



Meeting of States Parties

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Letter dated 30 April 2001 from the Chairman of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf addressed to the President of the Eleventh Meeting of States Parties

1. In a letter dated 3 June 1999 (SPLOS/49) from the President of the Ninth Meeting of States Parties addressed to the Chairman of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf concerning the issue of financing the participation of members from the developing countries in the work of the Commission, the Commission was informed that in order to formulate any recommendations on this issue the Meeting need detailed factual information in writing from the Commission regarding actual needs and financial estimates for each session, and that without that information it would be difficult to take any action.
2. In a letter dated 5 May 2000 (SPLOS/52) from the Chairman of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf to the President of the Tenth Meeting of States Parties, detailed factual information was given regarding actual needs and financial estimates for each session of the Commission. This was requested by the States Parties to enable the Meeting to take a decision regarding whether to recommend to the General Assembly of the United Nations the establishment of a voluntary trust fund for the purpose of meeting the costs of participation (travel expenses and daily subsistence allowance) of the members of the Commission from developing countries in the meetings of the Commission. The Meeting took a decision to recommend the establishment of that fund (SPLOS/58).
3. In addition, the Meeting recommended to the General Assembly the establishment of an additional voluntary fund for the purpose of facilitating compliance under article 76, and meeting the need for dissemination of information and for training of personnel of developing countries with respect to that compliance (SPLOS/59).
4. On 30 October 2000, the General Assembly adopted resolution 55/7, which contained, inter alia, a request for the establishment of the two voluntary trust funds mentioned above. The establishment of a voluntary fund for the purpose of defraying the costs of participation of members of the Commission from developing States in the meetings of the Commission was requested in paragraph 20 of the resolution.



5. The General Assembly, in paragraph 18 of the same resolution, also requested the establishment of the additional fund related to article 76 and the work of the Commission. This fund was to provide training for technical and administrative staff, and technical and scientific advice, as well as personnel, to assist developing States, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States, for the purpose of desktop studies and project planning. It was also aimed at helping those States to prepare and submit information under article 76 and annex II to the Convention in accordance with the procedures of the Scientific and Technical Guidelines of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf. It included a provision requesting an annual report to the General Assembly on the status of the fund. The terms of reference of the fund were contained in annex II to the resolution. As you may be aware, a grant of US\$ 1 million has already been received by the United Nations for the fund, and steps have been taken to enable the fund to begin operation as soon as possible.

6. As Chairman of the Commission, I would like to convey, on behalf of the members of the Commission, our sincere gratitude for the vital role played by the Meeting of States Parties in the creation of these two funds. The decisions taken by the Tenth Meeting reflect the concerns shared by both the Commission and the Meeting that States, especially developing States, should be enabled to prepare a substantial submission to the Commission to establish their continental shelves beyond 200 nautical miles, and to be in a position to take advantage of the economic benefits which will lead to an improvement in their economic status, and an enhancement of the economic welfare of their people.

7. A full account of the work of the Commission in 2000 is found in the most recent report of the Secretary-General on "Oceans and the Law of the Sea" (A/56/58, paras. 52-82). In regard to actions taken recently by the Commission in furtherance of the development of the knowledge and skills for preparation of a submission in respect of the outer limits of the continental shelf provided for by the Convention, paragraphs 61 to 64 describe the documents prepared and actions taken. For example, a basic flowchart for preparation of a submission to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf was designed (CLCS/22).

8. In the context of its responsibilities to provide advice to coastal States, the Commission also prepared an outline for a training course of approximately five days' duration, aimed at practitioners who would take part in the preparation of the submission of a coastal State (CLCS/24). The outline was developed by the Commission to facilitate the preparation of submissions in accordance with the letter and spirit of the Convention, as well as with the Guidelines of the Commission. It was also hoped that courses offered using a standard outline would help ensure a uniform and consistent practice in the preparation of submissions to the Commission.

9. In this context, it must be noted that it is not part of the mandate of the Commission to conduct or organize training. The suggested course could be developed and delivered by interested Governments and/or international organizations and institutions that possess the necessary facilities and pedagogic and subject expertise. In fact, a five-day training workshop, using the outline published by the Commission as its basic work plan, has already taken place.

10. In the light of the above-mentioned information, I would like to request the Meeting to invite interested States, as well as international organizations and

institutions that possess the necessary facilities and pedagogic and subject expertise, to organize training to assist States. Courses could be adapted from the outline for a training course and fitted to the particular needs of coastal States at the regional level, which would have several practical advantages. First, offering courses to be held in, and designed for, specific regions would be cost-effective for developing countries in the region. Second, such courses may take into account the wide variety in types of continental margins in different areas of the oceans, as well as the ways of applying the criteria contained in the Convention.

11. As stipulated in the terms of reference of the trust fund established in accordance with paragraph 18 of General Assembly resolution 55/7, interested developing States, especially least developed States and small island developing States, may wish to consider taking steps to address requests for assistance from the trust fund as soon as it has been fully established and is operational. The Commission would also like to call for additional political and financial support for the trust fund for training, as well as for programmes, especially for developing countries, within the United Nations system and through other appropriate international or regional organizations.

12. Once again, I would like to call to the attention of the States Parties that the Commission is ready to receive submissions from coastal States. As mentioned in previous letters to the President of the Meeting of States Parties, the basic documents of the Commission related to those preparations are the Rules of Procedure (CLCS/3/Rev.3), the Modus Operandi (CLCS/L.3) and the Scientific and Technical Guidelines (CLCS/11, and Add.1 and Corr.1). These documents, as well as the most recent documents of the Commission, including the statement by the Chairman summarizing the debate and reflecting the decisions of the Commission (CLCS/25), are available to participants during the Meeting of States Parties.

(Signed) Yuri B. **Kazmin**
Chairman of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf
