



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

## **Press Release**

**PRESIDENT YANAI ADDRESSES THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY ON THE OCCASION OF THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
OPENING FOR SIGNATURE OF THE CONVENTION AND ON AGENDA ITEM  
“OCEANS AND LAW OF THE SEA”**

Judge Shunji Yanai, President of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, made two statements before the United Nations General Assembly on 10 and 11 December 2012. The President first addressed the General Assembly on the occasion of the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the opening for signature of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The second statement was made in the context of the General Assembly’s annual consideration of its agenda item “Oceans and the Law of the Sea”.

In his statement on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the opening for signature of the Convention, the President underlined the fact that the adoption of the Convention was one of the pivotal moments in the development of international law. He also noted that the Convention established a comprehensive legal framework regulating the most important resource on the planet, defining the status of different maritime areas and introducing an efficient mechanism for the settlement of disputes.

In this connection the President highlighted the key role played by the Tribunal in the settlement of disputes under the Convention. He pointed out the broad spectrum of legal questions that have been submitted to the Tribunal in the 16 years of its existence, including issues such as navigation, fisheries, use of force, protection of the marine environment and delimitation of maritime areas. He also emphasized the Tribunal’s commitment to serving the needs of the international community, stating that the Tribunal “strive[s] to meet the expectations of States turning to us to find a solution to their disputes as quickly as possible”.

In his statement during the General Assembly’s annual consideration of its agenda item “Oceans and Law of the Sea”, President Yanai welcomed the two newest Member States, Ecuador and Swaziland, which ratified the Convention in September 2012, thereby bringing the total number of States Parties up to 164,

including the European Union. The ever-increasing number of States Parties, the President pointed out, was a “manifestation of the positive momentum towards universal participation” in the 1982 Convention. The President noted that as at 1 December 2012, 47 of those 164 States had made declarations regarding the choice of means for the settlement of disputes under article 287 and that 34 of those declarations have been made in favour of the Tribunal.

The President also gave an overview of the judicial work of the Tribunal. Noting that 20 cases have been submitted to the Tribunal so far, he drew the delegates’ attention to the three cases currently pending before the Tribunal: the “*ARA Libertad*” Case (*Argentina v. Ghana*), the *M/V “Louisa” Case (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines v. Kingdom of Spain)* and the *M/V “Virginia G” Case (Panama/Guinea-Bissau)* .

The President 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 slightly more than two years after proceedings were instituted and that the judgment was well received by the two Parties, Bangladesh and Myanmar.

Describing the Tribunal’s activity in providing training in the law of the sea, the President cited the Tribunal’s internship programme, which has received financial support from the Korea Maritime Institute and the China Institute of International Studies to provide assistance to candidates from developing countries. He also made reference to 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, and to the Summer Academy of the International Foundation for the Law of the Sea.

The text of the President’s statements may be found on the website of the Tribunal.

Note: The press releases of the Tribunal do not constitute official documents and are issued for information purposes only.

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