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*Translated from French*

Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations

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The Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations presents its compliments to the United Nations Secretariat (Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs) and has the honour to convey the following:

France notes that the Government of the Republic of Vanuatu deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations the Maritime Zones Act No. 6 of 2010, article 2 of which provides that “The Sovereignty of Vanuatu comprises of all islands within the archipelago including Mathew (Umaenupne) and Hunter (Leka) Islands”, and article 7(2)(b) of which specifies that “the territorial sea of Vanuatu comprises those areas of the sea having as their inner limits the low water line of the coasts of Matthew (Umaenupne) and Hunter (Leka) Islands”. France notes that on 1 July 2010, the Government of the Republic of Vanuatu also deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations lists of geographical coordinates of points defining the normal and archipelagic baselines of Vanuatu, as contained in the Ministerial Order of 29 July 2009, accompanied by an illustrative map, and that those documents apparently describe Matthew and Hunter Islands as being under the sovereignty of the Republic of Vanuatu.

France believes that this deposit is not compatible with the French territorial status of those islands and does not recognize the deposit as having any legal effects.

France states that it exercises full sovereignty over Matthew and Hunter Islands, which have always been an integral part of the French territory of New Caledonia. It believes that no other State has the right to claim the maritime areas adjacent to Matthew and Hunter Islands.

Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea

Office of Legal Affairs

United Nations

France recalls:

- That the Republic of Vanuatu made no objection when France deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations its Decree No. 2002-827 of 3 May 2002 defining the straight baselines and closing lines of bays used to determine the baselines from which the breadth of French territorial waters adjacent to New Caledonia is measured, article 2 of which refers to Matthew and Hunter Islands;
- That the Republic of Vanuatu made no objection when France deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations the Agreement signed on 19 January 1983 between the Government of the Republic of France and the Government of Fiji relating to the Delimitation of their Economic Zone, in effect since 21 August 1984, which delimits the maritime spaces between the two States to the east of Matthew and Hunter Islands.

The Government of the Republic of France requests the Secretary-General of the United Nations to register this declaration and to publish it in the next issue of the Law of the Sea Bulletin, in the Law of the Sea Information Circular and in any other relevant United Nations publications.

The Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations takes this opportunity to renew to the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs the assurances of its highest consideration.