

**Ocean Policy Research Foundation International Seminar:**

“The thirtieth anniversary of the UNCLOS from the perspective of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf as its organ”

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**“United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea: its functions and role in relation to the implementation of UNCLOS”**

Presentation by

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***The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)***

As reaffirmed annually by the General Assembly in its resolution on oceans and the law of the sea, UNCLOS sets out the legal framework under which all activities in the oceans and sea must be carried out. As such it is considered the “constitution for the oceans.” There are currently 162 parties to the Convention, including the European Union.

In 1994 and 1995 respectively, two implementing agreements, namely the Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (Part XI Agreement), and the United Nations Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (Fish Stocks Agreement), were adopted. Following the entry into force on 16 November 1994, the International Seabed Authority (ISA), the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) and the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS), bodies established under UNCLOS, came into existence.

2012 marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening for signature of UNCLOS, which occurred on 10 December 1982 in Montego Bay, Jamaica. Various events planned throughout the year, will culminate in a high-level plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly on 10 December of this year.

***UNCLOS and the Division of Oceans Affairs and Law of the Sea (DOALOS)***

DOALOS is one of the eight organizational units within the Office of Legal Affairs of the UN Secretariat. It is the focal point for ocean affairs and law of the sea. Its main responsibilities relate to the discharge of relevant functions entrusted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations under UNCLOS and related General Assembly resolutions.

The core functions of DOALOS include the promotion of universal participation, facilitation of uniform and consistent application of UNCLOS and assistance to States in the implementation of the Convention. The Division prepares Secretary-General Reports to the General Assembly, provides technical and legal advice, and conducts substantive servicing for meetings of the General Assembly, the Meeting of States Parties to UNCLOS, the CLCS and Informal Consultations of States Parties to the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement and the Review Conference. The Division is also involved in capacity building and technical assistance. It manages seven trust funds and Fellowships programmes, including the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Fellowship Programme and the United Nations – Nippon Foundation Fellowship Programme. DOALOS cooperates and coordinates with competent international organizations under UNCLOS such as IMO on issues of shipping and navigation, and piracy and armed robbery against ships, the FAO on fisheries issues and UNESCO/IOC for marine scientific research. The Division is a member of the UN Oceans, an inter-agency coordination mechanism on oceans issues. DOALOS performs liaison functions for ISA and ITLOS, and is involved in technical assistance and capacity building. Since 2009, DOALOS also commemorates each year, the United Nations World Ocean’s Day on 8 June 2012.