

The International Court of Justice holds a hearing in the Great Hall of Justice.

(The Hague, Netherlands; April 2022) © UN Photo/Frank van Beek

Promotion of Justice and International Law

KEY PROGRAMMES

Legal services for the United Nations as a whole

Legal services for United Nations organs and funds and programmes

Extraordinary international accountability mechanisms

Custody, registration and publication of treaties

Development and codification of international law

Law of the sea and ocean affairs

International trade

INDICATIVE RESOURCES

\$220M

\$104M regular assessed, \$4M peacekeeping assessed (2021/2022), \$90M other assessed and \$22M voluntary contributions

SELECT MANDATES

Charter of the United Nations

Progressive development and codification of international law: International Law Commission, General Assembly resolutions 94 (1) and 77/103

Teaching, study, dissemination and wider appreciation of international law, General Assembly resolutions 2099 (XX) and 77/102

Strengthening and promoting the international treaty framework, General Assembly resolutions 97(1), 73/210 and 76/120

Progressive harmonization and unification of the law of international trade: United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, General Assembly resolutions 2205 (XXI) and 77/99

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, General Assembly resolutions 52/26, 77/118 and 77/248

Promotion and furtherance of international justice: General Assembly resolutions 57/228 B, 71/248 and 75/257 B; Security Council resolutions 1315 (2000), 1966 (2010), 1757 (2007) and 2379 (2017); and Human Rights Council resolution 39/2

SELECT ENTITIES

Office of Legal Affairs

International Court of Justice

International accountability mechanisms



António Guterres, Secretary-General, addresses the General Assembly to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the adoption and signature of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

(New York; December 2022) © UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

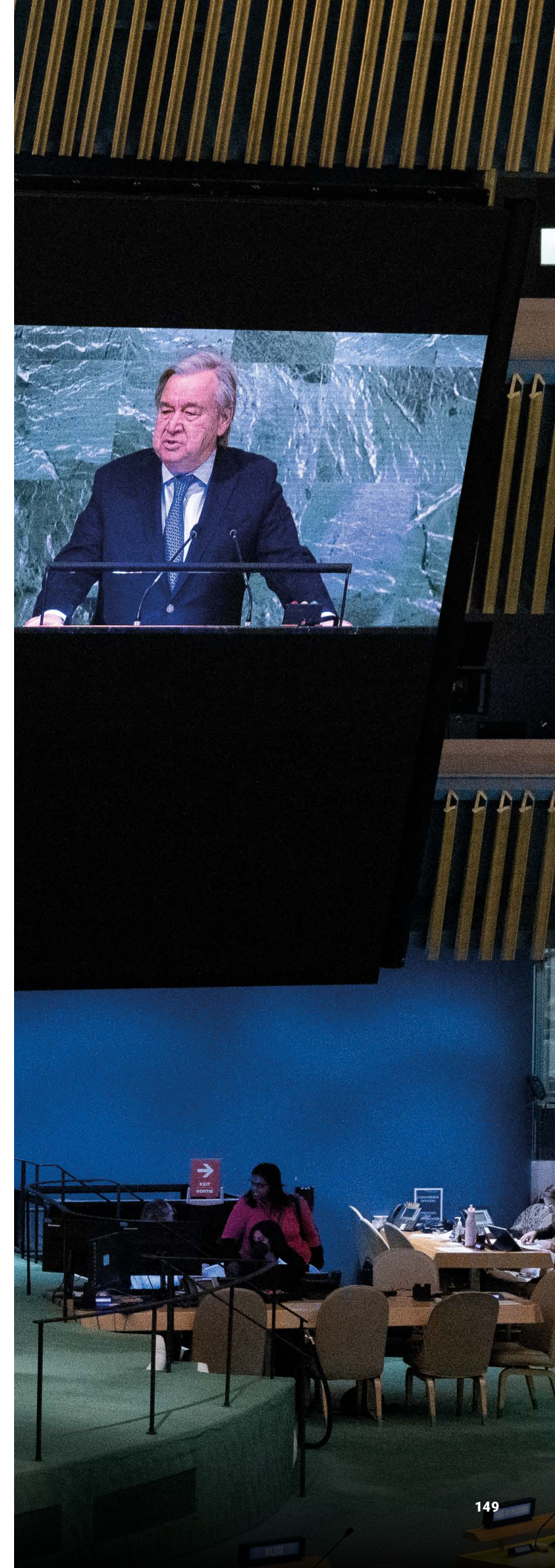


CONTEXT

The principles of justice and international law, as well as the peaceful settlement of disputes, are enshrined in the first two Articles of the Charter of the United Nations. These principles therefore constitute the very foundation upon which the international community cooperates.

