



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

Press Release

TRIBUNAL CO-HOSTS SYMPOSIUM ON FLAG STATE RESPONSIBILITIES AND THE FUTURE OF ARTICLE 91 OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF THE SEA

On 5 March 2020, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) co-hosted a symposium on flag State responsibilities and the future of article 91 of the Convention. The symposium, held at IMO headquarters in London, was organized by the International Maritime Law Institute and the World Maritime University and was attended by delegates from IMO Member States, representatives from international organizations, maritime lawyers and academics. Opening remarks were given by Mr Kitack Lim (Secretary-General, IMO) and ITLOS President Paik and Vice-President Attard.

In his opening remarks, President Paik welcomed the opportunity to discuss the issue of flag State responsibilities and emphasized that “it is important for us to step outside the deliberation room in Hamburg and to engage with the shipping community and IMO delegates on areas of concern in relation to the nationality of vessels”. He informed the symposium participants that the Tribunal “wishe[d] to ensure that States Parties to the Convention, and flag States in particular, understand the work of the Tribunal and the possibilities it offers for dispute settlement in relation to disputes involving vessels”.

The Secretary-General of the IMO stated that there was “great value in exploring the relationship between the Convention and IMO instruments”. He also expressed the wish that the “event would contribute to further conversations on the issue” of flag State responsibilities.

Presentations were given by Judges Kateka and Heidar on issues concerning “Nationality and registration of ships in the jurisprudence of the Tribunal” and “The right of the flag State to make claims in respect of its vessels”, respectively. Other presentations examined future challenges related to ship registration; the role of the Tribunal in the interpretation and application of article 91; the impact of fraudulent registries (including an update on the work of the IMO on measures to prevent unlawful practices associated with fraudulent registration); and the changing dynamics between governments and ship registries.

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