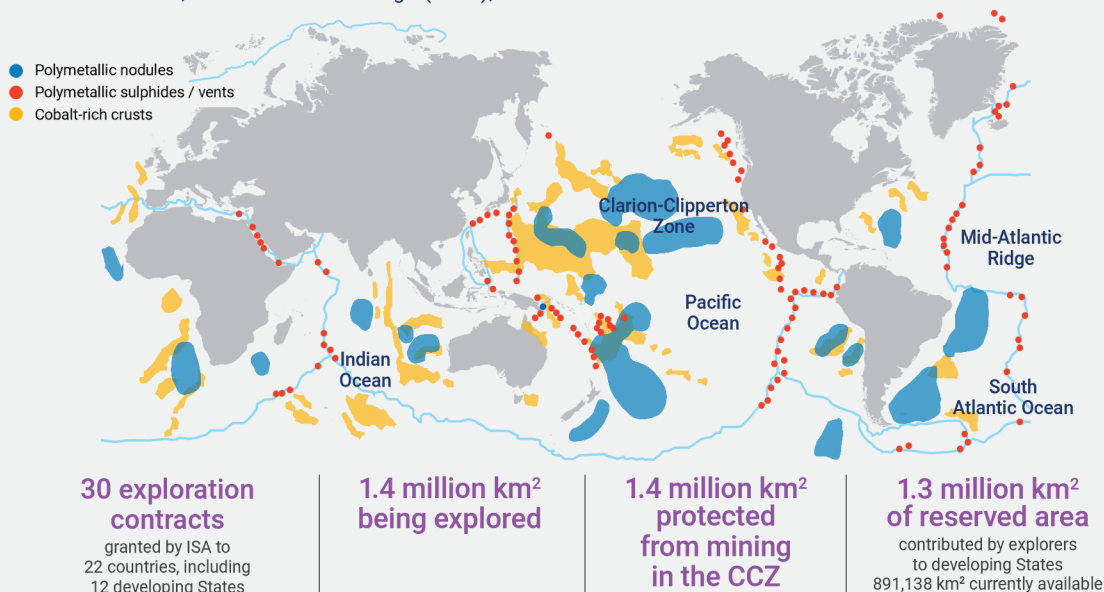
ISA contributes toward the implementation of 9 of the 17 SDGs





## Global distribution of seafloor mineral resources

Areas being explored under contract to the ISA are located in the Clarion-Clipperton Zone (CCZ), the Indian Ocean, the Mid Atlantic Ridge (MAR), the South Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean



All data and information related to the deep seabed and the associated water column collected during exploration activities is systematically made available in ISA **DeepData** database.

## Strategic Plan 2019-2023

To realize its mandate, ISA has produced a Strategic Plan for the period 2019-2023 built around 9 strategic directions

1. Realize the role of ISA in a global context
2. Strengthen the regulatory framework for activities in the Area
3. Protect the marine environment
4. Promote and encourage marine scientific research in the Area
5. Build capacity for developing States
6. Ensure fully integrated participation by developing States
7. Ensure equitable sharing of financial and other economic benefits
8. Improve the organizational performance of ISA
9. Commit to transparency