KEY OBJECTIVES

The United Nations promotes justice and international law through various actions and mandates, such as those related to oceans and law of the sea, international trade, treaties and international agreements, peace operations, international tribunals and other international accountability mechanisms, and sanctions. In addition, the International Court of Justice, the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, settles legal disputes submitted by States and provides advisory opinions on legal questions.





“Yes, the United Nations is relevant. Yes, international law is relevant.”

Miguel de Serpa Soares, Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, the United Nations Legal Counsel

The Security Council votes in the election of a member of the International Court of Justice.

(New York; November 2022) © UN Photo/Manuel Elias



KEY OUTCOMES

The International Court of Justice considered high-profile cases and delivered judgments on the merits in the cases of *Democratic Republic of the Congo v. Uganda*, *Nicaragua v. Colombia* and *Chile v. Bolivia*. The Court was also seized of four new contentious cases, including the proceedings between Ukraine and the Russian Federation, in which the Court indicated provisional measures.

In December 2022, the General Assembly requested the International Court of Justice to provide an advisory opinion on the legal consequences arising from the policies and practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. In March 2023, the Assembly also requested an advisory opinion on the obligations of States in respect of climate change.

Other United Nations or United Nations-assisted tribunals continued their work. In June 2022, the Appeals Chamber of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon sentenced Hassan Habib Merhi and Hussein Hassan Oneissi, in relation to the 2005 attack in Beirut that killed the former Prime Minister of Lebanon Rafik Hariri and 21 others and injured 226 more. In September 2022, the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia affirmed the convictions and life sentence against Khieu Samphan for genocide against the Vietnamese population, crimes against humanity and grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions committed between 1975 and 1979. This ruling completed its final case.



In its final case, the Supreme Court Chamber of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia affirms the convictions and life sentence against Khieu Samphan for genocide, crimes against humanity and grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions.

(Phnom Penh, September 2022) © ECCC/Nhet Sokheng

Oceans and the law of the sea remained a priority for Member States. The second World Ocean Assessment provided scientific information on the critical role of oceans and seas as a basis for policymaking discussions on the triple planetary threats to achieving the 2030 Agenda: climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss.

