

# International Advisory Body on Submarine Cable Resilience

22 May 2025



- Submarine cables are estimated to carry **over 99%** of international data exchanges, making their resilience a global imperative.
- As of 2024, **more than 500 active** and planned telecommunication submarine cable systems are estimated to span **over 1.7 million kilometres** across the globe, connecting continents, markets and households. It is estimated that nearly 200,000 km of new submarine cables were installed in 2024, and this growth is likely to persist over the next few years.
- Damage to submarine cables is not uncommon, with an average of **150 to 200 faults** occurring globally each year and requiring about **three cable repairs per week**, according to the ICPC.



## International Advisory Body on Submarine Cable Resilience

**Mission:** Enhance the resilience of submarine telecommunications cables, ensuring their role as vital infrastructure for global connectivity.

**Members (42):** Diverse representation from governments, regulatory authorities, industry leaders, submarine cable experts, and international organisations.

**Working Methods:** Combination of in-person (once per year) and virtual meetings, working groups, for an initial two-year term.

**International Submarine Cable Resilience Summit (Abuja, 26-27 Feb. 2025):** a landmark event, bringing together governments, industry leaders, and international organizations.





## Strengthening Submarine Fibre Optic Cable Resilience in the Caribbean



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## Strengthening Subsea Cable Resilience in the Caribbean



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# SUMMIT DECLARATION

We, the members of the International Advisory Body on Submarine Cable Resilience, recognize the vital role of submarine telecommunications cables in enabling global connectivity, empowering economic growth, and supporting digital transformation. They are critical infrastructure and should be respected in accordance with international law.

In the spirit of collaboration and shared understanding, we adopt this Declaration as a framework for fostering resilience and encouraging cooperative efforts to support this vital infrastructure.

**1. Acknowledging Vital Infrastructure**

We recognize the essential role that submarine telecommunications cables play as critical infrastructure in enabling global economic, social, and governmental activity through interconnected communication systems by carrying over 99% of intercontinental data traffic.

**2. Strengthening Cable Protection Through Risk Mitigation**

We underscore the importance of identifying and mitigating a range of risks to submarine cable systems, including natural events and accidental maritime damage, through the timely exchange of pertinent information, knowledge and best practices as well as enhanced cooperation between government agencies and all relevant stakeholders. We encourage promotion of sufficient and necessary mitigation and recovery measures to reduce the scale and scope of cable damage.

**3. Promoting Diverse Routes and Landings to Enhance Resilience and Continuity**

Considering that submarine telecommunications cables are crucial to the digital ecosystem from strategic, economic, safety, security, and strategic autonomy perspectives, we encourage the development of geographically diversified infrastructure, through all possible funding approaches including Public-Private-Partnerships, to mitigate potential disruptions, increase resilience, maintain connectivity, and ensure no region is left isolated.

**4. Facilitating Timely Deployment and Repair**

We encourage the development of government policies and practices to expedite the deployment of new submarine cable systems, ensure the maintenance and timely repair of damaged cables, to promote streamlined permits processes, maintain stockpiles/spares, and

## Strengthening Subsea Cable Resilience in the Caribbean

### Advisory Body

- H.E. Minister Bosun Tijani, Minister of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Co-chair)
- Prof. Sandra Maximiano, Chair of ANACOM's Board of Directors (Co-chair)
- 40 Members
- Focal points of each Member
- Intergovernmental organizations (consultative role)

### Executive Secretaries

- Tomas Lamanauskas, ITU Deputy Secretary General
- Kent Bressie, ICPC Legal Adviser

Timely Deployment & Repair Working Group

Risk Identification, Monitoring & Mitigation Working Group

Fostering of Connectivity & Geographic Diversity Working Group





- **WG1: Timely Deployment & Repair Working Group**

Focus on identifying and addressing delays in the deployment and repair of submarine cable systems.

- **WG 2: Risk Identification, Monitoring & Mitigation Working Group**

Focus on understanding and mitigating the risks facing submarine cables, including natural hazards, human activities, among others.

- **WG3: Fostering Connectivity & Geographic Diversity Working Group**

Focus on evaluating the benefits of geographically diverse cable routes and landing sites to enhance network resilience.



