


The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea: Impact and Implementation

Proceedings

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PREFACE

The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982 remained open for signature until December 9, 1984. By that time it had been signed by 159 states and had been ratified by fourteen states. It will enter into force only if a further forty-six states ratify or accede to it. The prospects for its early entry into force have not been improved by the decision of the governments of three important western states, the Federal Republic of Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States, not to sign the Convention, because of dissatisfaction with its regime for seabed mining. It seems not unlikely that the rate of ratification of the Convention will be influenced by these decisions, as well as by the outcome of the ongoing labors in the Preparatory Commission to develop the detailed rules for the exploitation of the Area beyond the limits of national jurisdiction.

The issue of seabed mining has featured prominently in recent annual Conferences of the Law of the Sea Institute. Partly for this reason, partly because further progress must await the outcome of the Preparatory Commission's work, this topic has been considered only incidentally at the Nineteenth Annual Conference. It is clear that whether the Convention enters into force or not, and irrespective of the timing of that event and of the number of adherent states, the substance of the Convention will have a major impact upon the further development of international customary law and many of its rules will be informally "implemented" by their incorporation in municipal law. This Conference is concerned to examine the likely impact and implementation of the Convention in the various fields covered by the seven panels and the Special Symposium.

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