



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

Press Release

(Issued by the Registry)

**TRIBUNAL ADOPTS ITS RULES OF PROCEDURE,
RESOLUTION ON ITS INTERNAL JUDICIAL PRACTICE, AND
GUIDELINES TO ASSIST PARTIES**

HAMBURG, 3 November. One year after the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea was constituted and its inauguration celebrated, the Tribunal completed its judicial organization with the adoption of three very significant instruments: the Rules of the Tribunal, a set of Guidelines to assist parties in presenting cases, and a Resolution on the Internal Judicial Practice of the Tribunal setting out the manner in which the deliberations of the Judges will take place.

The Tribunal emerges from its initial organization with the establishment of a standing Chamber of Summary Procedure for urgent matters, a Seabed Disputes Chamber, a Chamber for Marine Environment Disputes, and a Chamber for Fisheries Disputes. Now the Tribunal has in place the procedural instruments that regulate and facilitate the functioning of the Tribunal and its Chambers, the deliberation of the Judges, and access to it by parties to a dispute.

The adoption of these instruments marked the conclusion of the Fourth Session of the Tribunal in Hamburg, on 31 October 1997. A more detailed account of the session and its achievements will be made available in a further Press Release to be issued shortly.

The Rules of the Tribunal

The Rules consist of a total of 138 articles, which were adopted concurrently in English and French. The Rules set out the organization of the judiciary and the Registry. Most importantly, they provide a set of procedural steps that structure the conduct of a case: from the point of the institution of proceedings through the stages of written pleadings and hearings to the conclusion of a case with a judgment or an advisory opinion.

The Tribunal decided at the very outset that the Rules should ensure the efficient, cost-effective, and user-friendly administration of justice -- the goal being to serve the interest of justice independently, fairly, affordably, with expedition and based on the rule of law. To this end, the Rules provide for abbreviated time-limits, prompt hearings, and the use of modern technologies.

(more)

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Resolution on the Internal Judicial Practice of the Tribunal

The Resolution on the Internal Judicial Practice of the Tribunal stipulates how the Tribunal reaches a decision in a case. The Resolution defines the method used for the deliberation on cases and the drafting of judgments.

Guidelines concerning the Preparation and Presentation of Cases before the Tribunal

Together with its Rules, the Tribunal adopted a set of Guidelines, intended to provide the parties appearing before the Tribunal with practical information concerning the proceedings.

These instruments and further information on the Tribunal are available on the United Nations website: <http://www.un.org/Depts/los/>. Previous Press Releases, setting out the background and the composition of the Tribunal and its specialized chambers, are available from the Registrar of the Tribunal. Requests may be addressed by telephone, facsimile or E-mail:
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