

# **Draft Articles on Jurisdictional Immunities of States and Their Property**

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# Draft Articles on Jurisdictional Immunities of States and Their Property

## PART I INTRODUCTION

### *Article 1* *Scope of the present articles*

The present articles apply to the immunity of a State and its property from the jurisdiction of the courts of another State.

### *Article 2* *Use of terms*

1. For the purposes of the present articles:

- (a) “court” means any organ of a State, however named, entitled to exercise judicial functions;
- (b) “State” means:
  - (i) the State and its various organs of government;
  - (ii) constituent units of a federal State;
  - (iii) political subdivisions of the State which are entitled to perform acts in the exercise of the sovereign authority of the State;
  - (iv) agencies or instrumentalities of the State and other entities, to the extent that they are entitled to perform acts in the exercise of the sovereign authority of the State;
  - (v) representatives of the State acting in that capacity;
- (c) “commercial transaction” means:
  - (i) any commercial contract or transaction for the sale of goods or supply of services;
  - (ii) any contract for a loan or other transaction of a financial nature, including any obligation of guarantee or of indemnity in respect of any such loan or transaction;
  - (iii) any other contract or transaction of a commercial, industrial, trading or professional nature, but not including a contract of employment of persons.

2. In determining whether a contract or transaction is a “commercial transaction” under paragraph 1 (c), reference should be made primarily to the nature of the contract or transaction, but its purpose should also be taken into account if, in the practice of the State which is a party to it, that purpose is relevant to determining the non-commercial character of the contract or transaction.

3. The provisions of paragraphs 1 and 2 regarding the use of terms in the present articles are without prejudice to the use of those terms or to the meanings which may be given to them in other international instruments or in the internal law of any State.

*Article 3*  
*Privileges and immunities not affected*  
*by the present articles*

1. The present articles are without prejudice to the privileges and immunities enjoyed by a State under international law in relation to the exercise of the functions of:

- (a) its diplomatic missions, consular posts, special missions, missions to international organizations, or delegations to organs of international organizations or to international conferences; and
- (b) persons connected with them.

2. The present articles are likewise without prejudice to privileges and immunities accorded under international law to Heads of State *ratione personae*.

*Article 4*  
*Non-retroactivity of the present articles*

Without prejudice to the application of any rules set forth in the present articles to which jurisdictional immunities of States and their property are subject under international law independently of the present articles, the articles shall not apply to any question of jurisdictional immunities of States or their property arising in a proceeding instituted against a State before a court of another State prior to the entry into force of the present articles for the States concerned.

PART II  
GENERAL PRINCIPLES

*Article 5*  
*State immunity*

A State enjoys immunity, in respect of itself and its property, from the jurisdiction of the courts of another State subject to the provisions of the present articles.

*Article 6*  
*Modalities for giving effect to State immunity*

1. A State shall give effect to State immunity under article 5 by refraining from exercising jurisdiction in a proceeding before its courts against another State and to that end shall ensure that its courts determine on their own initiative that the immunity of that other State under article 5 is respected.

2. A proceeding before a court of a State shall be considered to have been instituted against another State if that other State:

- (a) is named as a party to that proceeding; or

(b) is not named as a party to the proceeding but the proceeding in effect seeks to affect the property, rights, interests or activities of that other State.

#### *Article 7*

##### *Express consent to exercise of jurisdiction*

1. A State cannot invoke immunity from jurisdiction in a proceeding before a court of another State with regard to a matter or case if it has expressly consented to the exercise of jurisdiction by the court with regard to the matter or case:

- (a) by international agreement;
- (b) in a written contract; or
- (c) by a declaration before the court or by a written communication in a specific proceeding.

2. Agreement by a State for the application of the law of another State shall not be interpreted as consent to the exercise of jurisdiction by the courts of that other State.

