



Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf

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New York, 22 January–8 March 2024

Progress of work in the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf

Statement by the Chair

Summary

The present statement provides information on the work carried out during the sixtieth session of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf. The statement contains information on the election of one newly elected member as Vice-Chair of the Commission and his appointment to subcommissions and other subsidiary bodies. The statement also contains an overview of the progress made in the examination of submissions made by: Mauritius, in respect of the region of Rodrigues Island (partial submission); Palau, in respect of the North Area (partial amended submission); Portugal; Spain, in respect of the area of Galicia (partial submission); Trinidad and Tobago; Namibia; Cuba, in respect of the eastern polygon in the Gulf of Mexico; Brazil, in respect of the Brazilian equatorial margin (partial revised submission); the Cook Islands, concerning the Manihiki Plateau (revised submission); and Iceland, in respect of the western, southern and south-eastern parts of the Reykjanes Ridge (partial revised submission). In addition, the statement contains information on the presentations of the submission made by Portugal, and the partial submission made by the Federated States of Micronesia in respect of the area north of Yap. The statement also provides information about the establishment of new subcommissions for the consideration of the submission made by Cuba in respect of the eastern polygon in the Gulf of Mexico, and of the submission made by Mozambique. Lastly, the statement addresses the working methods and technical needs of the Commission, the pattern of its meetings in New York, revisions to its rules of procedure, the development of training courses and bulletins on matters of scientific and technical relevance, the retrieval and disposal of submission materials, and the readiness of delegations whose submissions will be examined by the Commission in the future.



I. Introduction

1. The Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf held its sixtieth session at United Nations Headquarters from 22 January to 8 March 2024. The plenary parts of the session were held from 29 January to 2 February and from 26 February to 1 March.¹ The remainder of the session was devoted to the scientific and technical examination of submissions at the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat. The Commission also held three meetings of its members to address organizational and substantive matters.

2. The following members of the Commission attended the session: Lawrence Asangongo Apaalse, Harald Brekke, Aldino Manuel dos Santos de Campos, Efrén Pérez Carandang, Antonio Fernando Garcez Faria, Helena Inniss, Estevão Stefane Mahanjane, Domingos de Carvalho Viana Moreira, David Cole Mosher, Simon Njuguna, Tolojanahary Randriamiantsoa, Rajan Sivaramakrishnan, Yong Tang, Michał Tomczak, Ariel Hernán Troisi, Toshitsugu Yamazaki and Gonzalo Alejandro Yáñez Carrizo.²

II. Opening of the sixtieth session

3. The Director of the Division, speaking on behalf of the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel, welcomed the new member of the Commission, Mr. Tomczak, nominated by Poland and elected in November 2023 (see [SPLOS/33/19](#), para. 11), and congratulated him on his election. The Director also paid tribute to the memory of Ivan F. Glumov, former member of the Commission from the Russian Federation.

4. Referring to the financial situation of the Organization, the Director stated that the Division would continue to do its utmost to deliver high-quality support to the Commission. He highlighted recent upgrades to the existing technical facilities of the Division and new software, as requested by the Commission (see [SPLOS/33/10](#), para. 18 and annex), and noted that more time was needed, given the current constraints, to find additional office space and increased digital storage space. He provided updates regarding, among other things, efforts to address the shortage of physical storage space in the Secretariat, the option of remote meetings with delegations and the updating of training materials. Recalling that the conditions of service of the members of the Commission remained an important issue, the Director noted that the Division was preparing background information, as requested by the Co-Coordinator of the Open-Ended Working Group, for consideration by delegations, and that the Co-Coordinator were planning to conduct intersessional consultations in advance of the thirty-fourth Meeting of States Parties in order to find efficient, sustainable and long-term solutions to improve the conditions of service. He also recalled that there were two vacant seats in the Commission, one arising from the death of Mr. Glumov and the other a long-standing vacancy for one seat allocated to the Eastern European Group. He informed the Commission that the secretariat had circulated a call for nominations with a view to filling those vacancies at the thirty-fourth Meeting of States Parties, scheduled to be convened from 10 to 14 June 2024. On behalf of the Legal Counsel, the Director reiterated the continued support of the Office of Legal Affairs, through the Division, to the Commission and wished members a productive session.

¹ General Assembly resolution [78/69](#), para. 107.

² Adnan Rashid Nasser Al-Azri and Miloud Loukili did not attend the session. Messrs. Brekke and Randriamiantsoa attended the session from 23 January; and Mr. Moreira attended the session from 25 January.

