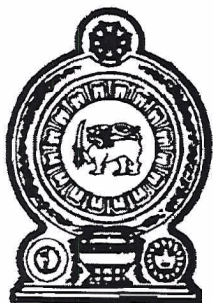


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**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST
REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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My No. LEG/UN/39

The Permanent Mission of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka to the United Nations presents its compliments to the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea and has the honour to refer to the latter's Note No. DOALOS-08-00075 of 29 January 2008.

As requested in the Note, the Permanent Mission is pleased to attach hereto, information relating to assistance available to, and measures that may be taken by, Sri Lanka to realize benefits of sustainable and effective development of marine resources and uses of the oceans within the limits of its national jurisdiction under UNCLOS, in accordance with paragraph 102 of GA Resolution 62/215 and paragraph 88 of GA Resolution 61/222. A scanned copy of this text is being transmitted electronically to the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea via doalos@un.org.

The Permanent Mission of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, the assurances of its highest consideration.

New York, April, 09

Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea
Office of Legal Affairs
Room DC2-450
United Nations
New York



**PERMANENT MISSION OF
SRI LANKA TO THE U.N.**

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தேசிய நீரியல்வள ஆராய்ச்சி அபிவிருத்தி முகாமை
NATIONAL AQUATIC RESOURCES RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

හතලා දුරා, මහලක්දොර, කොළඹ - 15. නැංකු: 2521176, 2521881, 2521881. ෆැක්ස්: 2524430. Crow Island, Maitakkuliya, Colombo 15.

මගේ අංකය
எனது இல.
My No.

ඔබේ අංකය
உமது இல.
Your No.

අවසාන
திகதி
Date

3rd April 2008

Mr. G. Piyasena
The Secretary
Ministry of Fisheries & Aquatic Resources
Colombo 10



Dear Sir,

Report to be sent to the UN Secretary General on UNCLOS

Please find enclosed my report on *"Assistance available to and measures that may be taken by Sri Lanka to realize benefits of sustainable and effective development of marine resource and uses of the ocean within the limits of its national jurisdiction under UNCLOS."*

This may be forwarded to the Ocean Affairs Division of the UN office.

Yours' faithfully,

K. Haputantri
Chairman

Chairman	Director General	General Office
Tel : 2521176 / 2521881	Tel : 2521932	Tel : 2521000 / 2521006
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Assistance available to and measures that may be taken by Sri Lanka to realize benefits of sustainable and effective development of marine resource and uses of the ocean within the limits of its national jurisdiction under UNCLOS

Introduction

Sri-Lanka^{is} an island state situated at the tip of the Indian sub continent having geographically significant and strategic position. It opens to three major sections of the Indian ocean; i.e. Bay of Bengal in the Eastern, Mid Indian Ocean Basin in Southern, Arabian Sea in Western Side. Apart of that, on the North it is surrounded by the famous Polk-Strait and Gulf of manner. More over, it should be noted that on the South there is a no land mass up to Antarctica. Due to this unique status Sri-Lanka is highly influenced by the meteor-Oceanic climatic changes in the Bay of Bengal, Arabian Sea and Mid Indian Ocean Basin.

Population of Sri-Lanka is around 20 million and 1/3 of the population lives in the coastal zone. The length of the coastline is 1760 km in which majority of the population is fishers. Almost all the major cities, including Colombo, are located along the coastal belt. As a result, a large number of major industries, Government establishments, and residencies are located in the coastal zone.



Until mid 80's, tourism was the major income generating source in the country. Sri-Lanka possesses beautiful scenic coastal zones with famous beaches, coral reefs, bays lagoons etc.. All the rivers of Sri-Lanka begin from the highland situated in the middle of the country and flows to the Indian Ocean adding a huge amount of sediments to the Indian Ocean annually. Hence, the Indian Ocean is highly interconnected with the life cycle of the Island.

Role of Sri Lanka under UNCLOS

Sri-Lanka is a member of the UN system who ratified the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) from its inception. Hence, Sri-Lanka enjoys legally, the facilities, authorities, powers, rights and jurisdiction under the UNCLOS to some extent but in practical terms the benefits are restricted by the paucity of facilities and capabilities available to her.

Direct Benefits to Sri Lanka under UNCLOS

As an Island state the demarcation of maritime zones: i.e. (i) Historical Waters, (ii) contiguous zone, and (iii) Economic Exclusive Zone under UNCLOS can be one of the major direct benefits achieved.

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Accordingly, the total area of its maritime zone is 522,800 km², which is eight (8) times bigger than its land territory.

Contribution to economic development under UNCLOS

Fishers and fish related work force both direct and indirect constitute around 1/3 of the total population of the country and are mostly benefited by the demarcation of the maritime boundaries. Sri-Lankan coastal Fishing industry which has a long way to go in international standards developed to its maximum sustainable potential utilization to some extent under UNCLOS provisions. Though our EEZ could supply 400,000 tones of fish annually current annual catch is only 260,000 tons. The industry provides 17% of the country's nutrition demand. This significant figure gives a strong message to the policy makers of the country as to what they should do for the sustainable utilization of its Sea territory for her economic development.

Guaranteed sovereignty over the maritime zone and peaceful demarcation of boundaries

It is a requirement under the UNCLOS that all the nations should obtain permission to use our EEZ for any kind of economic purposes. That secures the under-utilized living and non living resources potential for the future economic development and its sovereignty of the country.

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One of the remarkable achievements under the UNCLOS is the equal sharing of living and non living resources in the Gulf of manner and Polk-strait in the Northern seas with its neighbor peacefully.

