
[Translated from Spanish]

*The People's Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela*

Caracas, 9 March 2012

Sir,

I am pleased to write to you concerning the submission made by the Republic of Guyana in 6 September 2011, giving information relating to the limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles.

The Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has reservations in regard to the information provided by the Government of the Republic of Guyana which, in the executive summary of its submission, proposes a limit for the continental shelf formed by the territory west of the Essequibo river, which is the subject of a territorial sovereignty dispute under the Geneva Agreement of 1966 and, within this framework, a matter for the good offices of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela expresses its surprise and concern that it was at no time consulted by the Guyanese authorities regarding the submission to be made. In contrast and as stated by the Guyanese Government itself in a communiqué from its Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Guyana carried out consultations with Barbados, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago between 2008 and 2010 concerning the preparation of its submission and established a modus vivendi whereby the four States would make their submissions without prejudice to the limits that might be set and without reciprocal objections.

Such a lack of consultation with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, serious in itself in that it violates the relevant rules, is inexplicable in so far as the coast whose projection is used by the Republic of Guyana in its attempt to extend the limits forms part of the disputed territory over which Venezuela demands and reiterates its claim to sovereignty rights.

H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General
United Nations, New York

The Venezuelan State has expressed its concern to the Government of the Republic of Guyana, while reiterating its readiness to engage in constructive dialogue in respect of these matters and trusting in the good offices procedure pursued by the Secretary-General with a view to finding a practical and satisfactory solution to the aforementioned territorial dispute.

For the foregoing reasons, and having regard to the rules governing the work of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela objects to the submission made by the Republic of Guyana and also objects to the information submitted being considered or assessed by the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, in accordance with customary international law, and irrespective of the fact that it is not a party to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, has a right to the continental shelf extending to the outer edge of the continental margin, corresponding to the Atlantic region, which right is independent of its actual occupancy and of any express declaration.

The Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has invited the Government of the Republic of Guyana to address this matter within the framework of the good offices of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, convinced as it is that this is the appropriate mechanism to arrive at the practical and satisfactory solution that both countries undertook to seek, under the Geneva Agreement of 1966, in order to resolve the territorial dispute.

Kindly arrange for this note to be circulated among the relevant bodies and other States Members of the Organization.

Accept, Sir, the renewed assurances of my highest consideration.

[signed] Nicolás Maduro Moros