

United Nations Nations Unies

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REFERENCE: Questionnaire/2002

The Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs, presents its compliments to the Permanent Mission of ... to the United Nations and has the honour, with reference to General Assembly resolution 56/12 of 28 November 2002, to communicate the following:

On 10 December 2002, the United Nations will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the opening for signature of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which entered into force on 16 November 1994. The Convention, hailed as the “constitution for the oceans”, is one of the most important achievements of the United Nations in the codification and progressive development of international law. Twenty years after its adoption, the provisions of the Convention are practically universally accepted, widely applied and reflected, or referred to, in numerous multilateral and bilateral treaties, national legislation acts and other instruments. The high number of States Parties to the Convention (now more than seventy percent of all States Members of the United Nations) is evidence of the importance attached by the international community to the regime governing the ocean and seas. Albeit without great publicity, this regime has been a pillar of stability and peace for the world’s oceans and seas and a major point of reference for all nations, whether coastal or landlocked.

The Division, in carrying out the secretariat functions of the Convention, has demonstrated a deep commitment to its principal mandate - in particular as set out in General Assembly resolutions 49/28 and 52/26 - of promoting the Convention with a view to achieving its universal acceptance and consistent application.

As referred to in paragraph 24 of document A/56/58/Add.1, the Division is in the process of reviewing and enhancing its collection of information regarding legislative measures undertaken by States Parties in implementing UNCLOS. It intends to prepare an analysis of the information received and share the results with the States Parties as soon as practicable as part of an overall assessment of the implementation of UNCLOS 20 years after its adoption.

In this context, the Division would be most grateful if the Government of ... would kindly respond to the attached questionnaire as well as provide any relevant information concerning other steps taken by States Parties to harmonize their national legislation with UNCLOS. The questionnaire has also been placed on the DOALOS website (www.un.org/Depts/los). Furthermore, the website contains a set of national legislation acts and maritime boundary delimitation treaties (in English) organized by regions and by States.

It would be greatly appreciated if the replies to the questionnaire as well as any relevant texts of legislative acts could be communicated to the Division at the earliest convenience and, if possible, in electronic format (addressed to doalos@un.org). In addition to the results of the analysis of the questionnaire, the Division intends to

disseminate current information, as provided by States Parties, regarding national legislation and delimitation treaties, through, inter alia, its website (www.un.org/Depts/los).

The Permanent Mission may wish to note that in order to commemorate the forthcoming 20th anniversary of the opening for signature of the Convention, the Division is planning a series of activities and events. Among other things, the attention of the Permanent Missions is drawn to the decision of the General Assembly, in resolution 56/12 “to devote two days of plenary meetings at the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, on 9 and 10 December 2002, to the consideration of the item entitled ‘Oceans and the law of the sea’ and the commemoration of the twentieth year anniversary of the opening for signature of the Convention”, and to the encouragement addressed to Member States and observers “to be represented at the highest possible level”.

In addition to this event, the Division, in cooperation with UNITAR, will organize a two-day briefing on developments in ocean affairs and the law of the sea, tentatively scheduled for 25 and 26 September 2002. It is expected that this briefing will be followed and complemented by a series of round tables in English, French and Spanish organized by DOALOS to provide an informal forum for discussing various topics.

Regarding the details of all events and activities related to the 20th anniversary of the opening for signature of UNCLOS, the Division intends to keep the permanent missions and international community regularly apprised through its website.

19 February 2002