

**Observations by the Cook Islands in connection with the official deposit of its lists of geographical coordinates of points, accompanied by illustrative maps, for maritime baselines and maritime zones in accordance with the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea**

The Cook Islands, as a State Party to the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea ("UNCLOS"), assumes legal obligations and exercises all sovereign and jurisdictional entitlements as legal consequence of being such a State Party. As a State Party to UNCLOS, the Cook Islands is presently depositing with the Secretary-General of the United Nations lists of geographical coordinates of points, accompanied by illustrative maps, for all maritime baselines as well as for the territorial sea, contiguous zone, and exclusive economic zone of the Cook Islands, as defined under UNCLOS.

In this context, the Cook Islands notes that the applicable international law as reflected in UNCLOS bestows maritime zones to coastal States, and many small island developing States, such as the Cook Islands, have planned their development in reliance on the sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction generated by such maritime zones. Sea-level rise and climate change challenge this careful planning, including in terms of their effects on relevant geophysical features. The Cook Islands, a country made up of 15 islands, many of which are low-lying islands and atolls, is specially affected by such sea level rise and climate change.

The Cook Islands states its understanding that it is not obliged to keep under review the maritime zones reflected in the present official deposit of lists of geographical coordinates of points and accompanying illustrative maps, delineated in accordance with UNCLOS, and that the Cook Islands intends to maintain these maritime zones in line with that understanding, notwithstanding climate change-induced sea-level rise.