III. Minute of silent prayer or meditation

5. The Commission observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation in remembrance of Mr. Glumov, who had served as a member of the Commission from 2012 to 2023, including as Vice-Chair from 2012 to 2019.

IV. Solemn declaration by a newly elected member of the Commission

6. Pursuant to rule 10 of the rules of procedure of the Commission (CLCS/40/Rev.1) and paragraph 1 of the internal code of conduct for members of the Commission (CLCS/47), Mr. Tomczak made a solemn declaration and delivered a signed copy thereof to the Secretary of the Commission.

V. Adoption of the agenda

7. The Commission considered the provisional agenda (CLCS/60/L.1) and adopted it, with amendments (CLCS/60/1).

VI. Election of one Vice-Chair of the Commission

8. Recalling that, at its fifty-eighth session, the election of one of the Vice-Chairs had been deferred owing to the absence of members from the Eastern European Group, the Commission elected Mr. Tomczak by acclamation as Vice-Chair for the remainder of the two-and-a-half-year term, i.e. until 15 December 2025. In accordance with rule 13 of the rules of procedure, Mr. Tomczak is eligible for re-election.

VII. Organization of work

9. The Commission approved its organization of work as outlined by the Chair.

VIII. Appointment of new members of subcommissions and other subsidiary bodies

10. The Commission appointed Mr. Tomczak, the sole member of the Commission from the Eastern European Group, to both the Committee on Confidentiality and the Scientific and Technical Advice Committee, on the understanding that the appointments may be revisited in the case of the election of other members of the Commission from that regional group.

IX. Plan of work

11. Nine submissions were actively considered at the subcommission level according to the following schedule, which had been agreed upon at the fifty-ninth session and amended during the sixtieth session:

(a) From 22 to 26 January and from 5 to 7 February: Spain, in respect of the area of Galicia (subcommission chaired by Mr. Mosher); Trinidad and Tobago (subcommission chaired by Mr. Brekke); and Iceland, in respect of the western,

southern and south-eastern parts of the Reykjanes Ridge (partial revised submission) (subcommission chaired by Mr. Garcez);

(b) From 8 to 20 February: Portugal (subcommission chaired by Ms. Inniss); Cuba (subcommission chaired by Mr. Tang); and Brazil, in respect of the Brazilian equatorial margin (partial revised submission) (subcommission chaired by Mr. Yamazaki);

(c) From 21 to 23 February and from 4 to 8 March: Mauritius, in respect of the region of Rodrigues Island (subcommission chaired by Mr. Yáñez Carrizo); Palau, in respect of the North Area (subcommission chaired by Mr. Troisi); and the Cook Islands, concerning the Manihiki Plateau (revised submission) (subcommission chaired by Mr. Mosher).

12. During the plenary parts of the sixtieth session, the Chairs of the above-mentioned subcommissions, as well as the Chair of the subcommission established for consideration of the submission made by Namibia, Mr. Mahanjane, provided comprehensive and substantive accounts of the progress of their work, including the views of the submitting States. They also responded to questions and took note of observations that the subcommissions will take into account in consideration of the respective submissions and communicate to the submitting States, as needed. The sections below contain further details regarding the progress of work specific to the various submissions under active consideration.

X. Consideration of the partial submission made by Mauritius in respect of the region of Rodrigues Island³

13. The subcommission continued the main scientific and technical examination of the submission and held two meetings with the delegation, during which the delegation responded to the requests made by the subcommission and the subcommission presented preliminary observations in relation to the definition of the base and foot of the continental slope along the Rodrigues Depth Anomaly. The subcommission transmitted a communication to the delegation conveying its current observations, as well as requests for clarification and additional data and information, and inviting the delegation to meet with the subcommission during the sixty-first session.

XI. Consideration of the partial amended submission made by Palau in respect of the North Area⁴

14. The subcommission continued the main scientific and technical examination of the submission and held two meetings with the delegation, headed by the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Gustav N. Aitaro, during which the delegation and the subcommission made presentations and exchanged views with regard to the base of the continental slope and some foot of slope points on the eastern flank of the Palau-Kyushu Ridge.

³ Submission made on 6 May 2009. Available at www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_mus_36_2009.htm.

⁴ Submission made on 8 May 2009 and amended on 26 October 2017. Available at www.un.org/depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_plw_41_2009.htm.

