



Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf

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New York, 14 October–29 November 2019

Progress of work in the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf

Statement by the Chair

Summary

The present statement provides information on the work carried out during the fifty-first session of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf. In particular, it contains an overview of the progress made in the examination of the submissions made by the Russian Federation in respect of the Arctic Ocean (partial revised submission); Brazil in respect of the Brazilian equatorial margin (partial revised submission); France and South Africa, jointly, in respect of the area of the Crozet Archipelago and the Prince Edward Islands; Kenya; Nigeria; Palau in respect of the North Area (partial amended submission); Sri Lanka; Portugal; Spain in respect of the area of Galicia (partial submission); and India (partial submission).



I. Introduction

1. The Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf held its fifty-first session at United Nations Headquarters from 14 October to 29 November 2019.¹ The session was entirely devoted to the technical examination of submissions at the geographic information systems laboratories of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs of the Secretariat.

2. The following members of the Commission attended the session: Adnan Rashid Nasser Al-Azri, Lawrence Folajimi Awosika, Aldino Campos, Wanda-Lee De Landro-Clarke, Ivan F. Glumov, Martin Vang Heinesen, Mazlan bin Madon, Estevão Stefane Mahanjane, Jair Alberto Ribas Marques, Marcin Mazurowski, Domingos de Carvalho Viana Moreira, David Cole Mosher, Simon Njuguna, Yong Ahn Park, Carlos Marcelo Paterlini, Clodette Raharimananirina, Yong Tang, Toshitsugu Yamazaki and Gonzalo Alejandro Yáñez Carrizo.²

3. The Commission had before it the following documents:

(a) Statements by the Chair on the progress of work in the Commission at its fiftieth session (CLCS/50/2 and CLCS/50/2/Corr.1);

(b) Submissions made by coastal States³ pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, including related communications.

II. Consideration of the partial revised submission made by the Russian Federation in respect of the Arctic Ocean⁴

4. The subcommission, chaired by Mr. Madon, met from 11 to 29 November. During that period, it continued the main scientific and technical examination of the submission, focusing in particular on the data and information provided by the delegation in response to the requests for clarification made by the subcommission during the fiftieth session.

5. The subcommission held three meetings with the delegation of the Russian Federation, during which presentations were exchanged with regard to the additional data and information provided by the delegation. Subsequently, the subcommission transmitted its comments and requests for additional data and information resulting from the examination of the data and information submitted by the delegation.

6. The subcommission decided that its members would continue to work on the submission during the intersessional period and that it would resume its consideration of the submission at the fifty-second session, which would include meetings with the delegation.

¹ See CLCS/105, para. 88, and General Assembly resolution 73/124, para. 103.

² Owing to personal, health or other reasons, Mr. Awosika attended the session until 26 November; Mr. Glumov attended the session from 21 October to 22 November; Mr. Moreira attended the session from 22 November; Messrs. Al-Azri, Marques, Mosher and Yáñez attended the session only until 27 November; and Messrs. Campos and Mazurowski did not attend the session on 21 and 22 November. Emmanuel Kalngui informed the secretariat that he was not able to attend the session owing to visa-related issues.

³ For a full list of the submissions made to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, see www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs_new/commission_submissions.htm.

⁴ Submission made on 3 August 2015. Available at www.un.org/depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_rus_rev1.htm.

7. The meetings of the subcommission during the fifty-second session will be held from 17 to 21 February 2020.

III. Consideration of the partial revised submission made by Brazil in respect of the Brazilian equatorial margin⁵

8. The subcommission, chaired by Mr. Awosika, met from 14 to 25 October. During that period, it commenced the main scientific and technical examination of the submission.

9. No meetings were held with the delegation of Brazil. At the end of the session, the subcommission transmitted to the delegation a document containing its preliminary observations and requests for clarification and additional data and information.

10. The subcommission decided that it would resume its consideration of the submission at the fifty-second session.

11. The meetings of the subcommission during the fifty-second session will be held from 27 to 31 January and from 10 to 14 February 2020.

IV. Consideration of the joint submission made by France and South Africa in respect of the area of the Crozet Archipelago and the Prince Edward Islands⁶

12. The subcommission, chaired by Mr. Njuguna, met from 21 to 25 October. During that period, it continued the main scientific and technical examination of the submission.

13. No meetings were held with the joint delegation of France and South Africa. The subcommission considered the communications it received in response to the way forward it had proposed at the fiftieth session, including data and information, as well as a document transmitted by the joint delegation during the session. The communications sought clarification with regard to a number of scientific and technical issues concerning the views and conclusions reflected in the document transmitted by the subcommission during the forty-sixth session, pursuant to paragraph 10.3 of annex III to the rules of procedure,⁷ and the related document of clarifications which the subcommission had transmitted during the forty-eighth session.

14. The subcommission decided that it would resume its consideration of the submission during the fifty-second session.

15. It was decided that the meetings of the subcommission during the fifty-second session would be held from 27 to 31 January 2020.