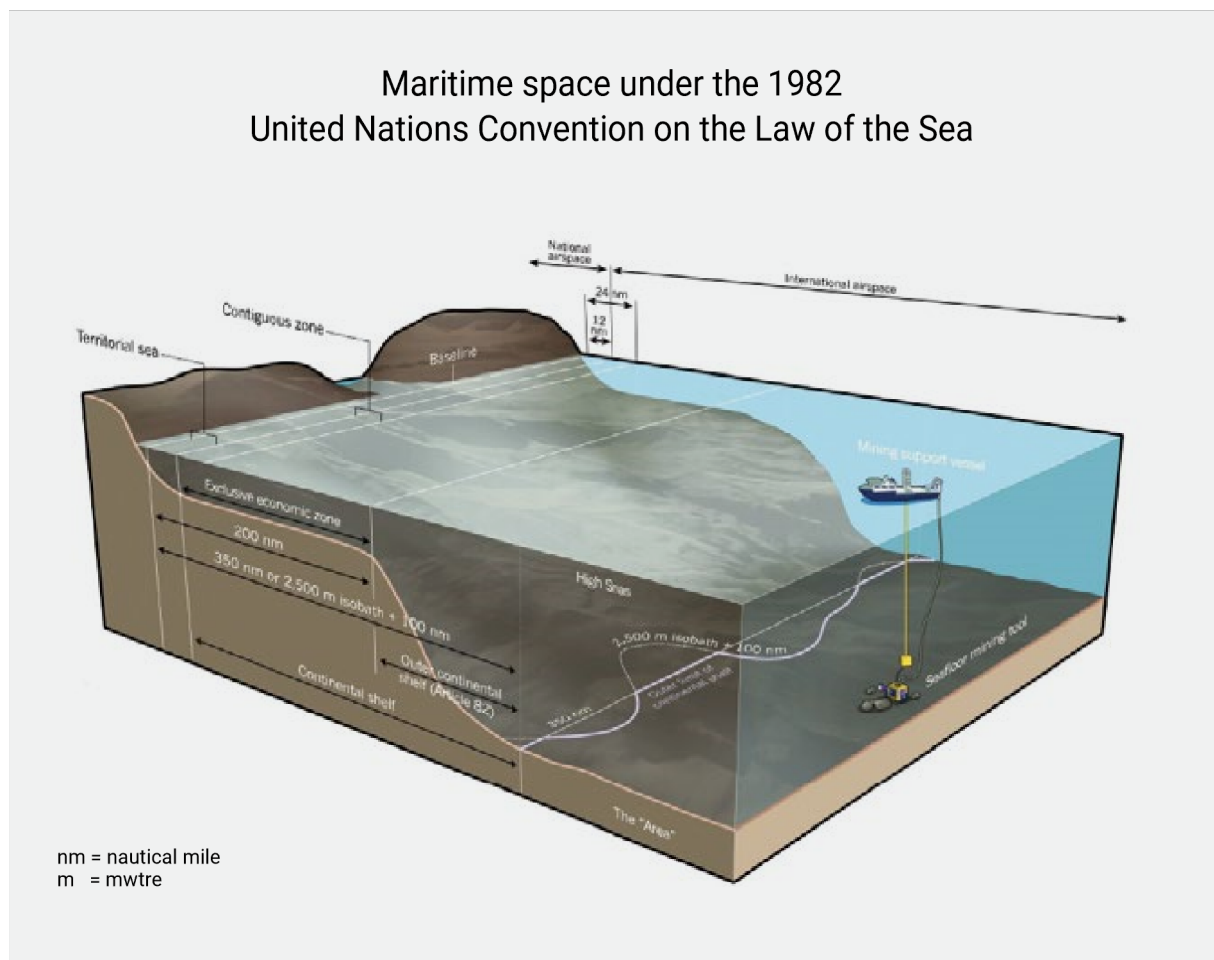
## The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the 1994 Agreement

The International Seabed Authority (ISA) is an autonomous international organization that was established in 1994 under UNCLOS and the subsequent 1994 Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of UNCLOS (1994 Agreement).

It is the organization through which States parties to UNCLOS organize and control activities in the "Area".

ISA thus has the exclusive mandate to manage deep-sea mineral resources for the benefit of humankind.

ISA has a number of other obligations, including to take necessary measures with respect to activities in the Area to ensure effective protection of the marine environment from harmful effects which may arise from such activities,<sup>1</sup> to distribute to States parties payments or in-kind contributions derived from exploitation of non-living resources of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles,<sup>2</sup> and to promote and encourage marine scientific research concerning the Area and its resources as well as co-ordinate and disseminate the results of research and analysis when available.<sup>3</sup>



The Area is defined as the seabed and ocean floor and subsoil thereof beyond the limits of national jurisdiction.

