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REFERENCE: MSP/32/ELECT/CLCS

The Secretary-General of the United Nations presents his compliments to the representatives of States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (the “Convention”) and has the honour to refer to the forthcoming elections to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (the “Commission”).

Pursuant to article 2, paragraph 1, of Annex II to the Convention, “the Commission shall consist of 21 members [...], elected by States Parties to this Convention from among their nationals, having due regard to the need to ensure equitable geographical representation, who shall serve in their personal capacities”.

Pursuant to article 2, paragraph 3, of Annex II, “[e]lections of the members of the Commission shall be held at a meeting of States Parties convened by the Secretary-General at United Nations Headquarters.”

Pursuant to article 2, paragraph 4, of Annex II, “[t]he members of the Commission shall be elected for a term of five years. They shall be eligible for re-election”.

The forthcoming elections will be held at the thirty-second Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, scheduled to be convened from 13 to 17 June 2022 (SPLOS/31/9, footnote 14). It is recalled in this regard, however, that the terms of office of the current members of the Commission will expire on 15 June 2023, pursuant to the decision by the thirty-first Meeting of States Parties to extend the terms of office of the members of the Commission for one additional year (SPLOS/31/9, paras. 84-86 and SPLOS/31/10).

Call for Nominations

Pursuant to article 2, paragraph 2, of Annex II to the Convention, “[a]t least three months before the date of each election, the Secretary-General of the United Nations shall address a letter to the States Parties, inviting the submission of nominations, after appropriate regional consultations, within three months. The Secretary-General shall prepare a list in alphabetical order of all persons thus nominated and shall submit it to all the States Parties.”

The Secretary-General hereby invites States Parties to the Convention to submit nominations for the election of 21 members to the Commission.

Pursuant to article 2, paragraph 1, of Annex II to the Convention, members of the Commission “shall be experts in the field of geology, geophysics or hydrography, elected by States Parties to [the] Convention from among their nationals, having due regard to the need to ensure equitable geographical representation, who shall serve in their personal capacities”.

States parties are encouraged to nominate female experts, with a view to achieving gender balance in the Commission.

Procedure of nomination

The period for the nomination of candidates for the election of the members of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf will open on 16 December 2021 and will close on 15 March 2022 at midnight (EST time).

Nominations made before 16 December 2021 or after 15 March 2022 cannot be accepted. Following the end of the nomination period, the Secretary-General will prepare, in alphabetical order, a list of all the persons thus nominated. The list will then be submitted to all States Parties.

Nominations must indicate the name of the candidate and include a statement of qualifications of the candidate. It is recalled that pursuant to article 2, paragraph 1, of annex II to the Convention, members of the Commission shall be experts in the fields of geology, geophysics or hydrography.

It is recalled that at the resumed thirty-first Meeting of States Parties, the President of the Meeting stressed the importance of ensuring full and effective participation and equal opportunities at all levels for women in institutions relevant under the Convention, in order to achieve gender equality, as recognized in Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SPLOS/31/13, para. 15). States Parties are thus encouraged to nominate female experts, with a view to promoting gender balance in the Commission.

The statement of qualifications should not exceed 400 words; however, the nominating State may additionally submit a full curriculum vitae for publication on the web site of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs. Nominations must be addressed to:

The Secretary-General of the United Nations
 c/o Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea
 Office of Legal Affairs
 United Nations DC2-0450
 New York, NY 10017
 fax: 1 (917) 367-0560

The statement of qualifications of the candidate should also be transmitted electronically in MS Word format to: doalos@un.org.

Expenses of members while in performance of Commission duties – an undertaking by nominating States

Pursuant to article 2, paragraph 5, of Annex II to the Convention, “the State Party which submitted the nomination of a member of the Commission shall defray the expenses of that member while in performance of Commission duties”. In addition to defraying the costs associated with relevant travel and subsistence allowance, this may also include appropriate life, medical and other forms of insurance covering the period of service.

Developing States whose candidates are elected to the Commission can request and receive financial assistance for these expenses from the *Voluntary Trust Fund for the purpose of defraying the cost of participation of the members of the Commission from developing States in the meetings of the Commission* established by General Assembly resolution 55/7, subject to availability of funds in that Trust Fund. These include the costs that relate to travel and daily subsistence allowance, including self-obtained medical travel insurance for qualifying members of the Commission, up to a maximum limit of USD 570 per 50-day coverage period or prorated accordingly to the actual length of the session.

In addition, it is recalled that the General Assembly has also decided, on an exceptional basis, that the members of the Commission will have the option to join the Headquarters medical insurance scheme upon payment of the full premium and that such costs paid by members of the Commission from developing States can be reimbursed from the Trust Fund, subject to the availability of funds (see, resolution 76/72, para. 110).

The twenty-sixth Meeting of States Parties “urged States parties that would nominate candidates for future elections of members of the Commission to formally undertake to support their candidates in accordance with article 2, paragraph 5, of annex II to the Convention. [...] Such an undertaking could be provided in the form of a note verbale that would accompany the nomination of a candidate to the Commission and would be brought to the attention of the Meeting of States Parties at the time of the election of the members of the Commission” (SPLOS/303, paragraph 79).

Moreover, the twenty-sixth Meeting of States Parties appealed to States “to ensure the full participation of the members of the Commission nominated by them in the work of the Commission, including by not scheduling conflicting activities for those members during the sessions of the Commission” (SPLOS/303, paragraph 80).

In this connection, it is recalled that the twenty-sixth Meeting of States Parties requested the Commission, as from 16 June 2017, to “meet at United Nations Headquarters for up to 26 weeks, but not less than an intended minimum of 21 weeks, per year for a period of five years, distributed in such a way that the Commission determines to be the most effective, and that no two sessions be sequential” (SPLOS/303, paragraph 84).

The Secretary-General avails himself of this opportunity to renew to the representatives of States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea the assurances of his highest consideration.


15 December 2021

