



Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf

Content of presentation

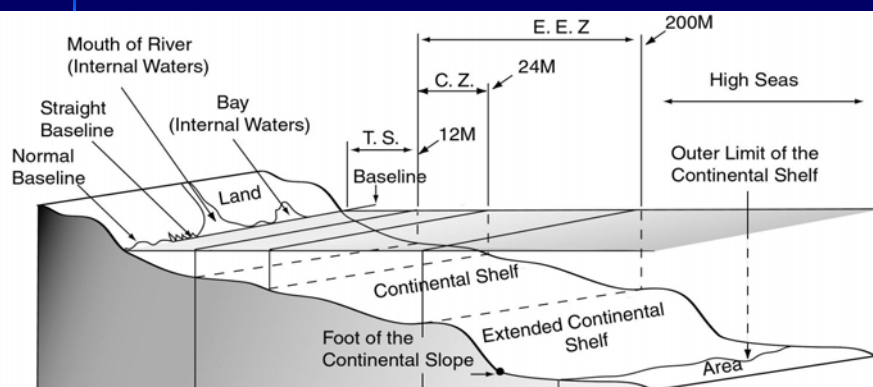
- Continental shelf definition (art. 76)
- "Normal" vs. "Extended" Continental shelf
- Mandate/Features of the Commission
- Submissions received
- Work of the Commission
- Support by the Secretariat

Continental Shelf (Definition)

Article 76 (para. 1)

The continental shelf of a coastal State comprises the seabed and subsoil of the submarine areas that extend beyond its territorial sea throughout the natural prolongation of its land territory to the outer edge of the continental margin, or to a distance of 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured where the outer edge of the continental margin does not extend up to that distance.

Maritime zones



Continental Shelf (art. 76)

Possible scenarios:

A. Continental shelves up to 200 nautical miles:

Rights on the continental shelf are
'automatic':

“The rights of the coastal State over the continental shelf do not depend on occupation, effective or notional, or on any express proclamation” (article 77, paragraph 3).

Continental Shelf (art. 76)

B. Continental shelves extending beyond 200 nautical miles (extended continental shelf)

A procedure for the preparation and presentation of a submission to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf has to be initiated

Only this scenario is the focus of this presentation!

Complexity of art. 76

One of the most complex articles in the Convention - geology, hydrography, geomorphology, geodesy to establish:

- Foot of the continental slope;
- Delineation of formulae lines;
- Delineation of constraint lines;
- Delineation of the outer limits of the continental shelf by means of the formulae and constraint lines.

These scientific/technical information/data
-> submission to the Commission

Mandate of the CLCS

- To consider submissions and make recommendations thereupon
- To provide scientific and technical advice (Scientific and Technical Advice Committee)

NOTE: The Commission is a body of experts

Basic features of the CLCS

- 21 members experts in the fields of
 - geology;
 - geophysics; or
 - hydrography;
- Elected by States Parties to this Convention from among their nationals, having due regard to the need to ensure equitable geographical representation: there must be at least three members from each geographical region;
- Serve in their personal capacities (Annex II, paragraph 2(1))
- Have their own rules of procedure

10 year period

If State intends to establish outer limits beyond 200M -> Submission to CLCS

WHEN? -> Article 4 – Annex II:

- As soon as possible, but in any event:
- Within 10 years from entry into force of Convention

(2009 for early ratifiers – SPLOS/72)

Submissions received so far


1. Russian Federation (2001)
2. Brazil (2004)
3. Australia (2004)
4. Ireland (partial - 2005)
5. New Zealand (2006)
6. France, Ireland, Spain, United Kingdom (joint and partial - 2006)
7. Norway (2006)
8. France (partial - 2007)

Work of the Commission

- Increasing number of submissions received
- Very lengthy examination
- Approach adopted by the Commission under current working set-up (18th session) -> queuing:
 1. Only 3 subcommission shall function simultaneously while considering submissions.
 2. Submissions shall be queued in the order they are received.
 3. Submission next in line shall be taken for consideration by a subcommission only after one of the three working subcommissions presents its recommendations to the Commission.

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 **Oceans and Law of the Sea**
Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea

Last updated: 20 November 2001

New developments and recent additions

THE CONVENTION AND THE RELATED AGREEMENT	OCEANS AND THE LAW OF THE SEA IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY	BODIES ESTABLISHED BY THE CONVENTION	SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES	THE DIVISION, ITS FUNCTIONS AND ACTIVITIES
United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea	United Nations Informal Open-ended Consultative Process	Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf	Choice of procedure under article 287 of the Convention	H.S. Amersinghe Fellowship
Agreement relating to the implementation of Part XI of the Convention	Reports of the Secretary-General	International Seabed Authority	International Court of Justice	TRAIN SEA COAST
1995 United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement	General Assembly resolutions	International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea		United Nations publications prepared by the Division
Meeting of States Parties to the Convention			Lists of Arbitrators and Conciliators	Technical Assistance
Status of the Convention and of the Agreements			List of experts	

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