⁵ Submission made on 8 September 2017. Available at www.un.org/depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_bra_rev2.htm.

⁶ Submission made on 6 May 2009. Available at www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_frazaf_34_2009.htm.

⁷ CLCS/103, para. 23.

V. Consideration of the submission made by Kenya⁸

16. The subcommission, chaired by Mr. Heinesen, met from 28 October to 8 November. During that period, it continued the main scientific and technical examination of the submission.

17. No meetings were held with the delegation of Kenya. After reviewing a response by the delegation to requests for clarification made by the subcommission during the fiftieth session, the subcommission transmitted a summary of considerations and requests for clarification based on its examination of the data and information submitted to date.

18. The subcommission decided that its members would continue to consider the submission during the intersessional period and that it would resume its consideration of the submission during the fifty-second session.

19. The meetings of the subcommission during the fifty-second session will be held from 24 to 28 February and from 9 to 13 March 2020.

VI. Consideration of the submission made by Nigeria⁹

20. The subcommission, chaired by Mr. Mahanjane, met from 11 to 29 November. During that period, it continued the main scientific and technical examination of the submission.

21. Two meetings were held with the delegation, during which the delegation presented its response to the views and conclusions of the subcommission relating to the submission area that were transmitted at the fiftieth session,¹⁰ and the delegation and the subcommission exchanged further views.

22. At the end of the session, the subcommission transmitted a communication with its views and conclusions relating to the response by the delegation.

23. The subcommission decided that its members would continue to work individually on the submission during the intersessional period and that it would resume its consideration of the submission during the fifty-second session.

24. The meetings of the subcommission during the fifty-second session will be held from 17 to 21 February 2020.

VII. Consideration of the partial amended submission made by Palau in respect of the North Area¹¹

25. The subcommission, chaired by Mr. Paterlini, met from 28 October to 8 November. During that period, it continued the main scientific and technical examination of the submission, focusing in particular on the data and information provided by the delegation in response to the requests for clarification made by the subcommission during the fiftieth session.

⁸ Submission made on 6 May 2009. Available at www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_ken_35_2009.htm.

⁹ Submission made on 7 May 2009. Available at www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_nga_38_2009.htm.

¹⁰ CLCS/50/2, para. 30.

¹¹ Submission made on 8 May 2009 and amended on 26 October 2017. Available at www.un.org/depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_plw_41_2009.htm.

26. Three meetings were held with the delegation, during which presentations were exchanged with regard to the additional data and information submitted by the delegation and on the progress of consideration of the submission by the subcommission, including its views that the test of appurtenance had been passed. The delegation made another presentation in response to the preliminary views of the subcommission and submitted additional data and information. At the end of the session, the subcommission transmitted some requests for clarification and additional data and information to the delegation.

27. The subcommission decided that its members would continue to work individually on the submission during the intersessional period and that it would resume its consideration of the submission during the fifty-second session, which would include meetings with the delegation.

28. The meetings of the subcommission during the fifty-second session will be held from 24 to 28 February and from 9 to 13 March 2020.

VIII. Consideration of the submission made by Sri Lanka¹²

29. The subcommission, chaired by Mr. Yáñez, met from 28 October to 8 November. During that period, it continued the main scientific and technical examination of the submission, focusing in particular on the data and information provided by the delegation in response to the requests for clarification made by the subcommission during the fiftieth session.¹³

30. The subcommission held two meetings with the delegation, during which presentations were exchanged with regard to the additional data and information provided by the delegation. Subsequently, the subcommission transmitted its comments and requests based on its examination of the data and information submitted during the session.

31. The subcommission decided that its members would continue to work individually on the submission during the intersessional period and that it would resume its consideration of the submission during the fifty-second session, which would include meetings with the delegation.

32. The meetings of the subcommission during the fifty-second session will be held from 24 to 28 February and from 9 to 13 March 2020.

IX. Consideration of the submission made by Portugal¹⁴

33. The subcommission, chaired by Ms. De Landro-Clarke, met from 14 to 25 October. During that period, it continued the main scientific and technical examination of the submission, focusing in particular on the response by the delegation to the requests for clarification made by the subcommission during the fiftieth session.

34. Three meetings were held with the delegation, during which presentations were exchanged by the delegation and the subcommission relating to the submission area. Subsequently, the subcommission transmitted a communication to the delegation with

¹² Submission made on 8 May 2009. Available at www.un.org/depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_lka_43_2009.htm.

¹³ CLCS/50/2, para. 45.

¹⁴ Submission made on 11 May 2009 and amended on 1 August 2017. Available at www.un.org/depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submissionprt_44_2009.htm.

its views relating to the submission area and the progress of its consideration of the submission.

35. The subcommission decided that its members would continue to work individually on the submission during the intersessional period and that it would resume its consideration of the submission during the fifty-second session, which would include meetings with the delegation.

36. The meetings of the subcommission during the fifty-second session will be held from 27 to 31 January and from 10 to 14 February 2020.

