



Meeting of States Parties

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New York, 21–25 June 2021

Agenda item 14

Other matters

Decision on the extension of the term of office of the current members of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf

The Meeting of States Parties,

Reaffirming the importance of the work of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf for coastal States and the international community as a whole,

Recalling the letter dated 13 April 2020 from the Chair of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf addressed to the President of the thirtieth Meeting of States Parties¹ and the addenda thereto² regarding the decision of the Commission not to hold its fifty-third and fifty-fourth sessions at Headquarters as originally planned in the light of the situation concerning the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and recalling in particular the addendum dated 15 February 2021,³ in which it was stated that given the specific challenges that the Commission would face if working by means other than in-person sessions at United Nations Headquarters and related concerns, the members of the Commission had concluded that the Commission would not be in a position to hold its fifty-third session until its members were able to travel to the host country and conditions allowed for the conduct of in-person meetings, including in the geographic information system laboratories of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs of the Secretariat,

Mindful of the workload of the Commission owing to the large number of submissions already made and the number of submissions which are expected to be made in the future,

Taking into account the letter dated 6 April 2021 from the Chair of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf addressed to the President of the thirty-first Meeting of States Parties,⁴ in which the Chair recalls that the COVID-19 pandemic has created additional challenges for the work of the Commission and that,

¹ SPLOS/30/10.

² SPLOS/30/10/Add.1, SPLOS/30/10/Add.2, SPLOS/30/10/Add.3, SPLOS/30/10/Add.4, SPLOS/30/10/Add.5 and SPLOS/30/10/Add.6.

³ SPLOS/30/10/Add.6.

⁴ SPLOS/31/6.



consequently, a full year of work has been lost by the Commission at a time in its members' five year-term of office when the progress made in the first three years might have resulted in the approval of additional recommendations and informs that members of the Commission have expressed their readiness to serve for one additional year until June 2023, should it be so decided by the Meeting of the States Parties,

1. *Decides* that the term of office of the current members of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf shall be extended by one year, such that it will expire on 15 June 2023;

2. *Stresses* that the decision to extend the term of office of the current members of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf is made on an exceptional basis, owing to the unprecedented circumstances arising as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and that this decision is without prejudice to article 2, paragraph 4, of annex II to the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea⁵ and does not constitute a precedent, either for the Commission or for other bodies of the Convention or the United Nations with elected members.

⁵ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1833, No. 31363.