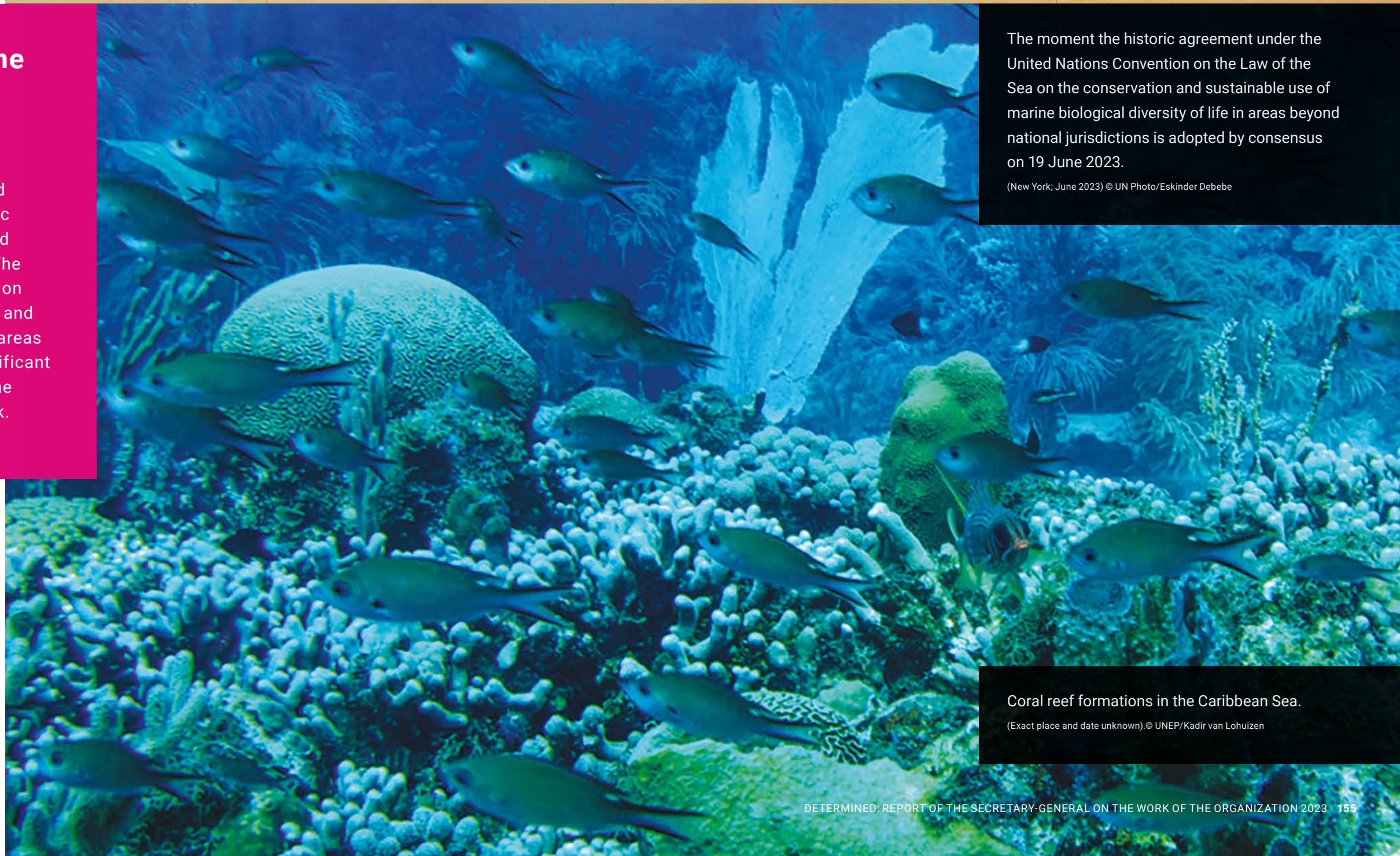


A historic agreement on marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction

The United Nations facilitated the finalization and adoption by consensus, in June 2023, of a historic agreement on marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction after two decades of talks. The agreement, under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, will support the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction and can make a significant contribution to achieving the 2030 Agenda and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

The moment the historic agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of life in areas beyond national jurisdictions is adopted by consensus on 19 June 2023.

(New York; June 2023) © UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe



Coral reef formations in the Caribbean Sea.

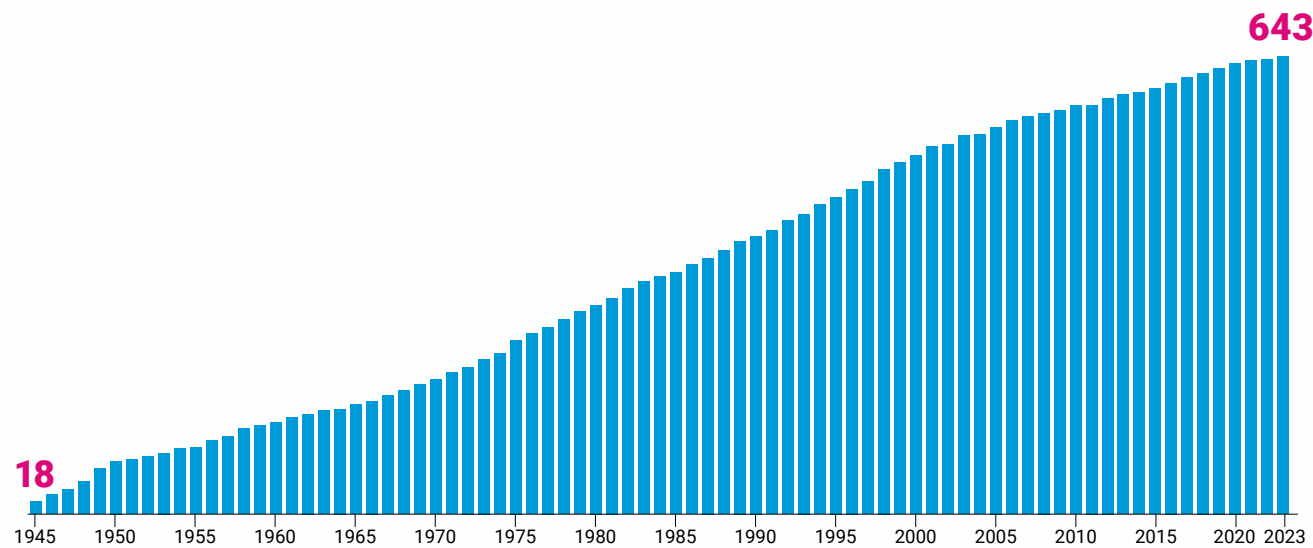
(Exact place and date unknown). © UNEP/Kadir van Lohuizen

On international trade law, the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law adopted a Model Law on the Use and Cross-border Recognition of Identity Management and Trust Services. The General Assembly also adopted the United Nations Convention on the International Effects of Judicial Sales of Ships, aimed at enhancing legal protection for purchasers of ships while safeguarding the interest of shipowners and creditors.

