

United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea

Geneva, Switzerland
24 February to 27 April 1958

Documents:
A/CONF.13/L.17/Add.1

Text of the articles and draft resolutions adopted by the Second Committee

Extract from the *Official Records of the United Nations Conference on the Law of The Sea, Volume IV (Second Committee (High Seas: General Regime))*

DOCUMENT A/CONF.13/C.2/L.121/Rev.1**Argentina, Ceylon, India and Mexico: proposal**

[Original text : English and Spanish]
[12 April 1958]

Additional article

1. Every State shall draw up regulations to prevent pollution of the seas from the dumping of radioactive waste, taking into account the norms and regulations formulated by the competent international organizations.
2. All States shall co-operate with the competent international organizations in drawing up regulations with a view to the prevention of pollution of the seas or air space above, resulting from experiments or activities with radioactive materials or other harmful agents.

DOCUMENT A/CONF.13/C.2/L.121/Rev.2**Argentina, Ceylon, India and Mexico: proposal**

[Original text : English and Spanish]
[14 April 1958]

Additional article

1. Every State shall take measures to prevent pollution of the seas from the dumping of radioactive waste, taking into account any standards and regulations which may be formulated by the competent international organizations.
2. All States shall co-operate with the competent international organizations in taking measures for the prevention of pollution of the seas or air space above, resulting from any activities with radioactive materials or other harmful agents.

DOCUMENT A/CONF.13/C.2/L.150**Union of South Africa: draft resolution**

[Original text : English]
[15 April 1958]

The Second Committee

1. *Recommends* to the plenary session of the Conference that the draft articles adopted by the Committee be embodied in a separate instrument on the régime of the high seas which shall take the form of a declaration by the Conference that the provisions therein set forth are considered by the United Nations Conference on the Law

of the Sea, met in Geneva from 24 February to 26 April 1958, by a majority of not less than two-thirds of States present and voting, as an expression of existing principles of international law on the Régime of the High Seas.

2. *Requests* its drafting committee to draw up a suitable preamble to such an instrument and to submit the text of the preamble and the final texts of the draft articles to the Committee for approval at its next meeting.

DOCUMENT A/CONF.13/L.17/Add.1 ***Text of the articles and draft resolutions adopted by the Second Committee**

[Original text : English, French and Spanish]
[22 April 1958]

I*Article 26*

The term "high seas" means all parts of the sea that are not included in the territorial sea, as contemplated by part I, or in the internal waters of a State.

Article 27

The high seas being open to all nations, no State may validly purport to subject any part of them to its sovereignty. Freedom of the high seas is exercised under the conditions laid down by these articles and by the other rules of international law. It comprises, *inter alia* :

* Incorporating document A/CONF.13/L.17/Add.1/Corr.1.

(1) Freedom of navigation ;

- (2) Freedom of fishing ;
- (3) Freedom to lay submarine cables and pipelines ;
- (4) Freedom to fly over the high seas.

These freedoms, and others which are recognized by the general principles of international law, shall be exercised by all States with reasonable regard to the interests of other States in their exercise of the freedom of the high seas.

Article 28

Every State has the right to sail ships under its flag on the high seas.

Article 29

1. Each State shall fix the conditions for the grant of its nationality to ships, for the registration of ships in its territory, and for the right to fly its flag. Ships have the nationality of the State whose flag they are entitled to fly. Nevertheless, for purposes of recognition of the national character of the ship by other States, there must exist a genuine link between the State and the ship ; in particular, the State must effectively exercise its jurisdiction and control in administrative, technical and social matters over ships flying its flag.

2. Each State shall issue to ships to which it has granted the right to fly its flag documents to that effect.

Article 30

Ships shall sail under the flag of one State only and, save in exceptional cases expressly provided for in international treaties or in these articles, shall be subject to its exclusive jurisdiction on the high seas. A ship may not change its flag during a voyage or while in a port of call, save in the case of a real transfer of ownership or change of registry.

