

**Thirty-fourth Meeting of States Parties
to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea**

**Statement by Mr. Aldino Campos
Chair of the Commission on the Limits of the
Continental Shelf**

**Item 10 (a) – Information reported by the Chair of the
Commission**

Monday, 10 June 2024

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Let me join previous speakers by congratulating His Excellency Ambassador Muhumuza on his election as President of the thirty-fourth Meeting of States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

It is my honour to address the Meeting for the first time since I was elected as Chair of the Commission.

At the outset, allow me to convey condolences for the passing of Judge Tafsir Malick Ndiaye of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, and to renew the condolences for the passing of Ivan F. Glumov, who touched me and my colleagues personally, as we had the opportunity of working with him for many years and appreciating his knowledge and

contribution to the work of the Commission and nice personality.

I would like to draw your attention to my letter dated 1 April 2024 addressed to the President of the thirty-fourth Meeting (document SPLOS/34/7), as well as to my Statements on the progress in the work of the Commission at its fifty-eighth, fifty-ninth and sixtieth sessions, which contain more detailed accounts of its work.

Since much of the information is before you in writing, I would like to highlight the most important developments and issues relevant to the discharge of the mandate of the Commission under the Convention.

Mr. President,

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The Commission continues to bear a heavy workload. The Commission has received a total of 104, including 11 revised submissions.

In total, 40 sets of recommendations have been issued to date, including for six revised submissions.

With ten submissions planned to be under active consideration during the sixty-first session, and the consideration of three other submissions suspended due to

objections by third States, 54 submissions are still awaiting consideration.

Since the last Meeting, the Commission has received one more revised submission and has issued two sets of recommendations with respect to the submissions made by Nigeria and the Russian Federation in respect of the southeastern part of the Eurasia Basin in the Arctic Ocean, respectively.

The Commission also suspended consideration of the submission made by Trinidad and Tobago, following receipt of a communication requesting that the Commission not consider and qualify that submission.

The waiting time between the making of a submission and the establishment of a subcommission for its consideration has continued to grow and is now more than 14 years.

I wish to draw the attention of States Parties again to the increasing number of submissions whose consideration has been deferred or suspended as a result of objections raised by States due to land or maritime disputes. The Commission reiterates its encouragement to States to take advantage of avenues available to them, such as provisional arrangements of a practical nature, so that the consideration of submissions may proceed.

Let me also recall the encouragement of the Commission to submitting States to actively monitor the progress of their

submissions in the queue, to ensure their readiness to engage effectively as soon as a subcommission is established for the consideration of their submissions, as well as regarding the planning of any submission of updated information and making sure that the geographic information system software used in their submissions is compatible with that used by the Commission.

I am pleased to recall that at the last session, the Commission was in a position to establish two new Subcommissions dealing with the submissions which had reached the top of the queue, namely those made by Cuba and by Mozambique.

Also, with a view to increasing its efficiency, the Commission established an open-ended working group on working methods and technical needs of the Commission. I am pleased to report on four key developments following the identification by the working group of needs for upgrades to the existing technical facilities and its review of the working methods of the Commission.

First, upgrades have been made to the existing technical facilities of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, including dual, larger computer monitors and new software, as had been requested in a letter dated 11 April 2023 from the Chairperson addressed to the President of the thirty-third Meeting of States. These upgrades will facilitate the work of the Commission.

Secondly, and in order to align the rules of procedure with the practice of the Commission and anticipate its future working needs, the Commission decided to revise its rules of procedure. During its sixtieth session, the Commission agreed in principle to a set of proposed amendments to the main body and annex III to the rules, which concern internal procedures and working arrangements. At the upcoming sixty-first session, the Commission will consider a consolidated draft of the revised rules.

Thirdly, as described in annex I to my letter, the Commission conducted a thorough analysis of the progress in the consideration of submissions under the pattern of 21 weeks of annual meetings, which was established in 2013.

On the basis of this analysis, the Commission agreed on a plan according to which, from 2025 to the end of its current term of office in June 2028, the pattern of annual meetings in New York would consist of three sessions of 5 weeks each, including plenary meetings, for a total of 15 weeks per year, to be held at United Nations Headquarters, complemented with increased intersessional work.

Given the importance of the plenary meetings, at which the Commission takes decisions and approves recommendations, the existing pattern of four plenary weeks per year will remain unchanged.

However, 15 weeks of work at United Nations Headquarters remains a significant amount of time to spend in New York. Therefore, issues concerning the conditions of service of the members of the Commission continue to be relevant and the work of the Open-ended Working Group to improve these conditions of service remains critical.

Fourthly, during its sixtieth session, the Commission re-established the Training Committee to propose a way forward to address capacity-building requirements for the development of the expertise required in the preparation, making and maintenance of submissions to facilitate their consideration by the Commission, which will – in turn – also benefit the efficiency of the Commission.

In this regard, let me draw the attention of States Parties to annex II to my letter, which sets out five-day outlines for each of two training courses for two distinct audiences: first, States that have yet to make a submission for the first time or whose delegations encountered a significant change in membership since the making of their submission; and secondly, for States that have at least some degree of experience, including those that have made submissions.

The Commission requests the Meeting to first, consider inviting the General Assembly to request the Secretary-General, in cooperation with States and relevant international organizations and institutions, to develop and make available training courses based on the two five-day

outlines; and secondly, to invite voluntary financial or other contributions to the trust fund to facilitate attendance at such training courses by States' nominated technical and administrative staff, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States.

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Membership in the Commission remains a concern. One seat allocated to the Group of Eastern European States has remained vacant since 2015. It remained vacant at the election of members of the Commission held at the thirty-second Meeting in 2022, and at the by-election held at the resumed thirty-third Meeting in 2023.

The untimely passing in December 2023 of one of the members of the Commission necessitated a by-election at the present Meeting. Again, however, only one nomination was received for the two vacant seats allocated to the Group of Eastern European States.

The Commission wishes to reiterate the importance of filling both vacancies in the interests of ensuring equitable geographical representation in the Commission and of the effective discharge of its mandate.

Let me now turn to the issue of the conditions of service of the members of the Commission. Significant disparities continue to exist in the levels of support provided for the fulfilment of their duties. The Commission reiterates its encouragement to States Parties to find a long-term and sustainable solution to ensure that all members of the Commission receive similar and reasonable treatment related to their duties, including reasonable travel and accommodation allowances and full insurance coverage, with United Nations standards as a minimum. I wish to express the appreciation of the Commission to the Open-ended Working Group on the Conditions of Service of the Members of the Commission for its ongoing efforts to find a solution to these challenges.

Let me take this opportunity to also express sincere appreciation to those States which have recently made contributions to the Voluntary Trust Fund for the purpose of defraying the cost of the participation of the members of the Commission from developing States in its meetings.

Mr. President,

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In closing, on behalf of all of the members of the Commission, let me express our gratitude for the opportunity to address the thirty-fourth Meeting of States Parties and inform delegations of important developments in our work.

Thank you.