XII. Consideration of the submission made by Portugal⁵

Presentation to the plenary

15. On 8 August 2023, Portugal requested an opportunity to make a presentation to the Commission (see [CLCS/58/2](#), para. 70). On 29 September, in response to a communication from the Commission dated 22 August, the delegation clarified that it proposed to present the submission, as amended, in the light of the election of the members of the Commission and the beginning of a new term of office in June 2023. At the sixtieth session, after considering the clarification provided, the Commission decided to accommodate the request on the understanding that the presentation would not include any data or information submitted by the delegation after the amendment of its original submission on 1 August 2017, or deal with any exchanges between the delegation and the subcommission, as these were matters to be finalized at the subcommission level.

16. The presentation of the submission of Portugal was made on 26 February 2024 by the head of delegation and Secretary of State for Maritime Affairs, José Maria Costa, and the Deputy Head of the Task Force for the Extension of the Continental Shelf, Pedro Madureira. The delegation was accompanied by the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations, Ana Paula Zacarias, as well as a number of advisers.

17. In addition to elaborating on substantive points of the submission, the delegation stated that one former member of the Commission, Fernando Pimentel, and one current member of the Commission, Mr. de Campos, had assisted Portugal by providing scientific and technical advice. The delegation recalled that no unresolved disputes existed in respect of the area covered in the submission in the sense of rule 46 of and annex I to the rules of procedure, notwithstanding the absence of agreed maritime boundaries between Portugal and Spain and between Portugal and Morocco. The delegation reiterated that consideration of the submission on the part of the Commission would be without prejudice to future delimitation in the area of the Galicia Bank region, as well as other areas where coastal States may be entitled to establish the outer limits of the continental shelf in accordance with international law.

18. The Commission continued its meeting in private and took note of the presentation by Portugal.

Consideration of the submission

19. The subcommission continued the main scientific and technical examination of the submission and held two meetings with the delegation, during which the subcommission and the delegation exchanged presentations on the submission. Considerable progress was made with respect to the location of the base of the continental slope and foot of slope points in sector VI of the eastern region (western and south-western flank of Madeira Island). Discussions were ongoing with respect to the sediment thickness point in the Galicia Bank region. The subcommission transmitted a communication to the delegation conveying preliminary views and conclusions of the subcommission on the data and information transmitted by the delegation during the session and inviting the delegation to meet with the subcommission at the sixty-first session.

⁵ Submission made on 11 May 2009 and amended on 1 August 2017. Available at www.un.org/depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_prt_44_2009.htm.

XIII. Consideration of the partial submission made by Spain in respect of the area of Galicia⁶

Consideration of the submission

20. The subcommission continued the main scientific and technical examination of the submission and held one meeting with the delegation, during which the delegation made a presentation that included images of new multichannel seismic reflection profiles, derivation of velocities used in travel time to depth conversion, and issues concerning sedimentary aprons in the context of paragraph 8.5.3 (a) of the Scientific and Technical Guidelines. The subcommission transmitted a communication conveying its understanding of paragraphs 8.5.3 (a) and (b) of the Guidelines and further views on velocities derived from multichannel reflection data, as expressed in paragraphs 8.3.5 and 8.4.4 of the Guidelines, and requested further information and clarifications.

Change in the composition of the subcommission

21. Two vacancies occurred in the subcommission, one owing to the death of Mr. Glumov (see also para. 5), which the Commission may address following the by-elections to be held at the thirty-fourth Meeting of States Parties, in June 2024, and the other owing to the establishment, in accordance with the criteria set forth in rule 42, paragraph 1, of the rules of procedure, of a new subcommission, to which Mr. Mosher was appointed to ensure a scientific and geographical balance during the second plenary part (see also paras. 49–51). The Commission addressed this vacancy by appointing Mr. Brekke to the subcommission for consideration of the partial submission made by Spain in respect of the area of Galicia. The subcommission met and elected Mr. Apaalse as the new Chair of the subcommission.

XIV. Consideration of the submission made by Trinidad and Tobago⁷

Change in the composition of the subcommission

22. The Commission appointed Mr. Tomczak as a member of the subcommission.

Consideration of the submission

23. The subcommission continued the main scientific and technical examination of the submission, focusing on the test of appurtenance. Two meetings were held with the delegation, during which the delegation responded to the preliminary observations and requests for clarification made by the subcommission at the fifty-ninth session. Following feedback received during the plenary, the subcommission presented its views and conclusions on the test of appurtenance, which were also transmitted in a communication to the delegation.

Communication dated 10 July 2023 from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

24. The Commission considered a communication from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations dated 10 July 2023, which had not been discussed at the fifty-eighth session owing to the limited time

⁶ Submission made on 11 May 2009. Available at **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.** www.un.org/depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_esp_47_2009.htm.

