



INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA
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Press Release

THE TWENTY-SECOND MEETING OF STATES PARTIES TO THE 1982 UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF THE SEA CELEBRATES THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OPENING FOR SIGNATURE OF THE CONVENTION

The twenty-second Meeting of States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (New York, 4 - 11 June 2012) completed its work on 11 June with the adoption of the budget of the Tribunal for 2013-2014.

At the beginning of the Meeting, on 4 June, the President of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, Judge Shunji Yanai, presented the Annual Report of the Tribunal for 2011. The President highlighted the substantial growth in the Tribunal's judicial activities with regard not only to the number of cases but also to the complexity and variety of matters before it. He emphasized that the Tribunal had sought to establish and meet exacting schedules with a view to conducting its judicial procedures in a cost-effective and timely manner.

President Yanai recalled that on 14 March 2012 the Tribunal delivered its judgment in the first maritime delimitation case submitted to it: the *Dispute concerning the delimitation of the maritime boundary between Bangladesh and Myanmar in the Bay of Bengal (Bangladesh/Myanmar)*. He pointed out that the decision in the case had been delivered a little more than two years after proceedings were instituted.

The President further noted that the Tribunal's first advisory opinion, delivered by the Seabed Disputes Chamber on 1 February 2011 in respect of the *Responsibilities and obligations of States sponsoring persons and entities with respect to activities in the Area*, had also been handled expeditiously and completed in slightly less than nine months from receipt of the request. He observed that the advisory opinion had been well received within the framework of the International Seabed Authority.

Referring to *The M/V "Louisa" Case* (Case No. 18), the President explained that all written pleadings had been duly filed by the Parties and that the hearing in the case was scheduled to take place in October 2012, while the Judgment was expected to be delivered in the second quarter of 2013.

Turning to *The M/V "Virginia G" Case* (Case No. 19), President Yanai informed the Meeting that the time-limits for the filing of written pleadings in the case had been set by Orders dated 18 August, 30 September and 23 December 2011 and that the first round of written pleadings had concluded on 30 May 2012.

The President pointed out the Tribunal's continuing efforts to promote knowledge of the Convention and its dispute settlement system, citing the Tribunal's internship programme, the Summer Academy of the International Foundation for the Law of the Sea and the capacity-building and training programme on law of the sea dispute settlement procedures, organised by the Tribunal with the support of the Nippon Foundation. In concluding his statement, President Yanai informed the Meeting of the establishment of a new trust fund in May 2012 with financial support from the China Institute of International Studies. The text of the President's statement may be found on the website of the Tribunal.

The Meeting of States Parties celebrated the 30th anniversary of the opening for signature of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea with a panel discussion held on 8 June 2012.

Opening the panel discussion, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr Ban Ki-moon, said that the Convention had historic significance as "an important contribution to the maintenance of peace, justice and progress for all peoples of the world".

United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, the Legal Counsel, Ms Patricia O'Brien stated in her opening remarks that the Convention provided "a flexible framework for adapting to new challenges — for the maintenance and development of the law of the sea, as well as for the strengthening of international peace and security."

In his statement the Chairman of the Nippon Foundation of Japan, Dr Yohei Sasakawa, addressed the importance of human capacity in the implementation of the Convention.

The ensuing panel discussion included participation by the President of the Tribunal, Judge Shunji Yanai, the Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority, Mr Nii A. Odunton, and the Chairman of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, Mr. Galo Carrera, as panellists. The discussion was chaired by H.E. Mr Raymond Wolfe, Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the United Nations.

In his remarks, the President of the Tribunal recalled that the Convention "redefined the continental shelf within and beyond 200 nautical miles", "set up a new regime for maritime navigation" and "established an innovative, complex yet flexible system of dispute settlement to ensure the proper interpretation and efficient application of its provisions".

Following the round table, delegations made statements to mark the commemoration. On the occasion the Meeting also adopted a declaration marking the 30th anniversary of the Convention. The text of the declaration will be made available on the website of the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS).

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 the Press Office at: Am Internationalen Seegerichtshof 1, 22609 Hamburg, Germany
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