X. Consideration of the submission made by Spain in respect of the area of Galicia¹⁵

37. The subcommission, chaired by Mr. Mosher, met from 11 to 29 November. During that period, it conducted the initial examination of the submission and commenced its main scientific and technical examination.

38. The subcommission held one meeting with the delegation. Following a standard introductory presentation by the subcommission on the procedures and practices followed by subcommissions in the examination of submissions, the delegation made a presentation which included an exchange of views and was followed by the transmittal of requests for additional data and information.

39. During the initial examination of the submission it was determined, among other things, that the test of appurtenance was satisfied. The issue of whether appropriate combinations of the foot of the continental slope points and constraint lines had been used would be addressed in the context of the main scientific and technical examination of the submission. The subcommission concluded that further time would be required to examine all of the data and to prepare recommendations for transmittal to the Commission.

40. Subsequently, the subcommission transmitted some observations and further requests for additional data and information to the delegation.

41. The subcommission decided that its members would continue to work individually on the submission during the intersessional period and that it would resume its consideration of the submission at the fifty-second session.

42. The meetings of the subcommission during the fifty-second session will be held from 17 to 21 February 2020.

XI. Consideration of the submission made by India¹⁶

43. The subcommission, chaired by Mr. Mahanjane, met from 14 to 18 October. During that period, the subcommission conducted the initial examination of the submission and commenced the main scientific and technical examination of the submission.

44. The subcommission held three meetings with the delegation. Following a standard introductory presentation by the subcommission on the procedures and practices followed by subcommissions in the examination of submissions, the

¹⁵ Submission made on 11 May 2009. Available at www.un.org/depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_esp_47_2009.htm.

¹⁶ Submission made on 11 May 2009. Available at www.un.org/depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_ind_48_2009.htm.

delegation made a presentation in respect of the western offshore region of India in the Arabian Sea included in the submission. The delegation also made a presentation in response to a request for clarification made by the subcommission.

45. Subsequently, the subcommission presented to the delegation its preliminary observations relating to the materials contained in the submission and requested clarifications and additional data and information. The subcommission indicated that during the initial examination of the submission it had determined that the test of apurtenance was satisfied. The subcommission concluded that further time would be required to examine all of the data and to prepare recommendations for transmittal to the Commission. The subcommission further indicated that, following the initial examination, it had commenced the main scientific and technical examination of the submission.

46. The subcommission decided that its members would continue to work individually on the submission during the intersessional period and that it would resume its consideration of the submission during the fifty-second session, which would include meetings with the delegation.

47. The meetings of the subcommission during the fifty-second session will be held from 10 to 14 February 2020.

XII. Other matters

Conditions of service of the members of the Commission

48. On 18 November 2019, the members of the Commission met with the Co-Coordinator of the Open-ended Working Group on the Conditions of Service of the Members of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, Sidney Kemble.¹⁷ The members of the Commission and the Co-Coordinator exchanged views on the two recent surveys that had been requested by the twenty-ninth Meeting of States Parties and conducted among those members and their nominating States with a view to conveying, through Mr. Kemble, information about issues related to the conditions of service of the members of the Commission to the representatives attending the informal consultations on the draft resolution of the General Assembly on oceans and the law of the sea. The Co-Coordinator informed the members of the Commission that he would bring their concerns to the attention of the Working Group, together with proposals to address them, and that he would meet again with the Commission following the publication by the Secretariat of the comprehensive study requested by the twenty-ninth Meeting of States Parties on possible options to address the working conditions of the Commission, including its funding, which will be discussed by the thirtieth Meeting of States Parties in 2020.

Trust funds

49. The secretariat informed the members of the Commission about the status of the trust fund for the purpose of defraying the cost of participation in its meetings of those members of the Commission from developing States. For the fiftieth session, financial assistance had been provided to seven members of the Commission, in the amount of approximately \$140,000, including programme support costs. For the present session, an estimated total of \$120,000 in financial assistance, including programme support costs, was being provided to six members of the Commission. The secretariat also informed the members that it had addressed a note verbale to all Member States and States Parties to the Convention to draw their attention to the critically low balance

¹⁷ For more information on the deliberations of the twenty-ninth Meeting of States Parties concerning the conditions of service of the members of the Commission, see [SPLOS/29/9](#), paras. 77 to 86.

of the trust fund, which, at that time, stood at less than \$50,000. In the note verbale, the secretariat emphasized that, unless additional contributions were received by the end of 2019, there would not be enough funding to provide assistance with regard to the next session, which is scheduled to begin on 27 January 2020. The secretariat also informed States that, in the absence of additional contributions, more than one third of the members of the Commission whose participation is made possible through the financial assistance provided through the trust fund would not be able to attend the next session, nor any subsequent session in 2020. As a result, the Commission and its subcommissions would lack the quorum required for the conduct of business. That, in turn, would affect the examination of the 14 submissions which will be on the agenda of the fifty-second session.

Workshop

50. One half-day meeting in a workshop format was devoted to a discussion on submarine fans and their relation to the identification of the base of the slope.
