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ARGENTINA PROTECTS ITS SOVEREIGNTY AND RESOURCES

The Argentine Republic, as a coastal State, has and exercises sovereign rights over its continental shelf, a maritime space that comprises the seabed and subsoil of those submarine areas extending beyond its territorial sea and throughout the natural prolongation of its land territory up to the outer edge of its continental margin. When the outer edge of the continental margin extends beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines, as in the case of Argentina, the States, in compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, must submit scientific studies to a technical body created by the aforementioned Convention, the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS), based in the United Nations. The sovereign rights of a coastal State over its continental shelf include the power to explore and exploit the sedentary living and non-living resources located in that maritime area.

Argentina made the submission, in due time and proper form, on April 21, 2009, making a first oral presentation to the Commission in August of that year in New York. On Wednesday August 8, 2012, Argentina made a second presentation to the same body, given that, during that Period of Sessions of the CLCS, the Subcommittee that would consider the outer limit of Argentina was created.

On that opportunity, an audiovisual presentation was made, taking advantage of a combination of specialized software programs prepared by the National Commission on the Outer Limit of the Continental Shelf (COPLA), causing great admiration among those present due to the excellence of the work conducted by the Argentine GIS (Geographic Information Systems) experts. This made it possible to attach relevant images and the necessary cartography of all the coastal extent of our territory, thus protecting the resources of our continental shelf and defending, once again, our sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands, Georgias del Sur and Sandwich del Sur Islands, and over Argentine Antarctica.

On August 8 of that year, the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf —by means of a Subcommittee consisting of seven members— started considering the Argentine submission. This Subcommittee is made up of the following experts with outstanding careers, who are part of that body in their personal capacities: Galo Carreras (Mexico), Chairman of the Subcommittee, Jair Alberto Ribas Marques (Brazil), Martin Vang Heinesen (Denmark), Isaac Owusu Oduro (Ghana), Mazlan Bin Madon (Malasia), Lawrence Folajimi Awosika (Nigeria), and Yong Ahn Park (Republic of Korea).

• BACKGROUND

On Wednesday August 8, during the 30th period of sessions of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS), in the United Nations headquarters in New York, the Argentine Republic explained to the CLCS the scientific grounds used to define the outer limit of its continental shelf. The complete information had been submitted in those headquarters on April 21, 2009, and a few

months later, Argentina explained the most relevant scientific arguments used to delineate the outer limit of its continental shelf.

Taking into account the time elapsed between the Argentine submission and the new composition of the CLCS, Argentina requested to make a second oral presentation about the submission of the outer limit of the continental shelf to the new Members of the Commission. Thus, they were given the opportunity to broadly familiarize themselves with the scientific data submitted. The National Commission on the Outer Limit of the Continental Shelf (COPLA), which has been working since 1997 on the determination of the outer limit of the Argentine continental shelf, was the body responsible for making the oral presentation.

The oral presentation was under the responsibility of Minister Mateo Estremé, Chargé d'Affaires of the Argentine Mission to the United Nations; Frida M. Armas Pfirter, General Coordinator of COPLA; Carlos María Urien, COPLA's consultant and member of the National Commission of the Geological Chart, and COPLA's consultants Yanina Berbeglia, Juan Allegrino, Daniel Abraham, Edgardo Monteros, Ma. Cristina Díaz, and Fernando Pellicioni. The Argentine delegation also included some of the specialized technical and legal consultants who worked on the preparation of the Argentine submission.

The grounds of the studies conducted, which support the written documentation submitted on April 21, 2009 by this Commission, were presented and explained, and the position expressed on that opportunity regarding the Argentine sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands, Georgias del Sur and Sandwich del Sur Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, as well as Argentine Antarctica, was reiterated. The presentation focused on four main aspects, namely: "Introduction to the Argentine submission", "The State body in charge of preparing the submission", "The schedule of tasks conducted by COPLA", and "The delineation of the outer limit of the Argentine continental shelf: the foot of the slope, formulas and constraints set forth in Article 76 of UNCLOS."

An audiovisual presentation was made, using a combination of specialized software programs and a Geographic Information System (GIS) which made it possible to attach relevant images and the necessary cartography of all the coastal extent of our territory. Thus, the Argentine Republic has submitted the limit of its entire territory, including the islands and the Argentine Antarctic Sector, and took advantage of this opportunity to reaffirm, once more, its sovereignty over the Malvinas, Georgias del Sur and Sandwich del Sur Islands.

- THE COMMISSION ON THE OUTER LIMITS OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF (CLCS). The CLCS is a technical body created by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), consisting of 21 members who do not represent the States of their nationalities, but serve in their personal capacities. They are chosen by the States Parties to UNCLOS, having due regard to the need to ensure equitable geographical representation. The Members of the Commission have a technical profile specifically oriented to the field of marine sciences, and they are experts in geology, geophysics, geodesy or hydrography. One of the 21 members of the Commission is the Argentine engineer Marcelo Paterlini, chosen by an overwhelming majority in June 2012.

The Commission is convened in New York for 21 weeks a year, and it is responsible for analyzing and evaluating all the data and other information submitted by coastal States with respect to the outer limits of their continental shelves when they extend beyond 200 nautical miles. So far, 61 submissions of the outer limit of the continental shelf have been made, and other 45 submissions with preliminary information by States that still have not defined all the necessary elements to delineate their limits.

Marcelo Paterlini <http://enaun.mrecic.gov.ar/content/marcelo-paterlini-de-la-argentina-electo-lacomisi%C3%B3n-de-l%C3%ADmites-de-la-plataforma-continental>

CLCS http://www.un.org/depts/los/clcs_new/clcs_home.htm

DOALOS

http://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements/convention_overview_convention.htm

COPLA <http://www.mrecic.gov.ar/>

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