Current status and issues requiring the attention of the UN

Because of this large sea-territory, the Island needs a very strong coast guard to secure it, a strong navy to ensure national security, a well equipped marine research institute, a well equipped hydrographic institute with capabilities to cater to safe navigation and research, and an array of institutions mandated to explore and exploit its vast amounts of non-living resources. It requires enormous amount of resources including funds, expertise, institutional capacities etc., which the country could not spare due to the other commitments.

Sri-Lanka has only one national research organization for fisheries and aquatic resources with a vast mandate. The National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency (NARA), established in 1981, undertakes both fisheries and other marine research under the jurisdiction of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Ministry. Except NARA a number of other institutions are involved in different aspects of ocean studies, under UNCLOS.

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Marine Pollution Prevention Authority (MPPA) – Marine Pollution

Sri-Lanka NAVY - Naval defense. Safety at the Sea

Department of Metrology - monitoring Meteor-Oceanic parameters, marine Hazards etc

Univeristy of Moratuwa – Newly established Department of earth resources (Oceanography)

University of Ruhuna – Faculty of Marine Biology

Though there are many facilities of under UNCLOS a lack of National Institute for Oceanography could be the main obstacle to explore those opportunities in Sri-Lanka. Therefore the establishment of such a national institute is an essential matter.

Dearth of practicing experts on UNCLOS is another setback in Sri-Lanka to utilize facilities and privileges under UNCLOS. There are no government or private educational establishments in Sri-Lanka which conduct special courses in Law of the Sea.

Sri-Lanka has now realized the importance of having an ocean policy for sustainable usage of its ocean. It has taken measures to expand its "National fisheries and aquatic Policy" into ocean development sector as well

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Initiative measures taken

Sri-Lankan NAVY, Sri-Lanka Customs and recently established Coast Guard unit under the Ministry of Internal Affairs with their megre resources are working together under the UNCLOS frame-work to minimize unfavorable incidents such as smuggling, piracy etc., in the region. Because of their coordinated efforts international ships are able to sail peacefully through our maritime zone which is considered as one of the safest seas in the world.

Sri-Lanka has taken effective measures to secure her Sea territory from any kind of marine pollution, in terms of the legal frame work provided under UNCLOS as well as MRCOPOLE by setting up of a National Agency "Marine Pollution Prevention Authority" in late 80s.

According to marine Geophysical data, the Sea Bed around Sri-Lanka is likely to have a huge margin of sediment layer extending up to 26 km vertically in the Sea bed. That includes a huge amount of hydro carbon, heavy minerals etc. Because of the legal structure of UNCLOS Sri-Lanka could protect it as a land territory. Further, because of article 72 chapter 18 Sri-Lanka has a unique opportunity to extent her Sea Bed territory beyond 200 nm.

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That is a great opportunity to Sri-Lanka under the UNCLOS. Sri-Lanka has set up an Inter-ministerial committee and a project office (Demarcation of Outer edge of the Continental Margin - DECOM) to submit its claim before International Sea Bed Authority by 2009 (ISBA) to demarcate its Sea bed territory.

Because of the zonal/regional policy of the UNCLOS and decentralization vision of Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), a policy implementation arm of the UNCLOS, most countries have come up with regional cooperation activities, alliances agencies etc in the past two decades.

Hosting of an Indian Ocean for Global Ocean Observation System (IOGOOS) second annual conference (2004) and Intergovernmental Oceanographic commission for Central Indian Ocean (IOCINDIO) – IV (2005) session, Sri-Lanka has shown her keen vision/interest on uplifting of regional cooperation in the south Asian region in Oceanographic research and development activities. Sri-Lanka is a member of the executive council of UNESCO as well as a member of executive council in IOC since 2005. Also Sri-Lanka is holding co-chairmanship of IOCINDIO since 2007.

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National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency (NARA), the research arm of the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources is the focal point of the IOC.

Assistance already made available

With the development of Oceanographic activities in Sri-Lanka within the UNCLOS jurisdiction various types of assistance were received through many initiatives from the UN agencies such as UNESCO, IOC, UNEP, UNIDO, FAO etc.. Among them are short and long term trainings, equipments, machinery etc..

UNDP assisted to develop a human resources development program in the field of Oceanography in late 80's. United Nations Revolving Fund (UNRF) supported for an assessment of monazite deposit at Southern western coastal line in late 90s.

Through International Oceanographic Data Exchange (IODE), and oceanographic data and information network of IOC, Sri-Lanka received a number of training opportunities. Also data and information products, access to other web sites, on-board trainings etc.. Particularly as a focal point of IOC, NARA received many data products from IODE which are very useful for the oceanographic R & D works.

(11)

After the year 2004 tsunami tragedy, which perished around 65,000 people in Sri Lanka alone, many UN agencies came forward to support rehabilitating efforts in different forms. Prior to tsunami, Sri Lanka had only one sea-level monitoring station which was located in Colombo. After the tsunami, IOC through Global Sea Level Observation System (GLOSS), assisted Sri Lanka to establish two other stations one in the East and the other in the South covering a wider area of the Island. Also under the guidance of IOC, NARA immediately setup an Ocean Observation Center operative 24X7 basis. Being an active member in the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System (IOTWS), Sri Lanka uses facilities available to access public domain ocean data web sites and technical assistance.

Further assistance needed

As the future of Sri Lanka depends on the ocean resources exploration of living and non-living resources in the ocean is considered a priority. On board trainings as well as regional on board programs utilizing well equipped research vessels are required for oceanographic, hydrographic and marine research development for Sri Lanka. As a developing country Sri Lanka is not in a position to maintain ocean research vessels due to heavy expenses involved. It is of utmost importance to carry out Sea bed surveys. Therefore, it may be a good proposal to arrange regional on-board research programmes under the aegis of UN to cater to poor coastal countries with large maritime zones.