



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

Press Release

PRESIDENT HEIDAR REPORTS TO THE MEETING OF STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION, NOTING THE TRIBUNAL'S GROWING BODY OF JURISPRUDENCE AND THE SUBMISSION OF THREE NEW CASES

Judge Tomas Heidar, President of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, addressed the thirty-sixth Meeting of States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on 15 June 2026, presenting the Tribunal's annual report for 2025 and informing delegates about the judicial work, organizational matters and capacity-building activities of the Tribunal since the last Meeting.

Reviewing the Tribunal's recent judicial work, President Heidar noted that a Special Chamber of the Tribunal had delivered its Judgment in *The M/T "Heroic Idun" (No. 2) Case* between the Marshall Islands and Equatorial Guinea on 27 May 2026. The case concerned the lawfulness of the arrest and detention of the *M/T "Heroic Idun"* and its crew by Equatorial Guinea. The President referred to the findings of the Special Chamber in relation to the responsibility borne by Equatorial Guinea and noted that the Special Chamber awarded the Marshall Islands compensation for several heads of damage, including for the loss suffered by the *M/T "Heroic Idun"* and for non-material damage suffered by the crew.

The President observed that proceedings in *The "Zheng He" Case (Luxembourg v. Mexico)*, which concerned the detention by Mexican authorities of a dredger flying the flag of Luxembourg in the Port of Tampico, Mexico, had been discontinued at the request of the parties on 16 March 2026.

The President then drew the delegates' attention to the recent submission of three contentious cases. He referred first to two cases submitted on 5 June 2026 to the Seabed Disputes Chamber of the Tribunal by Nauru Ocean Resources Inc. and Tonga Offshore Mining Ltd. against the International Seabed Authority, highlighting that these are the first contentious cases to be brought before the Seabed Disputes Chamber. He informed delegates that each Application had been accompanied by a request for the prescription of provisional measures under article 290, paragraph 1, of the Convention. The President further informed delegates that, on 3 June 2026, Ghana and Togo had concluded a special agreement requesting the formation of a special chamber of the Tribunal to deal with the dispute concerning the delimitation of the maritime boundary between them in the Gulf of Guinea, and that, by Order dated 12 June 2026, the Tribunal decided to accede to the request of the Parties to form a special chamber of seven members to deal with their dispute.

Turning to other matters, President Heidar appraised the various capacity-building programmes in which the Tribunal is engaged, including regional, thematic and Legal Advisers workshops, and the fellowship and internship programmes. He provided information on the upcoming workshop in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Maritime Law Institute (IMLI) to be held in Malta in August, and the upcoming fifth ITLOS workshop for Legal Advisers (sponsored by the Republic of Korea) to be held at the Tribunal in September, this time for States from Asia. The President expressed his gratitude to the Governments of Malta, Cyprus and the Republic of Korea, to IMLI, the Korea Maritime Institute, and the Nippon Foundation for their support of the respective programmes, and to all the donors of the Trust Fund for the Law of the Sea.

President Heidar's statement concluded with the announcement that the Tribunal's thirtieth anniversary would be marked on 25 September 2026 by a commemorative event and the release of new editions of the Digest of Jurisprudence of the Tribunal and the Basic Texts. The President emphasized that, over its first thirty years, the Tribunal had established itself as a central forum for the peaceful settlement of law of the sea disputes, as evidenced by the continuing submission of cases to the Tribunal, as well as by the advisory jurisdiction conferred on the Tribunal under the BBNJ Agreement. The President expressed his belief that the Tribunal "is well placed to carry on its mandate successfully into its fourth decade and beyond and to meet the challenges of the future."

The President's statement 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.

The press releases of the Tribunal, documents and other information are available on the Tribunal's website (<http://www.itlos.org> and <http://www.tidm.org>) and from the Registry of the Tribunal. Please contact Ms Julia Ritter at: Am Internationalen Seegerichtshof 1, 22609 Hamburg, Germany, Tel.: +49 (40) 35607-227; E-mail: press@itlos.org