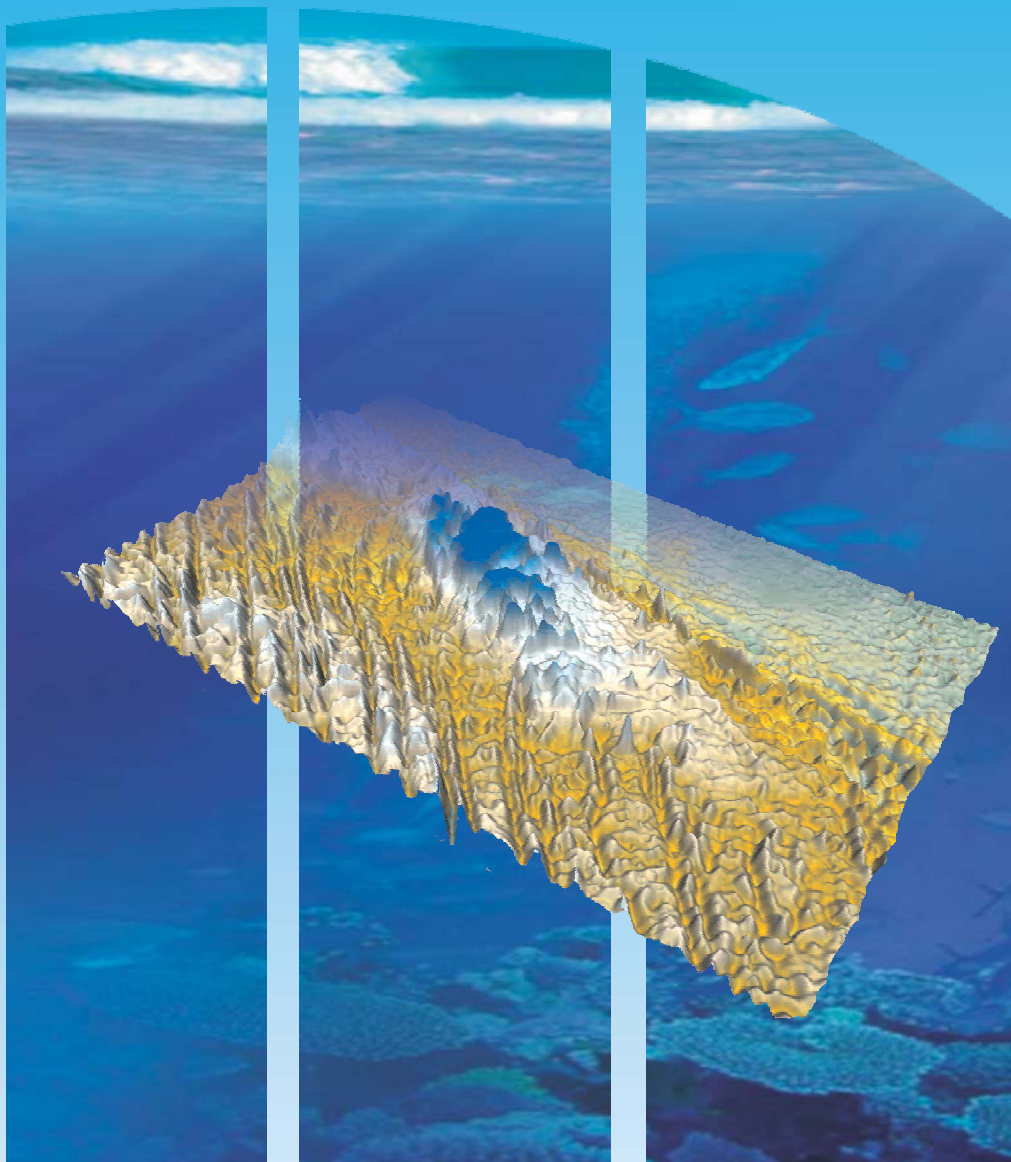


Republic of Mauritius

## **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea**

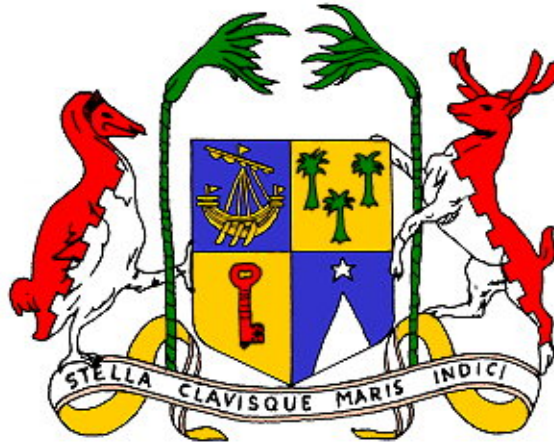
### **Preliminary Information Submitted by the Republic of Mauritius Concerning the Extended Continental Shelf in the Chagos Archipelago Region Pursuant to the Decision Contained in SPLOS/183**



