



INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA
TRIBUNAL INTERNATIONAL DU DROIT DE LA MER

Press Release

**JUDGE VLADIMIR GOLITSYN HIGHLIGHTS THE TRIBUNAL'S ROLE IN
CONTRIBUTING TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL LAW OF THE
SEA IN HIS FIRST ADDRESS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
AS PRESIDENT OF THE TRIBUNAL**

Judge Vladimir Golitsyn, President of the Tribunal, addressed the General Assembly of the United Nations on Tuesday, 9 December 2014, during the Assembly's annual debate on "Oceans and the Law of the Sea".



UN Photo/Loey Felipe

Speaking first on organizational matters, President Golitsyn informed the General Assembly that two new judges, Judges Gómez-Robledo (Mexico) and Heidar (Iceland), had been elected to the Tribunal at the Meeting of States Parties held in June 2014, and that five former judges had been reelected. He also recalled that, on 1 October 2014, he had been elected by the judges of the Tribunal as President and Judge Bouguetaia (Algeria) as Vice-President of the Tribunal, and Judge Jesus (Cabo Verde) as President of the Seabed Disputes Chamber.

Turning to an important role of the Tribunal in the dispute settlement system under the Convention, President Golitsyn expressed his appreciation for the continued efforts made by the General Assembly to encourage States to make declarations under article 287 of the Convention with a view to choosing the means of the settlement of disputes set out in that article of the Convention. He emphasized that States may at any time agree to submit their dispute to their preferred dispute settlement body, even in the absence of a declaration under article 287, and noted that Panama and Guinea-Bissau had done just that in the latest case to be decided by the Tribunal, the *M/V "Virginia G" Case (Panama/Guinea-Bissau)*,

President Golitsyn gave a brief overview of the role played by the Tribunal in exercising its contentious jurisdiction and adjudicating cases to contribute to the development of international law and, in particular, the international law of the sea.

He highlighted various cases in which the Tribunal has made such important contributions, for example in the delimitation case between Bangladesh and Myanmar, where the Tribunal was called upon to rule on the delimitation of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles.

He also referred to the *M/V “Virginia G” Case*, in which the Tribunal delivered its Judgment in April 2014, highlighting two important issues addressed by the Tribunal: the meaning of the requirement under the Convention of a genuine link between a flag State and a ship flying its flag and the legality under the Convention of national legislation regulating bunkering activities in support of foreign fishing vessels in the EEZ.

President Golitsyn pointed out that the Tribunal’s jurisdiction is not limited to contentious cases. He noted in this regard that a Request for an Advisory Opinion regarding IUU fishing activities had been submitted to the Tribunal by the Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission, an intergovernmental organization comprising seven West African States, in March 2013 and that the proceedings in the case had attracted considerable interest from States and intergovernmental organizations. He informed the General Assembly that the advisory opinion would probably be delivered in the spring of 2015.

In concluding, President Golitsyn emphasized the Tribunal’s commitment to the advancement of the idea of peaceful dispute settlement not only through its contentious and advisory functions but also through disseminating information and conducting capacity-building programmes, for example through the Tribunal’s regional workshops, the latest of which had been held in Nairobi in August 2014, in conjunction with the Government of Kenya and the Korea Maritime Institute, the ITLOS/Nippon Foundation training programme for young government officials and researchers, the Tribunal’s internship programme for students and the annual Summer Academy of the International Foundation for the Law of the Sea.

The text of the President’s statement may be found on the Tribunal’s website.

Note: The press releases of the Tribunal do not constitute official documents and are issued for information purposes only.

The press releases of the Tribunal, documents and other information are available on the Tribunal’s websites (<http://www.itlos.org> and <http://www.tidm.org>) and from the Registry of the Tribunal. Please contact Ms Julia Ritter at: Am Internationalen Seegerichtshof 1, 22609 Hamburg, Germany, Tel.: +49 (40) 35607-227; Fax: +49 (40) 35607-245; E-mail: press@itlos.org