

closing line for bays, and for the application of the straight baseline system for determining, in certain circumstances, the starting point for measuring the territorial sea. In addition, it recognizes and regulates the right of innocent passage for ships through the territorial sea.

The Convention on the High Seas, proclaiming as its underlying principle the freedom of the high seas, gathers together into a single instrument a wide variety of rules relating to the high seas, including such matters as the nationality of ships, safety of life at sea and the prevention of water pollution.

A third Convention, on High Seas Fishing, was designed to maintain the productivity of the living resources of the high seas. It takes a new step forward in developing and applying the principles of conservation to the high seas and in recognizing the special interests of coastal states in the fishing resources in the high seas adjacent to their coasts.

The Convention on the Continental Shelf is of special importance since it is the first international instrument dealing with this subject. It grants to coastal states sovereign rights over the exploration and exploitation of the natural resources of the sea bed and subsoil of its coast to a depth of two hundred metres or to a greater depth if exploitation is possible.

Lastly, an optional protocol provides for the compulsory judicial settlement of disputes.

These achievements illustrate the immense scope of the work of the Conference.

Failure of the Conference to Agree on the Extent of the Territorial Sea or Fishing Zones

These instruments may not have achieved the recognition they deserve as important and far-reaching steps forward in maritime law, because attention has largely been focused on the failure to agree at Geneva on the questions of the breadth of the territorial sea and a coastal state's rights in the contiguous fishing zone.