⁷ Submission made on 12 May 2009. Available at www.un.org/depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_tto_49_2009.htm.

available (see [CLCS/58/2](#), para. 82), nor at the fifty-ninth session during which no plenary meetings were scheduled. Taking into account the objection to the consideration of the submission by Trinidad and Tobago contained in that communication, the Commission decided to suspend the consideration of the submission in accordance with paragraph 5 (a) of annex I to the rules of procedure, noting that the States concerned may wish to make use of the avenues available to them, including provisional arrangements of a practical nature provided for in annex I.

XV. Consideration of the submission made by Namibia⁸

Change in the composition of the subcommission

25. The Commission appointed Mr. Tomczak as a member of the subcommission.

Consideration of the submission

26. The subcommission, chaired by Mr. Mahanjane, was scheduled to meet from 8 to 20 February and had invited the delegation to attend. During the sixtieth session, the delegation advised that it was unable to attend the session, requested more time to submit its responses to the views, observations and requests for additional data and information that had been transmitted by the subcommission at the fifty-ninth session, and proposed to meet with the subcommission at the sixty-first session.⁹ The subcommission therefore decided that it would resume its consideration of the submission at the sixty-first session, which would include meetings with the delegation.

XVI. Consideration of the submission made by Cuba in respect of the eastern polygon in the Gulf of Mexico¹⁰

27. The subcommission commenced the initial examination of the submission on the basis of the data and information contained in the submission made by Cuba on 1 June 2009. The subcommission examined the format and completeness of the submission. It commenced the preliminary analysis of the submission, concluding, *inter alia*, that more time would be required to examine the data and prepare recommendations for transmittal to the Commission. The subcommission also concluded that it was not necessary at the current stage to recommend seeking cooperation with competent international organizations, in accordance with rule 56 of the rules of procedure, or the advice by specialists, in accordance with rule 57.

28. On 15 February, Cuba transmitted an amended executive summary, which superseded the executive summary that had been submitted on 1 June 2009. One meeting was held with the delegation by videoconference,¹¹ at which the subcommission presented some preliminary observations. The subcommission

⁸ Submission made on 12 May 2009. Available at www.un.org/depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_nam_50_2009.htm.

⁹ In the light of the information communicated by the delegation, the Commission decided during the first plenary part that the members of the subcommission should consider another submission in the queue in order to optimize the use of the time allocated for the sixtieth session (see paras. 45–48 of the present document).

¹⁰ Submission made on 1 June 2009. Available at www.un.org/depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_cub_51_2009.htm.

¹¹ The delegation indicated its willingness to meet with the subcommission virtually, acknowledging the limitations concerning the confidentiality of exchanges through means other than in-person meetings, which had been brought to the attention of the delegation by the secretariat and the subcommission.

transmitted a communication to the delegation containing a summary of its preliminary observations, as well as some requests for additional data and information, and inviting the delegation to meet with the subcommission at the sixty-first session.

XVII. Consideration of revised submissions

A. Partial revised submission made by Brazil in respect of the Brazilian equatorial margin¹²

29. The subcommission continued the main scientific and technical examination of the submission and held two meetings with the delegation, during which the subcommission and delegation exchanged views regarding seismic velocity estimations and basement interpretations for calculating sediment thickness at the 1 per cent sediment thickness points. The subcommission transmitted a communication to the delegation, setting out its current observations, as well as requests for clarification and additional data and information, and inviting the delegation to meet with the subcommission at the sixty-first session.

B. Revised submission made by the Cook Islands concerning the Manihiki Plateau¹³

Change in the composition of the subcommission

30. The Commission appointed Mr. Tomczak as a member of the subcommission.

Report of the subcommission

31. The subcommission continued the main scientific and technical examination of the submission, focusing on the reply by the delegation to the communication from the subcommission at the fifty-ninth session. Two meetings were held with the delegation, during which the delegation presented its response regarding the base of the continental slope identification, geological continuity of the Manihiki Plateau and the methodology for establishing the 2,500 m isobath. The subcommission presented its assessment of the base of the slope and the foot of slope points and its preliminary views on the natural components of the continental margin. The subcommission transmitted a communication to the delegation with a summary of exchanges and preliminary views of the subcommission at the sixtieth session, as well as requests for clarification.

C. Partial revised submission made by Iceland in respect of the western, southern and south-eastern parts of the Reykjanes Ridge¹⁴

Consideration of the submission

32. The subcommission continued the main scientific and technical examination of the submission. In particular, it focused on the consideration of morphological data

¹² Submission made on 8 September 2017. Available at www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_bra_rev2.htm.

¹³ Submission made on 3 December 2021. Available at www.un.org/depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_cok_23_2021.htm.

