

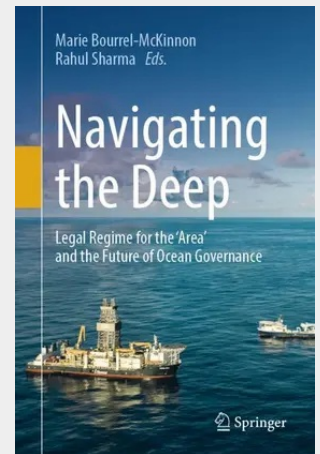
Navigating the Deep

Legal Regime for the 'Area' and the Future of Ocean Governance

Forty years after the entry into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the establishment of the International Seabed Authority (ISA), the legal regime anchoring pivotal mandates and responsibilities in support of the sustainable management of the resources of the seabed beyond national jurisdictions (called the 'Area') is facing unprecedented challenges. As global interest in seabed mineral resources intensifies, so do unilateral interpretations of treaty obligations, posing a threat to the foundational principles of UNCLOS and the thin consensus-base supporting it. This book critically examines how diverging expectations pertaining to the management of the Area and its resources, living or not, influence the implementation of UNCLOS' provisions and intersect with some emerging threats, exploring how such political and operational factors affect the role and mandate of ISA and how convergence amongst key actors could be reached in pursuit of the benefit of the common heritage of humankind.

The legal regime for access to and regulation of seabed exploration and exploitation in the Area, once seen as a pioneering framework for ocean governance, now stands at a crossroads. The growing pressure for resource exploitation, coupled with divergent interpretations of treaty obligations, risks undermining the legal and ethical underpinnings of the sustainable management of the international seabed area. By situating the ISA within contemporary debates on international law and sustainable development, this book offers an authoritative perspective on the regime's future relevance and resilience.

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