

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



**Statement given by His Excellency, Judge Rüdiger Wolfrum,
President of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea
at the opening of the regional workshop in Dakar**

Minister of State, in charge of Maritime Economy
and International Maritime Transport,

Honourable Members of the Government,

Excellencies,

Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Representatives of international organizations,

Honourable participants,

Distinguished guests,

Minister of State, we are greatly honoured by your opening today of the Dakar regional workshop, organized by the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea and the International Foundation for the Law of the Sea with your country's support. I should also like to express our gratitude to the Korea International Cooperation Agency whose funding has greatly facilitated the organization of this workshop.

Your presence here today, Minister of State, bears witness to your country's commitment to the cause of law and international justice. It is a sign of great encouragement to us in our mission, and one for which my colleagues and I thank you most heartily.

Our thanks go likewise to the Government of Senegal and in particular yourself, Minister of State, without whose support it would have been impossible to organize this workshop in such favourable circumstances.

The theme of our work here – the role of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea in the settlement of disputes – is in keeping with Senegal's tradition related geographically and historically to the sea, and with the longstanding and sustained interest your country has shown in international justice.

Your country, Minister of State, made an enormous contribution to initiating the movement to reform the law of the sea. Subsequently, within the African group, it played a decisive role in this movement, which led to the establishment of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982. The Convention

created the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, an institution for which developing countries, especially those in Africa, had wished for a long time.

As a signatory of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea since 1982 and a State Party since 1984, Senegal has also made its mark on the Tribunal through the intermediary of one of its eminent lawyers, Judge Tafsir Malick Ndiaye, who was elected when the Tribunal became operational, in 1996.

Minister of State, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Dakar workshop is the first in a series of regional workshops which are being organized throughout the world in order to raise awareness of the advantages which the Tribunal can offer in settling disputes relating to the law of the sea. I am able to inform you that two further workshops have already been planned for 2007: one in Jamaica and one in Singapore.

Within this context, the theme of our work devoted to "The role of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea in the settlement of disputes" came about quite naturally. Of course, we are well aware that peace cannot be the result of law alone and that judges are not the sole guarantors of peace. But we also know that the law can play a considerable role in the resolution of differences and the prevention of conflicts. And this is the mission which the Tribunal is called upon to pursue.

Indeed, the matter of the seas and oceans is of extreme timeliness for States, whether it concerns the delimitation of maritime spaces, combating pollution, management of fishing zones or exploitation of the seas' resources. The sea is also a place where many different interests converge; those of States and those of users of the seas: shipowners, oil companies, fishermen, and scientists. It is because these interests are so diverse that it is of fundamental importance to ensure that efficient mechanisms are in place for settling any disputes that may arise.

We could have decided to deal with our chosen topic in the conventional way and organize a series of conferences.

However, we decided differently and purposely chose to take a more practical approach, by presenting the different aspects of proceedings before the Tribunal and responding to the questions practitioners ask themselves when a case is brought before it.

Minister of State,

As I conclude this brief address, on behalf of both the organizers of the workshop and myself, I should like say how touched we are by the warm welcome given to us and all the assistance we have received in preparing this workshop. Thank you very much.

Finally, in the name of the Tribunal, I should like to present you, Minister of State, with a copy of the *Basic Texts* of the Tribunal as well as a collection of the *Reports of Judgments, Advisory Opinions and Orders* of the Tribunal.

The President of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea presents a copy of the Basic Texts of the Tribunal and a collection of the Reports of Judgments, Advisory Opinions and Orders of the Tribunal to the Minister of State.