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THE ARGENTINE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TODAY SUBMITTED TO THE UN THE DOCUMENTATION ON ITS CONTINENTAL SHELF

LEAD: The 840 kilos of documentation result from the scientific and technical tasks conducted throughout 11 years to defend the national sovereignty. The submission was made to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, a technical body of the UN. Foreign Minister Jorge Taiana asserted that "to perform this significant act of sovereign affirmation", he sent the Deputy Foreign Minister, who will lead the delegation of our country, and explained that this decision "is a national landmark in terms of boundaries and frontiers".

Today at 11.30 am, the Argentine Republic delivered to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf of the UN —a technical body created by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)— more than 800 kilos of documentation making up the national submission of the outer limit of the continental shelf of the entire Argentine territory. In strict compliance with the provisions in UNCLOS, Argentina performed an act of sovereign affirmation of its rights over a vast territory of more than 1,700,000 km<sup>2</sup>, added to approximately 4,800,000 km<sup>2</sup> of continental shelf up to 200 miles, so as to determine the final and binding geographical extent of the entire national territory. The national submission contains the outer limit of the continental shelf over which the Argentine Nation exercises sovereign rights in terms of exploration and exploitation of its natural resources, comprising the seabed and subsoil of submarine areas extending beyond its territorial sea and throughout the natural prolongation of the land territory, the South Atlantic islands and the Argentine Antarctic Sector. At the direction of Foreign Minister Jorge Taiana, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Victorio Taccetti, together with the head of the National Commission on the Outer Limit of the Continental Shelf (COPLA), Frida Armas Pfirter, were in charge of the formal Argentine submission, which was made this morning in the headquarters of the United Nations in New York, where the offices of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf are located. As announced on several opportunities, the national submission has been made in due time and proper form as established by UNCLOS. In this regard, Taiana expressed that, "it is a significant act of sovereign affirmation, a landmark in terms of national boundaries and frontiers, which crowns a technical and diplomatic effort of 11 years. It is fair then to talk about a true State policy in this matter, which today allows us to meet this international obligation to the UN in due time and proper form, with the certainty of having made our best scientific effort and reflecting the convictions of the Argentine society as a whole." The head of the Argentine diplomacy also explained that "our country has conducted, since 1998, in-depth and thorough scientific and technical tasks using the most convenient criterion to ensure the greatest extent possible, by means of bathymetric tasks (through which data on the seabed depth are obtained), as well as geophysical, geological and geodesic (to determine the continental and oceanic crust transition area), and seismic method (to obtain images of the subsoil) tasks, resulting from 12 oceanographic surveys." This thorough scientific and technical work provides certainty about the geographical extent of our sovereign rights over a maritime area of 1,782,645 km<sup>2</sup> of Argentine continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles, added to the

4,799,732 km<sup>2</sup> up to 200 nautical miles. This report was drafted by the National Commission on the Outer Limit of the Continental Shelf (COPLA), presided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and created by Law No. 24815. COPLA works as an inter-ministerial commission, and it is also made up of representatives of the Ministry of Economy and Production and of the Naval Hydrographic Service. Since it started working on April 20, 1998, it has organized several surveys to collect the necessary scientific data, among them, those conducted on board Vessel A.R.A. Puerto Deseado to the north and southeast of the Malvinas Islands and to the north of the Georgias del Sur Islands between April and May, 2008, and, more recently, in the Orcadas del Sur Islands, which successfully fulfilled its mission last January 28.