#### *Article 8*

##### *Effect of participation in a proceeding before a court*

1. A State cannot invoke immunity from jurisdiction in a proceeding before a court of another State if it has:

- (a) itself instituted the proceeding; or
- (b) intervened in the proceeding or taken any other step relating to the merits. However, if the State satisfies the court that it could not have acquired knowledge of facts on which a claim to immunity can be based until after it took such a step, it can claim immunity based on those facts, provided it does so at the earliest possible moment.

2. A State shall not be considered to have consented to the exercise of jurisdiction by a court of another State if it intervenes in a proceeding or takes any other step for the sole purpose of:

- (a) invoking immunity; or
- (b) asserting a right or interest in property at issue in the proceeding.

3. The appearance of a representative of a State before a court of another State as a witness shall not be interpreted as consent by the former State to the exercise of jurisdiction by the court.

4. Failure on the part of a State to enter an appearance in a proceeding before a court of another State shall not be interpreted as consent by the former State to the exercise of jurisdiction by the court.

*Article 9*  
*Counterclaims*

1. A State instituting a proceeding before a court of another State cannot invoke immunity from the jurisdiction of the court in respect of any counterclaim arising out of the same legal relationship or facts as the principal claim.

2. A State intervening to present a claim in a proceeding before a court of another State cannot invoke immunity from the jurisdiction of the court in respect of any counterclaim arising out of the same legal relationship or facts as the claim presented by the State.

3. A State making a counterclaim in a proceeding instituted against it before a court of another State cannot invoke immunity from the jurisdiction of the court in respect of the principal claim.

PART III  
PROCEEDINGS IN WHICH STATE IMMUNITY CANNOT BE INVOKED

*Article 10*  
*Commercial transactions*

1. If a State engages in a commercial transaction with a foreign natural or juridical person and, by virtue of the applicable rules of private international law, differences relating to the commercial transaction fall within the jurisdiction of a court of another State, the State cannot invoke immunity from that jurisdiction in a proceeding arising out of that commercial transaction.

2. Paragraph 1 does not apply:

- (a) in the case of a commercial transaction between States; or
- (b) if the parties to the commercial transaction have expressly agreed otherwise.

3. The immunity from jurisdiction enjoyed by a State shall not be affected with regard to a proceeding which relates to a commercial transaction engaged in by a State enterprise or other entity established by the State which has an independent legal personality and is capable of:

- (a) suing or being sued; and
- (b) acquiring, owning or possessing and disposing of property, including property which the State has authorized it to operate or manage.

*Article 11*  
*Contracts of employment*

1. Unless otherwise agreed between the States concerned, a State cannot invoke immunity from jurisdiction before a court of another State which is otherwise competent in a proceeding which relates

to a contract of employment between the State and an individual for work performed or to be performed, in whole or in part, in the territory of that other State.

2. Paragraph 1 does not apply if:

- (a) the employee has been recruited to perform functions closely related to the exercise of governmental authority;
- (b) the subject of the proceeding is the recruitment, renewal of employment or reinstatement of an individual;
- (c) the employee was neither a national nor a habitual resident of the State of the forum at the time when the contract of employment was concluded;
- (d) the employee is a national of the employer State at the time when the proceeding is instituted; or
- (e) the employer State and the employee have otherwise agreed in writing, subject to any considerations of public policy conferring on the courts of the State of the forum exclusive jurisdiction by reason of the subject-matter of the proceeding.

#### *Article 12*

##### *Personal injuries and damage to property*

Unless otherwise agreed between the States concerned, a State cannot invoke immunity from jurisdiction before a court of another State which is otherwise competent in a proceeding which relates to pecuniary compensation for death or injury to the person, or damage to or loss of tangible property, caused by an act or omission which is alleged to be attributable to the State, if the act or omission occurred in whole or in part in the territory of that other State and if the author of the act or omission was present in that territory at the time of the act or omission.

