

**GOVERNEMENT
DE LA
RÉPUBLIQUE DE VANUATU**

**MINISTÈRE
DES AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES
ET DU COMMERCE EXTERIEUR**



**GOVERNMENT
OF THE
REPUBLIC OF VANUATU**

**MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
AND EXTERNAL TRADE**

11 July 2007

The Chairman
Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf
Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea
Office of Legal Affairs
United Nations
2 United Nations Plaza, DC20450
New York, NY 10017
United States of America

Your Excellency,

I have great honour in bringing to the distinguished Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS), copy of the letter from the Prime Minister of Vanuatu Ham Lini Vanuaroroa to the President of France Nicholas Sarkozy, in which the Republic of Vanuatu is disputing France's claim of sovereignty over Mathew and Hunter Islands and subsequently over the recent submission of France for an extended continental shelf to the Commission under article 76 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)

The submission by France to the Commission under the aforesaid article of UNCLOS covering an area to the south east of New Caledonia will have serious implications and ramifications on Vanuatu's legal and traditional sovereign territory of Matthew and Hunter islands, south of Vanuatu.

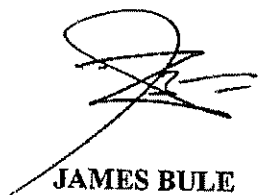
The Commission will take note that as a party to UNCLOS Vanuatu has complied with Articles 55-75 of the UNCLOS by proclaiming its Exclusive Economic Zone and accordingly enacted its domestic laws, which recognize Matthew and Hunter as part of its sovereign territory

In this respect, the Vanuatu national parliament in recognizing the two islands as forming part of the entire archipelago of the country enacted the Maritime Zones Act Cap. 138, subsection 5(2) specifically states that:

"The baselines from which the territorial sea is measured shall be the archipelagic baseline and the low-water line of the Coast of Matthew Island and Hunter Island."

I am therefore stressing to the Commission to consider this matter of paramount importance to the sovereignty of Vanuatu very seriously, and request that the letter from the Prime Minister of the Republic of Vanuatu be circulated to all members of the Commission. The Vanuatu Permanent Mission in New York will also be furnishing the Secretary General of the United Nations with a copy of this letter.

Accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration



JAMES BULE
Minister of Trade and Acting Foreign Minister