¹⁴ Submission made on 31 March 2021. Available at www.un.org/depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_isl_rev2021.htm.

and supporting geological and geophysical evidence in the context of the determination of the foot of the continental slope. Three meetings were held with the delegation, during which the delegation presented its response to the requests made by the subcommission at the conclusion of the fifty-ninth session and the subcommission presented observations in relation thereto. Subsequently, a preliminary reply of the delegation was followed by an exchange of views. The subcommission transmitted a communication inviting the delegation to meet with it at the sixty-first session.

Change in the composition of the subcommission

33. During the second plenary part of the session, the Commission appointed Mr. Randriamiarantsoa as a member of the subcommission.

XVIII. Consideration of other submissions made pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

Presentation of the partial submission made by the Federated States of Micronesia in respect of the area north of Yap

34. The partial submission made by the Federated States of Micronesia in respect of the area north of Yap was presented to the Commission on 1 February 2024 by Universe Yamase Lawrence, Chargé d'affaires a.i., Deputy Permanent Representative and head of delegation; Leonito Bacalando, Acting Secretary, Department of Justice; Alain Murphy, expert; and Scott Sweet, expert.

35. In addition to elaborating on substantive points of the submission, the delegation noted that the submission was the third partial submission made by the Federated States of Micronesia to the Commission. The delegation indicated that no former or serving member of the Commission had assisted the Federated States of Micronesia by providing scientific and technical advice during the preparation of the partial submission.

36. The delegation stated that “the area of the continental shelf covered by the submission is not the subject of dispute with any other State” and that “consideration of the submission will not prejudice matters relating to the delimitation of boundaries between the [Federated States of Micronesia] and any other State”. In this connection, the delegation noted that the Federated States of Micronesia had “agreed to make the submission without prejudice to the delimitation of maritime boundaries between [the Federated States of Micronesia] and Palau, noting that Palau also lodged a submission on the so-called Kyushu Ridge, which potentially overlaps with the present submission”. The Federated States of Micronesia and Palau had conducted formal consultations on the matter, and the absence of any objection to the submission of the Federated States of Micronesia had been assured, without prejudice to the determination of maritime boundaries. The delegation therefore concluded that there was “no dispute that will prevent the Commission from considering this submission”.

37. With respect to communications that had been received in connection with the partial submission, the delegation noted that, on 17 August 2022, Japan had “lodged a formal notification by note verbale acknowledging [the] submission and indicating further that the matter is without prejudice to matters relating to the delimitation of boundaries between [the Federated States of Micronesia] and Japan”. The delegation also referred to a communication from the United States of America dated 26 October 2022, which confirmed “that [the United States] had no objection to [the] submission [of the Federated States of Micronesia], without prejudice to the establishment of the

outer limits of the continental shelf by the United States, or to any delimitation of continental shelf between [the Federated States of Micronesia] and the United States”.

38. The Commission then continued its meeting in private. Addressing the modalities for the consideration of the submission, the Commission took note of the communications received in relation to the partial submission, namely the communications from Japan dated 17 August 2022 and the United States dated 26 October 2022.

39. Taking into account these communications and the presentation made by the delegation, the Commission decided to proceed with the consideration of the partial submission by the Federated States of Micronesia when it was next in line for consideration as queued in the order in which it was received.

40. In this context, the Commission recalled that at its fifty-seventh session it had decided that it would proceed on the basis of two queues, one for original submissions and the other for revised submissions (see [CLCS/57/2](#), paras. 70–73), and noted that the partial submission presented by the Federated States of Micronesia would be considered in the queue for original submissions.

XIX. Report of the Chair of the Committee on Confidentiality

41. The Chair of the Committee, Mr. Brekke, reported that no meetings of the Committee were required during the sixtieth session.

XX. Report of the Chair of the Scientific and Technical Advice Committee

42. The Chair of the Committee, Mr. Mosher, reported that the Committee did not meet during the sixtieth session as no request for scientific and technical advice had been received from any State.

43. In view of the significant scientific and technical advances that had been achieved since the publication of the Scientific and Technical Guidelines, as well as the development of practice in the examination of submissions (see [CLCS/58/2](#), para. 104; and [CLCS/59/1](#), para. 45), upon a proposal by the Chair of the Committee, the Commission tasked the Committee with coordinating the development of bulletins on matters of scientific and technical relevance to complement the Guidelines in the implementation of article 76 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the statement of understanding, which may assist States with regard to their submissions. In the case of discrepancies between the bulletins and the Guidelines, the latter shall prevail.

