



INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA
TRIBUNAL INTERNATIONAL DU DROIT DE LA MER

Press Release

PRESIDENT DOLLIVER NELSON ADDRESSES THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND HIGHLIGHTS THE CONTINUED CONTRIBUTION OF THE TRIBUNAL TO THE PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES

On 24 November 2003, the President of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, Judge Dolliver Nelson, addressed the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations on the agenda item "Oceans and the Law of the Sea".



UN Photo by Eskinder Debebe

In his statement the President expressed his gratitude to the drafters of the resolution on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, which notes the continued contribution of the Tribunal to the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with Part XV of the Convention and underlines the important role and authority of the Tribunal concerning the interpretation or application of the Convention and the Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the Convention.

The President stressed the ability of the Tribunal to deliver decisions within short periods of time and noted that the Tribunal has made significant pronouncements on several aspects of the Convention. He noted that the Tribunal has dealt predominantly with cases in which it has compulsory jurisdiction: the prompt release of vessels and crews and the prescription of provisional measures. He brought to the attention of the delegations the fact that the Tribunal has competence under the Convention, and

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remains ready, to resolve a much wider range of disputes concerning the interpretation or application of the Convention.

In his review of the developments that have taken place since the last meeting of the General Assembly on the item Oceans and Law of the Sea, President Nelson drew the Assembly's attention to the last two cases of the Tribunal, *The "Volga" Case* and the *Case concerning Land Reclamation by Singapore in and around the Straits of Johor*, emphasising that in Case No. 12 the Tribunal had once again underlined the central role and cardinal importance of cooperation between the parties in the protection and preservation of the marine environment.

Reiterating the draft resolution on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, President Nelson encouraged States to utilise the possibility offered to them by article 287 of the Convention to choose a means for the settlement of disputes concerning the interpretation or application of the Convention. He noted that 32 States Parties have made such declarations and that 19 States Parties have chosen the Tribunal as the means or as one of the means for the settlement of disputes.

President Nelson also drew the attention of the delegates to the voluntary trust fund that was established by the General Assembly in 2000 in order to assist States in the settlement of disputes through the Tribunal and encouraged States to contribute to this fund. He also appealed to States to consider ratifying or acceding to the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the Tribunal. In his closing remarks, the President expressed his deep appreciation for the full and cordial cooperation extended to the Tribunal by the Federal Republic of Germany and the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg.

The full text of the President's statement is available on the Tribunal's website.

On the same day, President Nelson met with the President of the 58th session of the UN General Assembly, Mr Julian Robert Hunte. He was also the guest of the spokesman of the UN Secretary-General, Mr Fred Eckhard, at the noon press briefing. On this occasion, President Nelson spoke about the work of the Tribunal and answered questions raised by journalists.

The Press Releases of the Tribunal, documents and other information are available on the Tribunal's websites: <http://www.itlos.org> and <http://www.tidm.org> and from the Registry of the Tribunal. Please contact Ms. Julia Pope at Am Internationalen Seegerichtshof 1, 22609 Hamburg, Germany, Tel.: +49 (40) 35607-227, Fax: +49 (40) 35607-245;
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