

Statement of Mr Philippe Gautier, Registrar of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Tribunal

Excellencies,
Members of the Tribunal,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Colleagues,

I should like to welcome you here today, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, and thank you for doing us the honour of celebrating this event with us.

It is a pleasure to receive the representatives from some 80 States: members of the diplomatic and consular corps as well as representatives from States who have made the journey all the way from their respective capital cities. We are honoured by your presence and show of commitment to the Tribunal.

I should also like to extend our thanks to the representatives of the Free and Hanseatic city of Hamburg and of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany for being present here today. We are grateful to you for the continued support you have shown the Tribunal, not only for these past 10 years but, in fact, since 1981, the date when the city of Hamburg was selected as the seat of the Tribunal, that is, for a total of 25 years.

I should like to extend my particular thanks to the First Mayor of the Free and Hanseatic city of Hamburg, Mr Ole von Beust, and to the State Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Housing, Mr Jörg Hennerkes.

We are thankful to the President of the International Court of Justice, Judge Rosalyn Higgins, The Legal Counsel of the United Nations, Mr Nicolas Michel, the President of the Meeting of States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, Ambassador Raymond Wolfe, the Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority, Mr Satya Nandan, the President of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, Mr Peter Croker, the Director of the United Nations Division on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, Mr Vladimir Golitsyn, and the representatives of the international courts and organizations based not only in Germany but around the world. The Tribunal seeks to maintain good relations with all international organizations and institutions and your decision to travel to Hamburg to join us in our celebratory events is valued most highly.

It is also an honour for me to welcome all other guests on this occasion, in particular those who have appeared in cases before the Tribunal, the numerous academics involved in furthering the study of law of the sea and the practitioners and representatives of the maritime industry.

It is with particular pleasure that I note the presence today of the first President of the Tribunal, Judge Mensah, of former judges of the Tribunal, Judges Warrioba, Anderson and Eiriksson, Judges ad hoc Hossain and Orrego Vicuña and the former Registrar, Mr Chitty.

The programme for this morning has been handed out to you. The statements are interpreted into the two official languages of the Tribunal, English and French. A few minutes after the end of the ceremony, before you are invited to lunch, you will have the time to look at the exhibition prepared by the staff members of the Tribunal, which gives an overview of the origin and current activity of the Tribunal. On the occasion of the anniversary, a booklet has been prepared with the texts of statements made by the successive Presidents of the Tribunal and on the occasion of the opening of our premises in 2000. The booklets are available to you and are on display on tables outside the courtroom. You will also find copies of the Guide to the proceedings of the Tribunal, a new publication which gives practical information on how to submit a case to the Tribunal. The guide is now available in English and French but I may inform you that in 2007 it will be available in all official languages of the United Nations.

But I have already spoken too many words and it is time to start today's programme. I have the pleasure now to invite Mr von Beust, First Mayor of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, to address this august gathering.