<sup>1</sup> UNCLOS, art.145.

<sup>2</sup> UNCLOS, art.82 (4).

<sup>3</sup> UNCLOS, art.143 (2).



## Strategic Plan and High-Level Action Plan 2019-2023

The ISA Strategic Plan<sup>4</sup> and corresponding High-Level Action Plan<sup>5</sup> provide an overview of the key priorities and high-level actions needed to achieve the strategic objectives of the organization for the period 2019 to 2023.

The plan includes nine strategic directions that will guide ISA work in the context of global challenges and the SDGs. An update on the implementation of the Strategic Plan is presented on pages 22-46.

## Membership

All parties to UNCLOS are automatically members of ISA.<sup>6</sup> As of June 2020, there were 168 parties to UNCLOS (167 States and the European Union) and thus 168 members of ISA.

On the same date, there were 150 parties to the 1994 Agreement (149 States and the European Union). There are therefore still 18 members of ISA (see table p.15) that became parties to UNCLOS before the adoption of the 1994 Agreement and that have yet to become parties to it.

Since Part XI of UNCLOS and the 1994 Agreement are to be interpreted and applied together as a single instrument, the provisions of the 1994 Agreement shall prevail in the event of any inconsistency between the two. Although members of ISA that are not parties to the 1994 Agreement necessarily participate in the work of ISA, becoming a party to the 1994 Agreement would remove any potential conflict and they are strongly encouraged to become parties at the earliest opportunity.

## Permanent missions

As of June 2020, 27 States and the European Union maintained permanent missions to ISA (see table p.15). The Secretary-General holds regular briefing sessions for the permanent missions on the progress of ISA work.

## Protocol on Privileges and Immunities

The Protocol on the Privileges and Immunities of ISA was adopted by the Assembly on 27 March 1998 and entered into force on 31 March 2003.

As of June 2020, 47 members are parties to the Protocol while a further 11 States have signed but not yet ratified it (see table p.15).



Photo: Franz Dejon/IISD

<sup>4</sup> ISBA/24/A/10.

<sup>5</sup> ISBA/25/A/15.

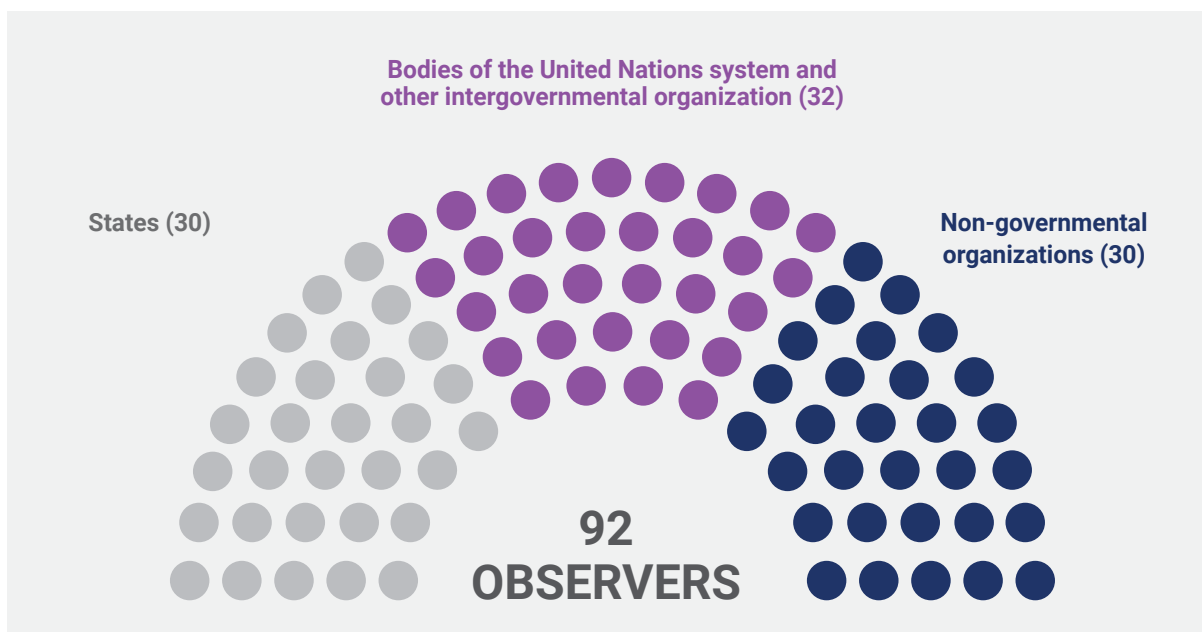
<sup>6</sup> UNCLOS, art.156 (2).