#### *Article 13*

##### *Ownership, possession and use of property*

Unless otherwise agreed between the States concerned, a State cannot invoke immunity from jurisdiction before a court of another State which is otherwise competent in a proceeding which relates to the determination of:

- (a) any right or interest of the State in, or its possession or use of, or any obligation of the State arising out of its interest in, or its possession or use of, immovable property situated in the State of the forum;
- (b) any right or interest of the State in movable or immovable property arising by way of succession, gift or *bona vacantia*; or
- (c) any right or interest of the State in the administration of property, such as trust property, the estate of a bankrupt or the property of a company in the event of its winding-up.

*Article 14*  
*Intellectual and industrial property*

Unless otherwise agreed between the States concerned, a State cannot invoke immunity from jurisdiction before a court of another State which is otherwise competent in a proceeding which relates to:

- (a) the determination of any right of the State in a patent, industrial design, trade name or business name, trade mark, copyright or any other form of intellectual or industrial property, which enjoys a measure of legal protection, even if provisional, in the State of the forum; or
- (b) an alleged infringement by the State, in the territory of the State of the forum, of a right of the nature mentioned in subparagraph (a) which belongs to a third person and is protected in the State of the forum.

*Article 15*  
*Participation in companies or other collective bodies*

1. A State cannot invoke immunity from jurisdiction before a court of another State which is otherwise competent in a proceeding which relates to its participation in a company or other collective body, whether incorporated or unincorporated, being a proceeding concerning the relationship between the State and the body or the other participants therein, provided that the body:

- (a) has participants other than States or international organizations; and
- (b) is incorporated or constituted under the law of the State of the forum or has its seat or principal place of business in that State.

2. A State can, however, invoke immunity from jurisdiction in such a proceeding if the States concerned have so agreed or if the parties to the dispute have so provided by an agreement in writing or if the instrument establishing or regulating the body in question contains provisions to that effect.

*Article 16*  
*Ships owned or operated by a State*

1. Unless otherwise agreed between the States concerned, a State which owns or operates a ship cannot invoke immunity from jurisdiction before a court of another State which is otherwise competent in a proceeding which relates to the operation of that ship, if at the time the cause of action arose, the ship was used for other than government non-commercial purposes.

2. Paragraph 1 does not apply to warships and naval auxiliaries nor does it apply to other ships owned or operated by a State and used exclusively on government non-commercial service.

3. For the purposes of this article, "proceeding which relates to the operation of that Ship" means, inter alia, any proceeding involving the determination of a claim in respect of:

- (a) collision or other accidents of navigation;

- (b) assistance, salvage and general average;
- (c) repairs, supplies or other contracts relating to the ship;
- (d) consequences of pollution of the marine environment.

4. Unless otherwise agreed between the States concerned, a State cannot invoke immunity from jurisdiction before a court of another State which is otherwise competent in a proceeding which relates to the carriage of cargo on board a ship owned or operated by that State if, at the time the cause of action arose, the ship was used for other than government non-commercial purposes.

5. Paragraph 4 does not apply to any cargo carried on board the ships referred to in paragraph 2 nor does it apply to any cargo owned by a State and used or intended for use exclusively for government non-commercial purposes.

6. States may plead all measures of defence, prescription and limitation of liability which are available to private ships and cargoes and their owners.

7. If in a proceeding there arises a question relating to the government and non-commercial character of a ship owned or operated by a State or cargo owned by a State, a certificate signed by a diplomatic representative or other competent authority of that State and communicated to the court shall serve as evidence of the character of that ship or cargo.

#### *Article 17*

#### *Effect of an arbitration agreement*

If a State enters into an agreement in writing with a foreign natural or juridical person to submit to arbitration differences relating to a commercial transaction, that State cannot invoke immunity from jurisdiction before a court of another State which is otherwise competent in a proceeding which relates to:

- (a) the validity or interpretation of the arbitration agreement;
- (b) the arbitration procedure; or
- (c) the setting aside of the award;

unless the arbitration agreement otherwise provides.