A ship which sails under the flags of two or more States, using them according to convenience, may not claim any of the nationalities in question with respect to any other State, and may be assimilated to a ship without nationality.

Article 31

The provisions of the preceding articles do not prejudice the question of ships employed on the official service of an intergovernmental organization flying the flag of the organization.

Article 32

1. Warships on the high seas have complete immunity from the jurisdiction of any State other than the flag State.

2. For the purposes of these articles, the term "warship" means a ship belonging to the naval forces of a State and bearing the external marks distinguishing warships of its nationality, under the command of an officer duly commissioned by the government and whose name appears in the Navy List, and manned by a crew who are under regular naval discipline.

Article 33

Ships owned or operated by a State and used only on government non-commercial service shall, on the high

seas, have complete immunity from the jurisdiction of any State other than the flag State.

Article 34

1. Every State shall take such measures for ships under its flag as are necessary to ensure safety at sea with regard, *inter alia*, to :

- (a) The use of signals, the maintenance of communications and the prevention of collisions ;
- (b) The manning of ships and labour conditions for crews taking into account the applicable international labour instruments ;
- (c) The construction, equipment and seaworthiness of ships.

2. In taking such measures each State is required to conform to generally accepted international standards and to take any steps which may be necessary to ensure their observance.

Article 35

1. In the event of a collision or of any other incident of navigation concerning a ship on the high seas, involving the penal or disciplinary responsibility of the master or of any other person in the service of the ship, no penal or disciplinary proceedings may be instituted against such persons except before the judicial or administrative authorities either of the flag State or of the State of which such person is a national.

2. In disciplinary matters, the State which has issued a master's certificate or a certificate of competence or licence shall alone be competent, after due legal process, to pronounce the withdrawal of such certificates, even if the holder is not a national of the State which issued them.

3. No arrest or detention of the ship, even as a measure of investigation, shall be ordered by any authorities other than those of the flag State.

Article 36

Every State shall require the master of a ship sailing under its flag, in so far as he can do so without serious danger to the ship, the crew or the passengers,

(a) To render assistance to any person found at sea in danger of being lost ;

(b) To proceed with all possible speed to the rescue of persons in distress if informed of their need of assistance, in so far as such action may reasonably be expected of him ;

(c) After a collision, to render assistance to the other ship, her crew and her passengers and, where possible, to inform the other ship of the name of his own ship, her port of registry and the nearest port at which she will call.

Every coastal State shall promote the establishment and maintenance of an adequate and effective search and rescue service regarding safety on and over the sea and — where circumstances so require — by way of mutual regional arrangements co-operate with neighbouring States for this purpose.

Article 37

Every State shall adopt effective measures to prevent and punish the transport of slaves in ships authorized to fly its flag, and to prevent the unlawful use of its flag for that purpose. Any slave taking refuge on board any ship, whatever its flag, shall *ipso facto* be free.

Article 38

All States shall co-operate to the fullest possible extent in the repression of piracy on the high seas or in any other place outside the jurisdiction of any State.

Article 39

Piracy consists of any of the following acts :

(1) Any illegal acts of violence, detention or any act of depredation, committed for private ends by the crew or the passengers of a private ship or a private aircraft, and directed :

(a) On the high seas, against another ship or aircraft, or against persons or property on board such ship or aircraft ;

(b) Against a ship, aircraft, persons or property in a place outside the jurisdiction of any State ;

(2) Any act of voluntary participation in the operation of a ship or of an aircraft with knowledge of facts making it a pirate ship or aircraft ;

(3) Any act of inciting or of intentionally facilitating an act described in sub-paragraph 1 or sub-paragraph 2 of this article.

Article 40

The acts of piracy, as defined in article 39, committed by a warship, government ship or government aircraft whose crew has mutinied and taken control of the ship or aircraft are assimilated to acts committed by a private ship.

Article 41

A ship or aircraft is considered a pirate ship or aircraft if it is intended by the persons in dominant control to be used for the purpose of committing one of the acts referred to in article 39. The same applies if the ship or aircraft has been used to commit any such act, so long as it remains under the control of the persons guilty of that act.