**PRELIMINARY INFORMATION**

**MCS-PI-DOC  
MAY 2009**

**1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea**



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**MAY 2009**

**MCS-PI-DOC**



## PREFACE

**This Preliminary Information document was prepared by the following Ministries and Statutory Corporations of the Government of the Republic of Mauritius:**

Prime Minister's Office  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration & International Trade  
Attorney-General's Office  
Ministry of Housing and Lands  
Mauritius Oceanography Institute

**The following persons have acted and/or will act as advisers to the Government of the Republic of Mauritius in the preparation of the Submission by the Republic of Mauritius concerning the extended continental shelf in the Chagos Archipelago Region:**

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## MAPS

**Figure 1** Map indicative of outer limits of the extended continental shelf of the Republic of Mauritius in the Chagos Archipelago Region

**MCS-PI-MAP-1**



## 1. INTRODUCTION

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1-1 This Preliminary Information document has been prepared by the Republic of Mauritius pursuant to the *Decision regarding the workload of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf and the ability of States, particularly developing States, to fulfill the requirements of article 4 of annex II to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, as well as the decision contained in SPLOS/72, paragraph (a)*, adopted by the Eighteenth Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention (SPLOS/183). This document provides an indication of the outer limits of the continental shelf of the Republic of Mauritius, that lie beyond 200 nautical miles (M) from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured (hereinafter referred to as ‘the territorial sea baselines’) in respect of the Chagos Archipelago Region.

1-2 The Republic of Mauritius consists of a group of islands in the Indian Ocean. The main Island of Mauritius is located at longitude 57° 30' east, and latitude 20° 00' south, approximately 900km east of Madagascar and is part of the Mascarene Islands. The total land area of the Republic of Mauritius is approximately 1,950km<sup>2</sup>. Under the *Constitution of Mauritius* the territory of Mauritius includes, in addition to the main island, the islands of Cargados Carajos (the St Brandon Group of 16 Islands and Islets) located some 402km north of the main Island of Mauritius, Rodrigues Island located 560km north-east, the Agalega Islands located 933km north, Tromelin located north-west of the main Island of Mauritius, and the Chagos Archipelago located at 06° 26' south 72° 00' east, approximately 2200km north-east of the main Island.



**1-3** The Republic of Mauritius is Party to the Convention, which it signed on the day it was opened for signature on 10 December 1982, and subsequently ratified on 4 November 1994. The *Maritime Zones Act 2005*, which repealed the *Maritime Zones Act 1977*, provides that the provisions of the Convention have the force of law in the Republic of Mauritius, and establishes maritime zones in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, including provisions defining the outer limits of the continental shelf.

**1-4** Under Article 4 of Annex II to the Convention, as supplemented by the decisions contained in SPLOS/72 and SPLOS/183 respectively regarding the 10-year period established by Article 4 of Annex II to the Convention, a coastal State for which the Convention entered into force before 13 May 1999 is required to submit particulars of the outer limits of the continental shelf to the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf ('the Commission') by 13 May 2009.

**2. STATUS OF PREPARATION AND INTENDED DATE OF SUBMISSION**

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**2-1** The Republic of Mauritius notes that it has made two partial submissions in respect of the outer limits of its extended continental shelf as set out below:

- a joint submission with the Republic of Seychelles concerning the region of the Mascarene Plateau, lodged on 1 December 2008 (**SMS-ES-DOC**); and,
- a submission concerning the region of Rodrigues Island, lodged on 6 May 2009 (**MRS-ES-DOC**).



- 2-2** The Republic of Mauritius also intends to make a submission for an extended continental shelf in respect of the Chagos Archipelago Region. The preparation of a submission concerning this region is currently being undertaken and has reached an advanced stage. The Republic of Mauritius expects to complete the Submission by 2012. Pending the lodgement of the submission, this Preliminary Information document is submitted consistent with operative paragraph 1(a) of the decision contained in SPLOS/183 in order to satisfy the requirement of Article 4 of Annex II to the Convention.
- 2-3** The Republic of Mauritius notes that, in accordance with operative paragraphs 1(b) and 1(c) of the decision contained in SPLOS/183, pending the receipt of the submission concerning the Chagos Archipelago Region, the Preliminary Information submitted by the Republic of Mauritius shall not be considered by the Commission and further, that the Preliminary Information is without prejudice to the submission and its future consideration by the Commission.
- 2-4** The part of the continental shelf lying beyond 200 M from the territorial sea baselines of the territory of the Republic of Mauritius measured from the Chagos Archipelago is referred to in this Preliminary Information document as the 'extended continental shelf'.