2022 Treaty Event and disarmament

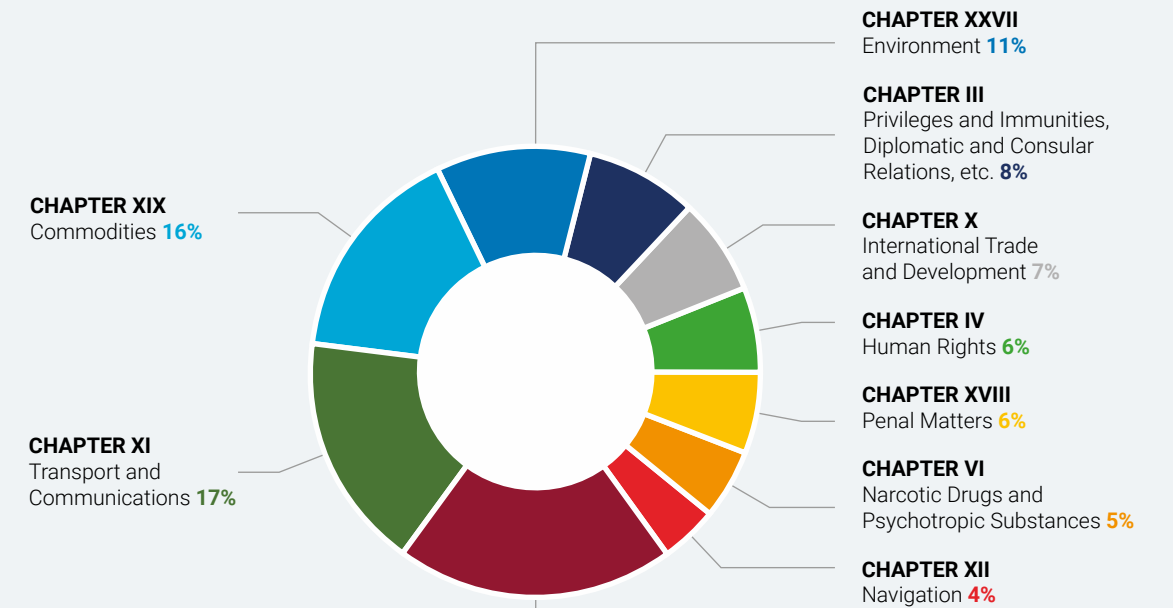
The 2022 Treaty Event renewed focus on universal participation in multilateral treaties deposited with the Secretary-General. States acted on a range of multilateral treaties, particularly in the field of disarmament.

Rising number of multilateral treaties deposited with the Secretary-General



MULTILATERAL TREATIES DEPOSITED WITH THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESS MATTERS OF WORLDWIDE INTEREST

Multilateral treaties deposited with the Secretary-General, proportion by Chapter (as of March 2023)



OTHER CHAPTERS 20%

- CHAPTER II Pacific Settlement of International Disputes
- CHAPTER V Refugees and Stateless Persons
- CHAPTER VII Traffic in Persons
- CHAPTER VIII Obscene Publications
- CHAPTER IX Health
- CHAPTER XIII Economic Statistics
- CHAPTER XIV Educational and Cultural Matters
- CHAPTER XV Declaration of Death of Missing Persons
- CHAPTER XVI Status of Women
- CHAPTER XVII Freedom of Information
- CHAPTER XX Maintenance Obligations
- CHAPTER XXI Law of the Sea
- CHAPTER XXII Commercial Arbitration and Mediation
- CHAPTER XXIII Law of Treaties
- CHAPTER XXIV Outer space
- CHAPTER XXV Telecommunications
- CHAPTER XXVI Disarmament
- CHAPTER XXVIII Fiscal Matters
- CHAPTER XXIX Miscellaneous