XXI. Other matters

A. Summary of recommendations for the submission made by Nigeria

44. The Commission took note of a communication from Nigeria dated 30 October 2023 concerning the summary of the recommendations approved by the Commission on 11 August 2023 in regard to the submission made by Nigeria on 7 May 2009. In accordance with its practice, the Commission redacted the summary by removing figures and captions identified by the delegation as being of a confidential or proprietary nature but decided not to make the requested textual changes in order to ensure that all matters of substance were fully addressed in the summary. The

Commission noted that the summary so redacted had been published on the website of the Commission maintained by the Division.

B. Establishment of new subcommissions

45. During the first plenary part of the session, taking into account the status of work in one of its established subcommissions (see also para. 26 and footnote 9), the Commission decided to proceed with the establishment of a new subcommission in order to optimize the efficiency of the session.

46. In accordance with its practice, the Commission first reviewed the status of the submissions that were next in line in the queue of original submissions. The Commission noted that, in the absence of consent given by all States that were parties to disputes that had caused their deferral, it was not yet in a position to commence the consideration of the following submissions: Myanmar; Yemen, in respect of south-east of Socotra Island; the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, in respect of the Hatton-Rockall area; Ireland, in respect of the Hatton-Rockall area; Fiji; Malaysia and Viet Nam, jointly, in respect of the southern part of the South China Sea; Viet Nam, in respect of the North Area; and the United Kingdom, in respect of the Falkland Islands and of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands. The status of these submissions would be reviewed by the Commission again at the time of the future establishment of new subcommissions.

47. The Commission therefore decided to establish a subcommission for the consideration of the submission next in line in the queue of original submissions, namely the submission made by Cuba in respect of the eastern polygon in the Gulf of Mexico.¹⁵ In doing so, the Commission took note of two relevant communications.

48. After consultations, the Commission appointed Messrs. de Campos, Garcez, Mahanjane, Njuguna, Tang, Tomczak and Troisi to the subcommission. The subcommission elected Mr. Tang as Chair and Messrs. Garcez and Mahanjane as Vice-Chairs.¹⁶

49. During the second plenary part of the session, following the suspension of the consideration of the submission made by Trinidad and Tobago (see also para. 24), the Commission decided to establish another new subcommission.

50. Noting that there had been no developments since the first plenary part that would have allowed the Commission to proceed with the consideration of the submissions listed in paragraph 46 above, the Commission decided to establish a subcommission for the consideration of the submission next in line in the queue of original submissions, namely the submission made by Mozambique.¹⁷

51. After consultations, the Commission appointed Messrs. Loukili, Mosher, Tang, Tomczak, Troisi and Yamazaki to the subcommission and decided that an additional member would be appointed at a subsequent stage. The subcommission elected Mr. Tomczak as Chair and Messrs. Mosher and Troisi as Vice-Chairs. It was decided that the subcommission would commence its consideration of the submission at the sixty-first session.

¹⁵ Submission made on 1 June 2009. Available at www.un.org/depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_cub_51_2009.htm.

¹⁶ See paras. 27 and 28 of the present document for a report on the progress of work in the consideration of this submission.

¹⁷ Submission made on 7 July 2010. Available at www.un.org/depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_moz_52_2010.htm.

C. Readiness of delegations

52. The Commission emphasized the importance of submitting States monitoring the progress of the queue, with a view to: (a) ensuring the readiness of their delegations to engage in an effective manner as soon as a subcommission is established for the consideration of their submissions; (b) planning in a timely manner any submission of updated data and information that they might be in the process of preparing; and (c) making sure that the version of the geographic information system software used in their submissions is compatible with the version used by the Commission.

D. Plan of work

53. The subcommissions decided that their members would continue to work individually during the intersessional period on submission materials that were not classified as confidential pursuant to annex II to the rules of procedure.

54. The Commission adopted the following programme of work for the subcommissions for the sixty-first session, subject to adjustments that the Commission may make at the sixty-first session to ensure its efficiency:

(a) From 8 to 17 July: Spain, in respect of the area of Galicia; Mozambique; and Iceland, in respect of the western, southern and south-eastern parts of the Reykjanes Ridge (partial revised submission);

(b) From 18 to 29 July: Mauritius, in respect of the region of Rodrigues Island; Palau, in respect of the North Area; and the Cook Islands, concerning the Manihiki Plateau (revised submission);

(c) From 30 July to 2 August and from 12 to 16 August: Portugal; and Brazil, in respect of the Brazilian equatorial margin (partial revised submission);

(d) From 30 July to 2 August: Namibia;

(e) From 12 to 16 August: Cuba, in respect of the eastern polygon in the Gulf of Mexico.

