

2405677E

Translated from Russian

Embassy of the Russian Federation in Jamaica

Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the International Seabed Authority, Sergey Petrovich, at the opening of the first part of the 29th session of the Council

18 March 2024

Mr President,

Secretary-General,

Your Excellencies,

The International Seabed Authority was established under the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and is designed to enforce the legal regime that it establishes for the Area proclaimed as the “common heritage of mankind”. However, some States that are not parties to the 1982 Convention are undermining that regime by their actions and, through unilateral steps, encroaching on its resources.

For example, on 19 December 2023, the United States, without reference to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, announced the establishment of the outer limits of its continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured, in seven areas of the world’s oceans. The cumulative area of seabed to which the United States has unilaterally claimed rights is about 1 million square metres.

Such unilateral actions contravene the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and threaten the integrity of the regime, both with respect to the Convention itself and to the Area declared the “common heritage of mankind”.

The vast majority of States that establish the outer limits of their continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles do so in accordance with article 76 of the 1982 Convention by receiving

recommendations from the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf as to whether the seabed areas concerned belong to the continental shelf. The limits of the shelf established by a coastal State on the basis of these recommendations are final and binding for all.

This is the only internationally recognized procedure for assigning certain areas of the seabed to the continental shelf on the basis of geological and other scientific data.

The 1982 Convention incorporated the customary law of the sea and the rules agreed by States at the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea. The interconnection of these norms in the text of the Convention has become the key to balancing the interests of developed and developing countries, allowing the world community to successfully regulate various activities in the oceans and seas.

Actions in which some States select from the Convention those provisions that are convenient for them to implement and reject others that impose obligations on them are unacceptable and harm the delicate balance achieved in the “constitution for the oceans”.

In addition, by acting unilaterally, the United States not only gains additional benefits for itself and limits the rights of other States to access the resources of the Area, but also, not being a party to the Convention, exempts itself from having to pay dues for the use of continental shelf resources beyond 200 nautical miles.

In this regard, we once again urge the United States to ratify the 1982 Convention, to properly implement the norms contained therein and to uphold the full range of rights and obligations thereunder.

On the basis of the foregoing, the Russian Federation declares that it does not recognize the outer limits of the continental shelf unilaterally established by the United States of America.

We categorically reject the selective approach taken to international law by the United States of America in which its rights are emphasized but its obligations are completely ignored. In this context, it has been repeatedly noted that the attempts made by the United States to use the norms of

the 1982 Convention in this way are untenable. We regard such steps as yet another example of Washington's promotion of a "rules-based order" in which the rules are determined each time depending on the current situation, regardless of the legitimate rights and interests of other States.

Thank you.