Article 42

A ship or aircraft may retain its nationality although it has become a pirate ship or aircraft. The retention or loss of nationality is determined by the law of the State from which the nationality was originally derived.

Article 43

On the high seas, or in any other place outside the jurisdiction of any State, every State may seize a pirate ship or aircraft, or a ship taken by piracy and under the control of pirates, and arrest the persons and seize the property on board. The courts of the State which carried out the seizure may decide upon the penalties to be imposed, and may also determine the action to be taken with regard to the ships, aircraft or property, subject to the rights of third parties acting in good faith.

Article 44

Where the seizure of a ship or aircraft on suspicion of piracy has been effected without adequate grounds, the State making the seizure shall be liable to the State the nationality of which is possessed by the ship or aircraft, for any loss or damage caused by the seizure.

Article 45

A seizure on account of piracy may be carried out only by warships or military aircraft, or other ships or aircraft on government service authorized to that effect.

Article 46

1. Except where acts of interference derive from powers conferred by treaty, a warship which encounters a foreign merchant ship on the high seas is not justified in boarding her unless there is reasonable ground for suspecting :

(a) That the ship is engaged in piracy ; or

(b) That while in the maritime zones treated as suspect in the international conventions for the abolition of the slave trade, the ship is engaged in that trade ; or

(c) That, though flying a foreign flag or refusing to show its flag, the ship is, in reality, of the same nationality as the warship.

2. In the cases provided for in sub-paragraphs (a), (b) and (c) above, the warship may proceed to verify the ship's right to fly its flag. To this end, it may send a boat under the command of an officer to the suspected ship. If suspicion remains after the documents have been checked, it may proceed to a further examination on board the ship, which must be carried out with all possible consideration.

3. If the suspicions prove to be unfounded, and provided that the ship boarded has not committed any act justifying them, it shall be compensated for any loss or damage that may have been sustained.

Article 47

1. The hot pursuit of a foreign ship may be undertaken when the competent authorities of the coastal State have good reason to believe that the ship has violated the laws and regulations of that State. Such pursuit must be commenced when the foreign ship or one of its boats is within the internal waters or the territorial sea or the contiguous zone of the pursuing State, and may only be continued outside the territorial sea or the contiguous zone if the pursuit has not been interrupted. It is not necessary that, at the time when the foreign ship within the territorial sea or the contiguous zone receives the order to stop, the ship giving the order should likewise be within the territorial sea or the contiguous zone. If the foreign ship is within a contiguous zone, as defined in article 66, the pursuit may only be undertaken if there has been a violation of the rights for the protection of which the zone was established.

2. The right of hot pursuit ceases as soon as the ship pursued enters the territorial sea of its own country or of a third State.

3. Hot pursuit is not deemed to have begun unless the pursuing ship has satisfied itself by such practicable means as may be available that the ship pursued or one of its boats or other craft working as a team and using the ship pursued as a mother ship are within the limits of the territorial sea, or as the case may be within the contiguous zone. The pursuit may only be commenced after a visual or auditory signal to stop has been given at a distance which enables it to be seen or heard by the foreign ship.

4. The right of hot pursuit may be exercised only by warships or military aircraft, or other ships or aircraft on government service specially authorized to that effect.

5. Where hot pursuit is effected by an aircraft :

(a) The provisions of paragraphs 1 to 3 of the present article shall apply *mutatis mutandis* ;

(b) The aircraft giving the order to stop must itself actively pursue the ship until a ship or aircraft of the coastal State, summoned by the aircraft, arrives to take over the pursuit, unless the aircraft is itself able to arrest the ship. It does not suffice to justify an arrest on the high seas that the ship was merely sighted by the aircraft as an offender or suspected offender, if it was not both ordered to stop and pursued by the aircraft itself or other

aircraft or ships which continue the pursuit without interruption.