## Observers

ISA collaborates with key stakeholders from governments and the private sector, international and regional organization, civil society and academia. As of June 2020, ISA has granted observer status to 30 States that are not party to UNCLOS. In addition, 32 bodies of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental

organization as well as 30 non-governmental organizations also have observer status, enabling them to participate in meetings of the Council and the Assembly. During the 25<sup>th</sup> session, in 2019, the Assembly approved the guidelines for applications for observer status for non-governmental organizations.<sup>7</sup>



<b>States (30)</b> ●	<b>Bodies of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organization (32)</b> ●	<b>Non-governmental organizations (30)</b> ●
Afghanistan	United Nations	Conservation International
Andorra	United Nations Environment Programme	Greenpeace International
Bhutan	United Nations Development Programme	International Association of Drilling Contractors
Burundi	International Labour Organization	International Ocean Institute
Cambodia	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	InterRidge
Central African Republic	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Law of the Sea Institute
Colombia	World Health Organization	World Wildlife Fund International
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	World Bank	International Cable Protection Committee
El Salvador	International Monetary Fund	Center for Oceans Law and Policy, University of Virginia School of Law


<sup>7</sup> ISBA/25/A/16.

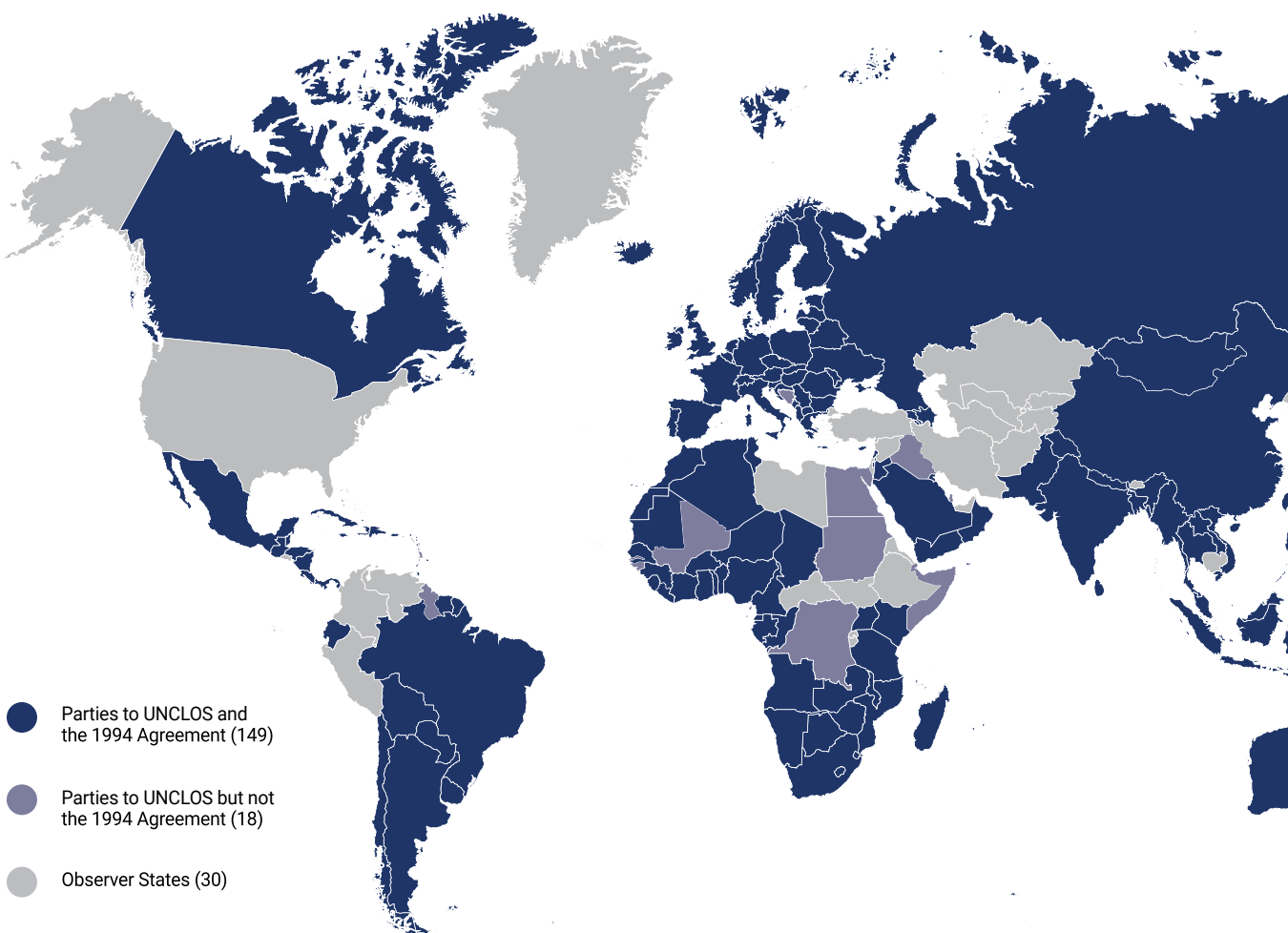


<b>States (30)</b> ●	<b>Bodies of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organization (32)</b> ●	<b>Non-governmental organizations (30)</b> ●
Eritrea	International Civil Aviation Organization	Deep Sea Conservation Coalition
Ethiopia	Universal Postal Union	Committee for Mineral Reserves International Reporting Standards