### **3. INDICATION OF THE OUTER LIMITS OF THE EXTENDED CONTINENTAL SHELF IN THE CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO REGION**

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- 3-1** As provided for under paragraph 1 of Article 76 of the Convention, the Republic of Mauritius has a continental shelf comprising the seabed and subsoil of the submarine areas that extends beyond its territorial sea throughout the natural prolongation of its land territory to the outer





edge of the continental margin, up to the limits provided for in paragraphs 4 to 6 of Article 76 of the Convention or, to a distance of 200 M from the territorial sea baselines where the outer edge of the continental margin does not extend up to that distance.

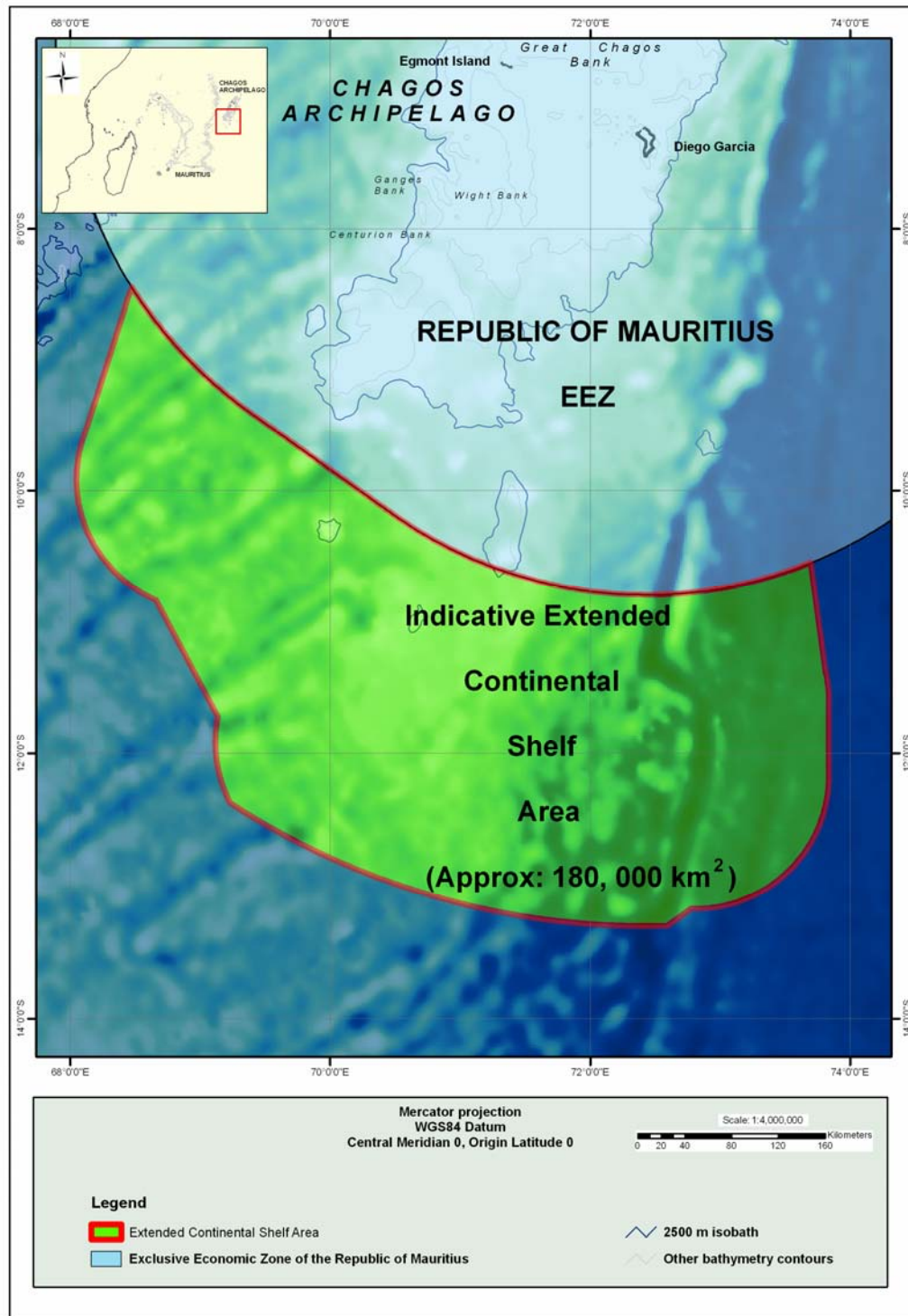
- 3-2** Article 121 of the Convention further provides that, in the case of islands, the limits of the continental shelf are to be determined in the same manner as other land territory.
- 3-3** Paragraphs 4 to 6 of Article 76 of the Convention set out the manner in which a coastal State may establish the outer edge of its continental margin and its extended continental shelf, wherever that margin extends beyond 200 M measured from the territorial sea baselines.
- 3-4** Data considered by the Republic of Mauritius establish that the outer edge of the continental margin in the relevant land territory in the Chagos Archipelago Region (Egmont and Diego Garcia Islands) extends beyond 200 M measured from archipelagic baselines established in accordance with Article 47 of the Convention.
- 3-5** Pursuant to operative paragraph 1(a) of the decision contained in SPLOS/183, **Sections 4** and **7** of this Preliminary Information document provide an indication of the outer limits of the extended continental shelf in the Chagos Archipelago Region as determined by the Republic of Mauritius.