E. Working group on working methods and technical needs of the Commission

55. The Chair of the open-ended working group on working methods and technical needs of the Commission, Mr. Mosher, noted with appreciation that upgrades had been made to the geographic information system laboratories of the Division with the provision of dual 27 inch monitors for all members and the acquisition of new software (see [SPLOS/33/10](#), annex, para. 1). He also noted, however, that the identification of the requested additional office space (see [CLCS/58/2](#), para. 105) had not yet been addressed. The secretariat reported that modalities for offering additional office space and funding for additional secure network storage space were being followed up on.

56. As a result of a number of proposals to increase the efficiency of the Commission arising from the working group, the Commission: (a) established an ad hoc drafting committee to address these matters (see also para. 58 and 59); (b) established a separate ad hoc drafting committee to revise the rules of procedure (see also paras. 60–63); and (c) re-established the Training Committee (see also paras. 64–66).

F. Pattern of meetings of the Commission in New York

57. The Commission recalled that, at the fifty-eighth session, it had decided that in 2024 it would continue to meet for a total of 21 weeks by holding three sessions of seven weeks each and that no two sessions would be sequential. The Commission also recalled its decisions to review the pattern of its meetings (see [CLCS/76](#), para. 16; [CLCS/85](#), para. 87; and [CLCS/58/2](#), para. 14) in the context of a more general review of the modalities of its work and, in this regard, had tasked the open-ended working group on working methods and technical needs of the Commission with conducting a comprehensive assessment of the current methods of work of the Commission, with a view to identifying ways to improve them.

58. Mr. Yáñez, as coordinator of a group of members of the Commission, introduced a document reviewing the current pattern of meetings (see [CLCS/58/2](#), para. 104). Subsequently, the Commission established an open-ended ad hoc drafting committee to draft an annex to the letter that the Chair would address to the President of the thirty-fourth Meeting of States Parties with proposals in this regard. The core members of the drafting committee were Ms. Inniss, as well as Messrs. Brekke, de Campos, Troisi, Njuguna, Sivaramkrishnan, Yamazaki and Yáñez. The working group elected Mr. Yáñez as its Chair.

59. Mr. Yáñez subsequently introduced a document entitled “Pattern of meetings of the Commission in New York”, outlining a plan according to which, starting in 2025 and until the end of its current term of office in June 2028, the pattern of annual meetings of the Commission would consist of three sessions of 5 weeks each, including plenary meetings, for a total of 15 weeks per year, to be held at United Nations Headquarters, with no two sessions being sequential, complemented with increased intersessional work. The Commission agreed with the proposed plan and decided to bring it to the attention of States parties as an annex to the letter of the Chair to the President of the thirty-fourth Meeting of States Parties.

G. Revision of the rules of procedure

60. Mr. Mosher, as coordinator of a group of members of the Commission, introduced a document illustrating a number of possible changes to the rules of procedure that could afford the Commission the flexibility required to conduct its business in a more efficient manner. Subsequently, the Commission decided to proceed with revising its rules of procedure to reflect its current and anticipated working needs and to align the rules with the practice resulting from decisions taken by the Commission since the adoption of document [CLCS/40/Rev.1](#).

61. For that purpose, the Commission decided to establish an open-ended ad hoc drafting committee, with Messrs. Mosher, Garcez, Apaalse, Brekke, de Campos, Carandang, Tang, Tomczak and Troisi as core members, and with the following mandate:

The ad-hoc drafting committee for the revision of the rules of procedure of the Commission contained in document [CLCS/40/Rev.1](#) is an open-ended committee, with core members, set up to prepare a new draft of the rules of procedure to:

(a) Increase the efficiency of the work of the Commission and its subcommissions;

(b) Codify the practice resulting from relevant decisions taken by the Commission since the adoption of [CLCS/40/Rev.1](#).

In discharging its mandate, the Committee shall:

(a) Focus only on the main body of the rules of procedure and its annex III (modus operandi for the consideration of a submission made to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf) contained in [CLCS/40/Rev.1](#);

(b) Circulate drafts for comments by the members of the Commission prior to discussions in plenary;

(c) Work in consultation with the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations.

62. The Committee met and elected Mr. Mosher as its Chair and Mr. Garcez as its Vice-Chair.

63. During the second plenary part, Mr. Mosher reported that the drafting committee had held six meetings and presented to the Commission a set of a proposed amendments to the main body of and annex III to the rules of procedure, to which the Commission agreed, in principle. The Commission requested the drafting committee, in consultation with the secretariat, to submit a consolidated draft of the revised rules of procedure for consideration at the sixty-first session.