#### PART IV

#### STATE IMMUNITY FROM MEASURES OF CONSTRAINT IN CONNECTION WITH PROCEEDINGS BEFORE A COURT

*Article 18*  
*State immunity from measures of constraint*

1. No measures of constraint, such as attachment, arrest and execution, against property of a State may be taken in connection with a proceeding before a court of another State unless and except to the extent that:

- (a) the State has expressly consented to the taking of such measures as indicated:
  - (i) by international agreement;
  - (ii) by an arbitration agreement or in a written contract; or
  - (iii) by a declaration before the court or by a written communication after a dispute between the parties has arisen;
- (b) the State has allocated or earmarked property for the satisfaction of the claim which is the object of that proceeding; or
- (c) the property is specifically in use or intended for use by the State for other than government non-commercial purposes and is in the territory of the State of the forum and has a connection with the claim which is the object of the proceeding or with the agency or instrumentality against which the proceeding was directed.

2. Consent to the exercise of jurisdiction under article 7 shall not imply consent to the taking of measures of constraint under paragraph 1, for which separate consent shall be necessary.

*Article 19*  
*Specific categories of property*

1. The following categories, in particular, of property of a State shall not be considered as property specifically in use or intended for use by the State for other than government non-commercial purposes under paragraph 1 (c) of article 18:

- (a) property, including any bank account, which is used or intended for use for the purposes of the diplomatic mission of the State or its consular posts, special missions, missions to international organizations, or delegations to organs of international organizations or to international conferences;
- (b) property of a military character or used or intended for use for military purposes;
- (c) property of the central bank or other monetary authority of the State;
- (d) property forming part of the cultural heritage of the State or part of its archives and not placed or intended to be placed on sale;
- (e) property forming part of an exhibition of objects of scientific, cultural or historical interest and not placed or intended to be placed on sale.

2. Paragraph 1 is without prejudice to paragraph 1 (a) and (b) of article 18.

PART V  
MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

*Article 20*  
*Service of process*

1. Service of process by writ or other document instituting a proceeding against a State shall be effected:

- (a) in accordance with any applicable international convention binding on the State of the forum and the State concerned; or
- (b) in the absence of such a convention:
  - (i) by transmission through diplomatic channels to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State concerned; or
  - (ii) by any other means accepted by the State concerned, if not precluded by the law of the State of the forum.

2. Service of process referred to in paragraph 1 (b) (i) is deemed to have been effected by receipt of the documents by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

3. These documents shall be accompanied, if necessary, by a translation into the official language, or one of the official languages, of the State concerned.

4. Any State that enters an appearance on the merits in a proceeding instituted against it may not thereafter assert that service of process did not comply with the provisions of paragraphs 1 and 3.

*Article 21*  
*Default judgement*

1. A default judgement shall not be rendered against a State unless the court has found that:

- (a) the requirements laid down in paragraphs 1 and 3 of article 20 have been complied with;
- (b) a period of not less than four months has expired from the date on which the service of the writ or other document instituting a proceeding has been effected or deemed to have been effected in accordance with paragraphs 1 and 2 of article 20; and
- (c) the present articles do not preclude it from exercising jurisdiction.

2. A copy of any default judgement rendered against a State, accompanied if necessary by a translation into the official language or one of the official languages of the State concerned, shall be transmitted to it through one of the means specified in paragraph 1 of article 20 and in accordance with the provisions of that paragraph.

3. The time-limit for applying to have a default judgement set aside shall not be less than four months and shall begin to run from the date on which the copy of the judgement is received or is deemed to have been received by the State concerned.

*Article 22*

*Privileges and immunities during court proceedings*

1. Any failure or refusal by a State to comply with an order of a court of another State enjoining it to perform or refrain from performing a specific act or to produce any document or disclose any other information for the purposes of a proceeding shall entail no consequences other than those which may result from such conduct in relation to the merits of the case. In particular, no fine or penalty shall be imposed on the State by reason of such failure or refusal.

2. A State shall not be required to provide any security, bond or deposit, however described, to guarantee the payment of judicial costs or expenses in any proceeding to which it is a party before a court of another State.

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