Holy See	International Telecommunication Union	World Ocean Council
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	World Meteorological Organization	Sargasso Sea Commission
Israel	International Maritime Organization	Fish Reef Project
Kazakhstan	World Intellectual Property Organization	International Dialogue on Underwater Munitions
Kyrgyzstan	International Fund for Agricultural Development	Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary
Libya	United Nations Industrial Development Organization	African Minerals Development Centre
Liechtenstein	International Atomic Energy Agency	Durham University's Centre for Borders Research
Peru	Commonwealth	RESOLVE
Rwanda	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission	The Pew Charitable Trusts
San Marino	Inter-American Development Bank	Deep Ocean Stewardship Initiative
South Sudan	International Hydrographic Organization	International Policy Laboratory of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Syrian Arab Republic	International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund	Center for Polar and Deep Ocean Development, Shanghai Jiao Tong University
Tajikistan	InterOceanmetal Joint Organization	International Marine Minerals Society
Turkey	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources	Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies
Turkmenistan	OSPAR Commission	Mining Standards International
United Arab Emirates	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries	Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology
United States of America	Permanent Commission for the South Pacific	Earthworks
Uzbekistan	Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity	Advisory Committee on Protection of the Sea
Venezuela	The Pacific Community	Ocean Society of India
	World Trade Organization	
	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme	

*Bodies that may participate as observers in the Assembly are described in rule 82, paragraph 1 of the Rules of procedure of the Assembly.*



