

International Organization of the Francophonie

The International Organization of the Francophonie represents 63 countries and provinces/regions (including ten with observer status) using French as an official language. Objectives include the promotion of peace, democracy, and economic and social development, through political and technical co-operation. The Secretary-General is based in Paris.

Members. Albania, Andorra, Belgium, Benin, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Canada–New Brunswick, Canada–Quebec, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Republic of the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Dominica, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, France, French Community of Belgium, Gabon, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Laos, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Moldova, Monaco, Morocco, Niger, Romania, Rwanda, St Lucia, São Tomé e Príncipe, Senegal, Seychelles, Switzerland, Togo, Tunisia, Vanuatu, Vietnam. *Observers.* Armenia, Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia.

Headquarters: 28 rue de Bourgogne, 75007 Paris, France.

Website: <http://www.francophonie.org>

Secretary-General: Abdou Diouf (Senegal).

International Road Federation (IRF)

The IRF is a non-profit, non-political service organization whose purpose is to encourage better road and transportation systems worldwide and to help apply technology and management practices to give maximum economic and social returns from national road investments.

Founded following the Second World War, over the years the IRF has led major global road infrastructure developments, including achieving 1,000 km of new roads in Mexico in the 1950s, and promoting the Pan-American Highway linking North and South America. It publishes *World Road Statistics*, as well as road research studies, including a 140-country inventory of road and transport research in co-operation with the US Bureau of Public Roads.

Headquarters: 2 chemin de Blandonnet, CH-1214 Vernier/GE, Switzerland.

Website: <http://www.irfnet.org>

Director-General (Geneva/Brussels): Tony Pearce (UK).

Director-General (Washington, D.C.): C. Patrick Sankey (USA).

International Seabed Authority (ISA)

The ISA is an autonomous international organization established under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) of 1982 and the 1994 Agreement relating to the implementation of Part XI of the above Convention. It came into existence on 16 Nov. 1994 and became fully operational in June 1996.

The administrative expenses are met from assessed contributions from its members. Membership numbered 149 in Jan. 2006; the budget for the biennium 2003–04 was US\$10,509,700.

The Convention on the Law of the Sea covers almost all ocean space and its uses: navigation and overflight, resource exploration and exploitation, conservation and pollution, fishing and shipping. It entitles coastal states and inhabited islands to proclaim a 200-mile exclusive economic zone or continental shelf (which may be larger). Its 320 Articles and nine Annexes constitute a guide for behaviour by states in the world's oceans, defining maritime zones, laying down rules for drawing sea boundaries, assigning legal rights, duties and responsibilities to States, and providing machinery for the settlement of disputes.

Organization. The Assembly, consisting of representatives from all member states, is the supreme organ. The 36-member Council, elected by the Assembly, includes the four largest importers or consumers of seabed minerals, four largest investors in seabed minerals, four major exporters of the same, six developing countries representing special interests and 18 members from all the geographical regions. The Council is the executive organ of the Authority. There are also two subsidiary bodies: the Legal and Technical Commission (currently 24 experts) and the Finance Committee (currently 15 experts). The Secretariat serves all the bodies of the Authority and under the 1994 Agreement is performing functions of the Enterprise (until such time as it starts to operate independently of the Secretariat). The Enterprise is the organ through which the ISA carries out deep seabed activities directly or through joint ventures.

Activities. In July 2000 the ISA adopted the Regulations for Prospecting and Exploration for Polymetallic Nodules in the Area. Pursuant thereto, it signed exploration contracts with seven contractors who have submitted plans of work for deep seabed exploration. These are: Institut Français de Recherche pour l'Exploitation de la Mer (IFREMER) and Association Française pour l'Etude de la Recherche des Nodules (AFERNOD), France; Deep Ocean Resources Development Co. Ltd (DORD), Japan; State Enterprise Yuzhmorgeologiya, Russian Federation; China Ocean Minerals Research and Development Association (COMRA); Interoceanmetal Joint Organization (IOM), a consortium sponsored by Bulgaria, Cuba, Czech Republic, Poland, Russian Federation and Slovakia; the government of South Korea; and the government of India.

Between 1998 and 2002 the ISA organized five workshops: the development of guidelines for the assessment of the possible environmental impacts arising from exploration for polymetallic nodules; proposed technologies for deep seabed mining of polymetallic nodules; the available knowledge on mineral resources other than polymetallic nodules in the deep seabed; a standardized system of data interpretation; prospects for international collaboration in marine environmental research. While continuing to develop a database on polymetallic nodules (POLYDAT), the Authority has also made significant progress towards the establishment of a central data repository for all marine minerals in the deep seabed.

Headquarters: 14–20 Port Royal St., Kingston, Jamaica.

Website: <http://www.isa.org.jm>

Secretary-General: Satya N. Nandan (Fiji Islands).

Publications. *Handbook 2005; plus selected decisions and documents from the Authority's sessions; various others.*

International Telecommunications Satellite Organization (ITSO)

Founded in 1964 as Intelsat, the organization was the world's first commercial communications satellite operator. Today, with