



**INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA
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Press Release

**THE INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA HOLDS ITS
FIRST REGIONAL WORKSHOP IN DAKAR
(31 October – 2 November 2006)**

The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea held its first regional workshop in Dakar, Republic of Senegal, from 31 October to 2 November 2006. The theme of this workshop was 'The role of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea in the settlement of disputes relating to the law of the sea in West Africa'.

The Tribunal is organizing a series of workshops on the settlement of law of the sea-related disputes in different regions of the world, in cooperation with the Korea International Cooperation Agency of the Republic of Korea (KOICA) and the International Foundation for the Law of the Sea, a Hamburg-based institution established to promote learning and research in the field of international law of the sea.

The purpose of the workshops is to provide government experts working in the maritime field with insight into the procedures for the peaceful settlement of disputes related to the law of the sea, as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, with special attention given to the jurisdiction of the Tribunal and the procedure for bringing disputes before it. Owing to the interest generated by proceedings instituted before the Tribunal, the Tribunal wishes to offer counsel and government experts practical information about the manner in which cases are instituted and conducted before the Tribunal, whilst adopting a regional approach that takes account of specific matters arising in the region in question.

At the invitation of the Government of the Republic of Senegal, the inaugural workshop was held in Dakar. The workshop was attended by representatives of the ministries of foreign affairs, justice, fisheries, transport and maritime affairs of thirteen States (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo).

During the opening ceremony, the President of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, Judge Rüdiger Wolfrum, thanked the Minister of State in charge of Maritime Economy and International Maritime Transport, Maître Djibo L. Kâ, for his welcoming speech and for his support in organizing the workshop, declaring that his

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presence “bears witness to [Senegal’s] commitment to the cause of law and international justice”.

Recognizing that peace cannot be the result of law alone and that judges are not the sole guarantors of peace, the President declared that “the law can play a considerable role in the resolution of differences and the prevention of conflicts”, adding that “this is the mission which the Tribunal is called upon to pursue”. The President concluded that “it is because these interests are so diverse that it is of fundamental importance to ensure that efficient mechanisms are in place for settling any disputes that may arise” and that States and individuals are aware of the potential role such mechanisms can play in the peaceful settlement of law of the sea-related disputes. In his address to the workshop participants, Maître Kâ underlined the importance of the initiative taken by the Tribunal in cooperation with the International Foundation for the Law of the Sea and KOICA for the promotion of the peaceful settlement of international disputes. As a sea-oriented country, Senegal is well aware of the growing challenges regarding *inter alia* the safety and security of navigation and the pollution of the marine environment and the need to take appropriate measures to respond to these challenges at national and international level.

The sessions held during the two-and-a-half-day programme were led by the President of the Tribunal, Judges Tafsir Ndiaye (Senegal) and José Luis Jesus (Cape Verde) and the Registrar of the Tribunal, Mr Philippe Gautier. The individual sessions addressed such topics as procedure before the Tribunal, proceedings on the merits and incidental proceedings, the prompt release of vessels and crews, provisional measures and advisory opinions. An information session on ‘The role of the International Maritime Organization’ was also given by the Head of the International Maritime Law and Technical Co-operation Section of the International Maritime Organization, Mr Chris Young.

The workshop closed with a fruitful and lively exchange of views on the participants’ experience in the field of law of the sea and the difficulties encountered in its practice.

Further regional workshops will be held by the Tribunal in Jamaica and Singapore in 2007.

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;
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