

The New York Joint Statement on the Security and Resilience of Undersea Cables in a Globally Digitalized World

Communications networks underpin almost every aspect of our lives. Yet the rapid development of communication technologies and massive scale of these networks increases our dependency on these systems and introduces vulnerabilities.

Undersea cables, together with other elements of the information and communications technology ecosystem, continue to transform the way we communicate and the way we live. The unparalleled capacity, low latency, and reliability of undersea cables make them ideal for transmitting vast volumes of data and information between continents. The demand for undersea cables has surged as seamless connectivity is indispensable to commerce and digital growth across every sector of the global economy, including finance, health care, education, and entertainment. The expansion of undersea cable networks is the foundation of a more interconnected and interdependent global community, and states should adopt policies to enable efficient, redundant, resilient, and secure network data and information flows.

These developments, however, present major risks to important public interests and have national and economic security implications. Ensuring the security of undersea cables is critical to global communications, economic growth, and development. Leveraging trustworthy suppliers of undersea cable equipment and trusted partners for laying and maintaining these cables is essential in building secure networks upon which we rely.

The signatories recommend the following principles for a shared global approach to ensure the security, reliability, interoperability, and resiliency for the deployment and maintenance of undersea cable infrastructure:

Design undersea cable infrastructure and services with resilience and security in mind. Build and maintain telecommunications infrastructure incorporating cybersecurity best practices that safely facilitate international communication.

Seek closer government and industry coordination and joint public-private partnerships for ensuring responsible cable deployment, maintenance, and repair according to established international industry norms.

Emphasize the importance of spatial and route planning to promote coordinated use of seabeds, protect cables from traffic, ease chokepoints, and reduce risk of inadvertent disruption while expanding global connectivity.

Coordinate on best practices for permitting, cabotage, and regulation to support international cable systems and supporting services and capabilities.

Promote deployment of reliable and trusted cable components and services to help ensure resilient cable infrastructure. Endeavor to share information, including the source of components and services that affect the security of the cable, including during deployment, maintenance and repair, following incidents of compromised undersea cable system security or integrity.

Encourage undersea cable network service providers and operations and maintenance providers to have transparent ownership, partnerships, and corporate governance structures.

Consider security and risk assessments of suppliers across the cable lifecycle and compliance with international instruments and industry best practices.

Implement data risk mitigation frameworks and data security measures to protect cables from unauthorized access to data in transit or storage for dual purposes.

By taking these actions, we hope other nations will follow these principles within their respective systems of government and thereby create collective action to better preserve the reliability, integrity, and availability of infrastructure that supports the global community.