H. Assistance to States in facilitating the preparation, making and maintenance of submissions to the Commission and their consideration by the Commission

64. The Commission recalled its discussion during the fifty-ninth session (see [CLCS/59/1](#), para. 45) and decided to re-establish the Training Committee to propose a way forward to address capacity-building requirements for the development of the expertise required to facilitate the preparation, making and maintenance of submissions to the Commission and their consideration by the Commission. After consultations, the Commission appointed Messrs. Apaalse, Brekke, Sivaramakrishnan, Tomczak and Yáñez as core members, noting that the Committee was open-ended. The Committee elected Mr. Brekke as its Chair and Mr. Yáñez as its Vice-Chair.

65. Mr. Brekke subsequently introduced a document entitled “Assistance to States with respect to the scientific and technical expertise required in facilitating the preparation, making and maintenance of submissions to the Commission and their consideration by the Commission”, containing two five-day outlines for two training courses designed for: (a) States that are yet to make a submission for the first time, or whose delegations have encountered a significant change of membership since making their submissions; and (b) States that have at least some degree of experience, including those that have made submissions.

66. The Commission decided to request the Meeting of States Parties to consider inviting the General Assembly to: (a) request the Secretary-General, in cooperation with States and relevant international organizations and institutions, to develop and make available training courses based on the two five-day outlines; and (b) invite States, intergovernmental organizations and agencies, national institutions, non-governmental organizations and international financial institutions as well as natural and juridical persons to make voluntary financial or other contributions to the trust fund to facilitate attendance of such training courses by technical and administrative staff of the States, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States. The document will be included as an annex to the letter of the Chair to the President of the thirty-fourth Meeting of States Parties.

I. Retrieval and disposal of submission materials

67. Recalling the decision taken by the Commission at its fifty-eighth session (see [CLCS/58/2](#), para. 106), the secretariat reported that, after circulating a communication drawing the attention of States parties to the decision, the secretariat had started to receive requests from a number of States that wished to retrieve or authorize the safe disposal of hard copies of submissions that were no longer needed. The Commission took note of the report and requested that the secretariat follow up, as needed, in relation to this matter.

J. Trust funds

68. The secretariat informed the Commission about the status of the voluntary trust fund for the purpose of defraying the cost of the participation of the members of the Commission from developing States in its meetings. Since the fifty-eighth session of the Commission, contributions had been received from Canada, China, France, the Philippines, Portugal, Spain, the United States and the European Union. As at 31 January 2024, the trust fund had approximate net assets of \$886,000.

69. For the sixtieth session, financial assistance for a total of approximately \$245,000, inclusive of programme support costs, was provided to eight members. The funding requirements for the sixty-first session, should all qualifying Commission members avail themselves of the assistance of the trust fund, are estimated at \$276,000. It was noted that, barring any unexpected circumstances, the trust fund therefore has sufficient funding to provide assistance to those qualifying members up to and including the sixty-first session.

70. The secretariat recalled that the balance of the trust fund was currently sufficient to reimburse the full costs of the premiums paid by the members of the Commission from developing States who joined the Headquarters medical insurance scheme in 2024. It was emphasized, however, that although the trust fund had sufficient funds to cover such expenditure in the foreseeable future, it would continue to be chronically underfunded without additional contributions.

71. With regard to the trust fund for the purpose of facilitating the preparation of submissions to the Commission for developing States, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States, and in compliance with article 76 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the secretariat reported that, as at 31 January 2024, the trust fund had an approximate net balance of \$138,000 and that no contributions had been received since the previous session. A total of four States, namely the Cook Islands, Mauritius, the Federated States of Micronesia and Trinidad and Tobago, had received assistance from the trust fund to participate in meetings held with the Commission or the relevant subcommissions during the current session of the Commission.

72. For the sixtieth session, financial assistance for a total of approximately \$41,000, inclusive of programme support costs, was provided to four delegations. Based on the pattern of requests for financial assistance of recent sessions, barring any unexpected circumstances, the trust fund therefore has sufficient funding to provide assistance to those qualifying delegations up to and including the sixty-first session.

73. The Commission took note of the information on the trust funds, expressed appreciation to all States that had made contributions to the trust funds and appealed to States that were in a position to do so to contribute to them.

K. Acknowledgements

74. The Chair noted with appreciation and gratitude the high standard of secretariat services rendered to the Commission by the Division. He also expressed his appreciation to the conference services, including to the interpreters and conference officers.