6. The release of a ship arrested within the jurisdiction of a State and escorted to a port of that State for the purposes of an inquiry before the competent authorities, may not be claimed solely on the ground that the ship, in the course of its voyage, was escorted across a portion of the high seas, if the circumstances rendered this necessary.

7. Where a ship has been stopped or arrested on the high seas in circumstances which do not justify the exercise of the right of hot pursuit, it shall be compensated for any loss or damage that may have been thereby sustained.

Article 48

Every State shall draw up regulations to prevent pollution of the seas by the discharge of oil from ships or pipelines or resulting from the exploitation and exploration of the seabed and its subsoil, taking account of existing treaty provisions on the subject.

New article relating to the pollution of the sea by radioactive waste (to be inserted immediately after article 48)

1. Every State shall take measures to prevent pollution of the seas from the dumping of radioactive waste, taking into account any standards and regulations which may be formulated by the competent international organizations.

2. All States shall co-operate with the competent international organizations in taking measures for the prevention of pollution of the seas or air space above, resulting from any activities with radioactive materials or other harmful agents.

Article 61

1. All States shall be entitled to lay submarine cables and pipelines on the bed of the high seas.

2. Subject to its right to take reasonable measures for the exploration of the continental shelf and the exploitation of its natural resources, the coastal State may not impede the laying or maintenance of such cables or pipelines.

3. When laying such cables or pipelines the State in question shall pay due regard to cables or pipelines already in position on the seabed. In particular, possibilities of repairing existing cables or pipelines shall not be prejudiced.

Article 62

Every State shall take the necessary legislative measures to provide that the breaking or injury by a ship flying its flag or by a person subject to its jurisdiction of a submarine cable beneath the high seas done wilfully or through culpable negligence, in such a manner as to be liable to interrupt or obstruct telegraphic or telephonic communications, and similarly the breaking or injury of a submarine pipeline or high-voltage power cable shall be a punishable offence. This provision shall not apply to any break or injury caused by persons who acted merely with the legitimate object of saving their lives or their ships, after having taken all necessary precautions to avoid such break or injury.

Article 63

Every State shall take the necessary legislative measures to provide that, if persons subject to its jurisdiction who

are the owners of a cable or pipeline beneath the high seas, in laying or repairing that cable or pipeline, cause a break in or injury to another cable or pipeline, they shall bear the cost of the repairs.

Article 64

[Deleted.]

Article 65

Every State shall take the necessary legislative measures to ensure that the owners of ships who can prove that they have sacrificed an anchor, a net or any other fishing gear, in order to avoid injuring a submarine cable or pipeline shall be indemnified by the owner of the cable or pipeline, provided that the owner of the ship has taken all reasonable precautionary measures beforehand.

II

Draft resolution relating to article 48

The United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, Recognizing the need for international action in the field of disposal of radioactive wastes in the sea,

Taking into account action which has been proposed by various national and international bodies and studies which have been published on the subject,

Noting that the International Commission for Radiological Protection has made recommendations regarding the maximum permissible concentration of radio isotopes in the human body and maximum permissible concentration in air and water,

Recommends that the International Atomic Energy Agency, in consultation with existing groups and established organs having acknowledged competence in the field of radiological protection should pursue whatever studies and take whatever action is necessary to assist States in controlling the discharge or release of radioactive materials to the sea, promulgating standards, and in drawing up internationally acceptable regulations to prevent pollution of the sea by radioactive material in amounts which would adversely affect man and his marine resources.

III

Draft resolution relating to nuclear tests (in connexion with article 27)

The United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, Recalling that the Conference has been convened by the General Assembly of the United Nations in accordance with resolution 1105 (XI) of 21 February 1957,

Recognizing that there is a serious and genuine apprehension on the part of many States that nuclear explosions constitute an infringement of the freedom of the seas, and

Recognizing that the question of nuclear tests and production is still under review by the General Assembly under various resolutions on the subject and by the Disarmament Commission, and is at present under constant review and discussion by the governments concerned,

Decides to refer this matter to the General Assembly for appropriate action.

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