**4. MAP INDICATIVE OF OUTER LIMITS OF THE EXTENDED CONTINENTAL SHELF IN THE CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO REGION**

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**4-1** A map at an appropriate scale which provides an overview of the indicative outer limit of the extended continental shelf in the Chagos Archipelago Region is included in this Preliminary Information document as **Figure 1 (MCS-PI-MAP-1)**.



**Figure 1** Map Indicative of the outer limits of the extended continental Shelf of the Republic of Mauritius in the Chagos Archipelago Region. MCS-PI-MAP-1

Preliminary Information Submitted by the Republic of Mauritius concerning the Extended Continental Shelf in the Chagos Archipelago Region

MCS-PI-DOC



## 5. PROVISIONS OF ARTICLE 76 INVOKED

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The Republic of Mauritius has applied paragraphs 4 (a)(ii), 4 (b), 5, 6 and 7 of Article 76 of the Convention in support of the determination of the indicative outer limits of the extended continental shelf in the Chagos Archipelago Region.

## 6. UNRESOLVED LAND AND MARITIME DISPUTES

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The Republic of Mauritius states that the Chagos Archipelago is and has always formed part of its territory. The Republic of Mauritius wishes to inform the Commission, however, that a dispute exists between the Republic of Mauritius and the United Kingdom over the Chagos Archipelago. Discussions are ongoing between the two governments on this matter. The last bilateral talks were held in London, United Kingdom, in January 2009.

## 7. OVERVIEW OF INFORMATION INDICATIVE OF OUTER LIMITS OF THE EXTENDED CONTINENTAL SHELF IN THE CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO REGION

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**7-1** The Chagos Archipelago is an archipelago composed of atolls and islands that lies approximately 2200km northeast of the main island of Mauritius. The largest individual islands are Diego García (27.20km<sup>2</sup>), Eagle (Great Chagos Bank, 2.45km<sup>2</sup>), île Pierre (Peros Banhos, 1.50km<sup>2</sup>), Eastern Egmont (Egmont Islands, 1.50km<sup>2</sup>), île du Coin (Peros Banhos, 1.28km<sup>2</sup>) and île Boddam (Salomon Islands, 1.08km<sup>2</sup>).

**7-2** The Chagos Archipelago is the surface expression of the southern portion of a prominent linear bathymetric feature in the western Indian



Ocean known as the Laccadive-Chagos Ridge. The latter extends as a continuous physiographic ridge from the Laccadive Islands, through the Maldives, to the Chagos Ridge.

**7-3** The Chagos Ridge is associated with submarine volcanic accumulations that resulted from the northward passage of the Indian Plate over the Reunion Hotspot.

**7-4** The Republic of Mauritius is of the view that the elevations and banks that are surmounted by the Chagos Archipelago represent the submerged prolongation of the relevant land territory of the Republic of Mauritius in this region.

**8. PUBLICATION OF INDICATIVE OUTER LIMITS OF THE EXTENDED CONTINENTAL SHELF IN THE CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO REGION**

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The Republic of Mauritius has the honour to request the Secretary-General to inform the Commission and notify member States of the receipt of this preliminary information, and make such information publicly available in accordance with operative paragraph 1(d) of the decision contained in SPLOS/183.