168	150	47 Parties	11 Signatories	27	10	30
						
<b>MEMBERS</b> 167 States and the European Union	<b>MEMBERS PARTIES TO THE 1994 AGREEMENT</b> 149 States and the European Union	<b>PROTOCOL ON PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES</b>	<b>MEMBERS WITH A PERMANENT MISSION</b>	<b>MEMBERS THAT HAVE MADE DEPOSITS IN LINE WITH ART.84 OF UNCLOS</b>	<b>OBSERVER STATES</b>	



### The Secretary-General continuously encourages:

- Relevant States to become parties to the 1994 Agreement at the earliest possible opportunity.
- Relevant members to take the necessary steps to become parties to the Protocol on Privileges and Immunities.
- All coastal States to deposit their charts or lists of coordinates as soon as possible after the establishment of the outer limit lines of their continental shelf.



## Member States



								
Albania								
Algeria								
Angola								
Antigua and Barbuda								
Argentina								
Armenia								
Australia								
Austria								
Azerbaijan								
Bahamas								
Bahrain								
Bangladesh								
Barbados								
Belarus								
Belgium								
Belize								
Benin								
Bolivia								
(Plurinational State of)								
Bosnia and Herzegovina								
Botswana								
Brazil								
Brunei Darussalam								
Bulgaria								
Burkina Faso								
Cabo Verde								
Cameroon								
Canada								
Chad								
Chile								
China								
Comoros								
Congo								
Cook Islands								
Costa Rica								
Côte d'Ivoire								
Croatia								
Cuba								
Cyprus								
Czech Republic								
DR Congo								
Denmark								
Djibouti								
Dominica								
Dominican Republic								
Ecuador								
Egypt								
Equatorial Guinea								
Estonia								
Eswatini								
Fiji								
Finland								
France								
Gabon								
Gambia								
Georgia								
Germany								
Ghana								
Greece								
Grenada								
Guatemala								
Guinea								
Guinea-Bissau								
Guyana								
Haiti								
Honduras								
Hungary								
Iceland								
India								
Indonesia								
Iraq								
Ireland								
Italy								
Jamaica								
Japan								
Jordan								
Kenya								
Kiribati								
Kuwait								
Lao PDR								
Latvia								
Lebanon								
Lesotho								
Liberia								
Lithuania								
Luxembourg								
Madagascar								
Malawi								
Malaysia								
Maldives								
Mali								
Malta								
Marshall Islands								
Mauritania								
Mauritius								
Mexico								
Micronesia								
Monaco								
Mongolia								
Montenegro								
Morocco								
Mozambique								
Myanmar								
Namibia								
Nauru								
Nepal								
Netherlands								
New Zealand								
Nicaragua								
Niger								
Nigeria								
Niue								
North Macedonia								
Norway								
Oman								
Pakistan								
Palau								
Panama								
Papua New Guinea								
Paraguay								
Philippines								
Poland								
Portugal								
Qatar								
Republic of Korea								
Republic of Moldova								
Romania								
Russian Federation								
Saint Kitts and Nevis								
Saint Lucia								
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines								
Samoa								
Sao Tome and Principe								
Saudi Arabia								
Senegal								
Serbia								
Seychelles								
Sierra Leone								
Singapore								
Slovakia								
Slovenia								
Solomon Islands								
Somalia								
South Africa								
Spain								
Sri Lanka								
Sudan								
Suriname								
Sweden								
Switzerland								
State of Palestine								
Thailand								
Timor-Leste								
Togo								
Tonga								
Trinidad and Tobago								
Tunisia								
Tuvalu								
Uganda								
Ukraine								
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland								
Tanzania								
Uruguay								
Vanuatu								
Viet Nam								
Yemen								
Zambia								
Zimbabwe								

\* France: charts deposited with respect to Martinique, Guadeloupe, Guyana, New Caledonia and the Kerguelen Islands