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# ICPC *Best Practices*

- Summarize ICPC's views on key actions that governments should take to promote cable protection and resilience
- Designed to assist governments in developing laws, policies, and practices to for submarine cable protection and resilience
- Identify general principles and best practices in specific areas. General principles include:
  - Wholistic approach to risks
  - Transparent regulatory regimes that foster speedy installation and repair
  - Promotion of rule of law for the oceans
  - Consultation with industry
  - Use of best available science
  - Engagement with other states on a regional and global basis



Best Practices  
Version 1.2

## GOVERNMENT BEST PRACTICES FOR PROTECTING AND PROMOTING RESILIENCE OF SUBMARINE TELECOMMUNICATIONS CABLES

With these Best Practices, the International Cable Protection Committee ("ICPC") identifies recommended actions for governments to foster the development and protection of submarine telecommunications cables and to maintain continuity of communications even in the event of damage to a submarine cable. In implementing these Best Practices, a state should adapt them to address national and regional circumstances, including but not limited to: localized risks to submarine cables; localized activities of other marine industries; national laws, regulations, and governmental structures; and jurisdictional disputes with littoral states.

### 1. General principles

In adopting and implementing a submarine cable resilience plan, the state should be guided by the following principles:

- Focus on statistically-significant risks where government action could have the greatest impact on risk reduction;
- Promote commercial and regulatory environments that encourage multiple and diverse (both with domestic and foreign landings) submarine cable landings within the state's territory;
- Observe and implement treaty obligations (particularly under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea ("UNCLOS")) and customary international law defining state jurisdiction over, and protection of, submarine cables;
- Promote transparent regulatory regimes that expedite cable deployment and repair according to well-established timeframes;



# Specific *Best Practices*

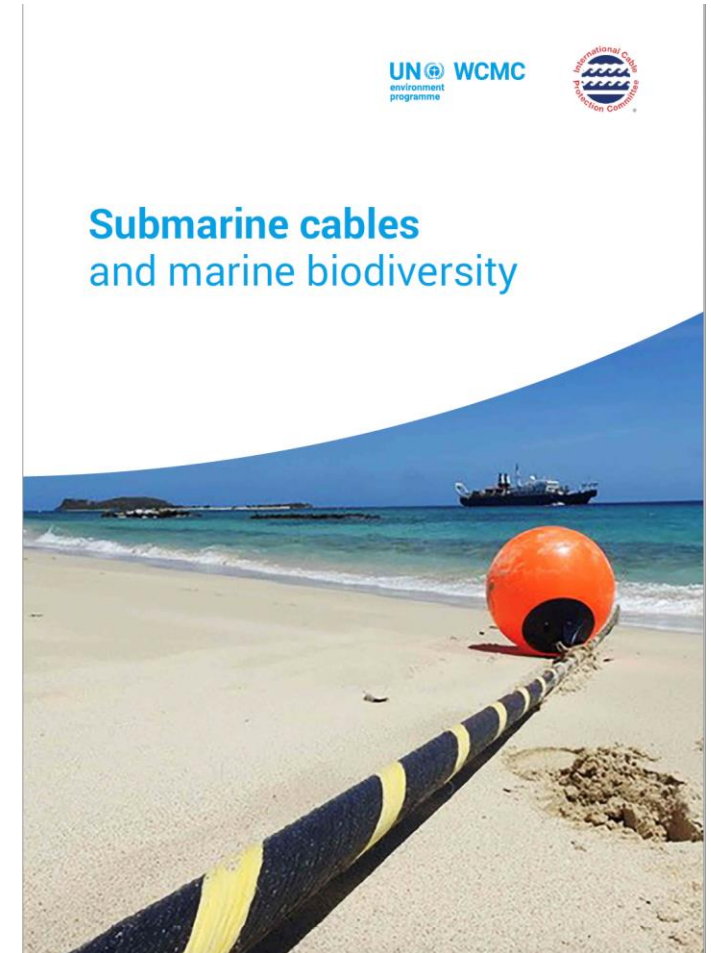
- Measures to reduce fishing and anchoring risks
- Default separation distances between cables and other marine activities
- Geographic diversity of routes and landings
- Single point of contact within national governments to enhance coordination
- Regulatory frameworks that expedite installation and repair, recognize high-seas freedoms, and apply best available science
- Charting of cables at all ocean depths
- Cable protection laws and measures
- Marine spatial planning to enhance early-stage coordination
- Minimal cabotage and crewing restrictions, customs duties, taxes, and fees
- Classification of submarine cables as critical infrastructure
- Sharing of risk and threat information between government and industry





# ICPC and UNEP-WCMC report

- On April 10, 2025, the ICPC and UNEP-WCMC launched their report *Submarine cables and marine biodiversity*
- A successor to the successful 2009 report *Submarine Cables and the Oceans*, the 2025 report addresses advances in scientific knowledge and in cables
- The 2025 report provides an invaluable resource for states and stakeholders in relation to BBNJ Agreement implementation



**Thank you!**

**If you have any questions, please feel free to contact:  
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