

**Twentieth Meeting of States Parties
to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea,**
*(Conference Room 1, NLB
Monday, 14 June 2010, 10:00 a.m.)*

**Opening remarks by Ms. Patricia O'Brien,
Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs,
The Legal Counsel**

Mr. President,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. I would like to start by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your election as President of the twentieth Meeting of States Parties and to wish you success in that challenging position.

I am pleased once more to join you on the occasion of the opening of the twentieth Meeting of States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and, on behalf of the Secretary-General, to convey to you and participating delegations his best wishes for fruitful and productive deliberations.

At the outset, let me recall with satisfaction that the number of States Parties to the Convention, which sets the legal order for the seas and oceans, now stands at 160, including the European Union. We have every confidence that this figure will undoubtedly continue to grow.

Annually, the Meeting of States Parties provides us with an opportunity to take stock of recent developments in the work of the three bodies established by the Convention: the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, the International Seabed Authority and the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf. I join you, Mr. President, in welcoming the President of the Tribunal, H.E. Judge Jesus, the Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority, H.E. Mr. Odunton, and the Chairman of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, Mr. Medeiros de Albuquerque.

Mr. President,

The Commission held its twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth sessions in 2009 and 2010 respectively. The Commission and its Subcommissions continued their consideration of submissions and continued to hear presentations by submitting States.

Regarding the workload of the Commission, the Secretariat has issued a Note that will be presented the Meeting as document SPLOS/208. At the time of the Note's preparation, there were a total of 51 submissions by coastal States, while 44 sets of preliminary information transmitted to the Secretary-General gives an indication of possible future submissions by States.

Mr. President,

States Parties must find a coherent and viable solution for dealing with the increased workload of the Commission. For the Commission to be able to efficiently and expeditiously consider and qualify the huge number of

submissions on its agenda, it seems to me that the most efficient and effective measure would be for the commission to work on a full-time basis. It is my hope that States Parties will give due consideration to this matter, which is of critical importance for the successful discharge of the functions of the Commission, as envisaged by the drafters of the Convention.

Distinguished delegates,

I trust that States Parties will once again take this opportunity to renew their commitments to the goals of the Convention. These goals include of course the promotion of peaceful uses of the seas and oceans, the equitable and efficient utilization of their resources, the conservation of their living resources, as well as the study, protection and preservation of the marine environment. I also trust that States will continue to deploy all their best efforts to ensure the effective implementation of the Convention at the national level.

I wish you a successful outcome to your deliberations. Thank you.
