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The Secretary-General of the United Nations presents his compliments to the representatives of States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (the “Convention”) and has the honour to communicate the following:

*Vacancies in the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf*

On 2 June 2023, the Secretary-General received a letter dated 2 June 2023 from Mr. Mateusz Damrat, informing of his decision to resign from the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (the Commission), before the beginning of his term on 16 June 2023. Mr. Damrat was elected as a member of the Commission by the thirty-second Meeting of States Parties for a term of five years, from 16 June 2023 to 15 June 2028 (SPLOS/32/15).

It is recalled that pursuant to the *Arrangement for the allocation of seats on the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea and the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf* approved by the nineteenth Meeting of States Parties on 26 June 2009 (SPLOS/201), Mr. Damrat was elected to fill a seat allocated to the Group of Eastern European States.

Pursuant to rule 72 (*By-elections*) of the rules of procedure for Meetings of States Parties ([SPLOS/2/Rev.5](#)), “[i]f the office of a member of the Commission becomes vacant, the Meeting of States Parties shall, in accordance with rule 71 [*(Elections of the members of the Commission)*], elect a member for the remainder of the predecessor’s term.”

In addition, it is recalled that another seat allocated to the Group of Eastern European States has remained vacant.

Therefore, the thirty-third Meeting of States Parties will need to be resumed with a view to holding a by-election to elect a member for the remainder of the term of Mr. Damrat, until 15 June 2028. An election for the other vacant seat on the Commission for the same term would also be held on this occasion.

### *Call for nominations*

Pursuant to article 2, paragraph 2, of annex II to the Convention, “[a]t least three months before the date of each election, the Secretary-General of the United Nations shall address a letter to the States Parties, inviting the submission of nominations, after appropriate regional consultations, within three months. The Secretary-General shall prepare a list in alphabetical order of all persons thus nominated and shall submit it to all the States Parties.”

The Secretary-General hereby invites States Parties to the Convention to submit nominations with respect to two vacant seats allocated to the Group of Eastern European States.

Pursuant to article 2, paragraph 1, of annex II to the Convention, members of the Commission “shall be experts in the field of geology, geophysics or hydrography, elected by States Parties to [the] Convention from among their nationals, having due regard to the need to ensure equitable geographical representation, who shall serve in their personal capacities”.

States parties are encouraged to give due regard to the desirability of addressing the gender imbalance in the Commission and consider nominating female experts.

### *Procedure of nomination*

The period for the nomination of candidates for election of members of the Commission will open on 7 July 2023 and will close on 6 October 2023 at midnight (EST time).

Nominations made before 7 July 2023 or after 6 October 2023 will not be accepted. Following the end of the nomination period, the Secretary-General will prepare, in alphabetical order, a list of all the persons thus nominated. The list will then be submitted to all the States Parties.

It is recalled that the Presidents of the thirty-first, thirty-second and thirty-third Meetings of States Parties, emphasized the importance of ensuring full and effective participation and equal opportunities at all levels for women in institutions relevant under the Convention, in order to achieve gender equality, as recognized in Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SPLOS/31/13, para. 15; SPLOS/32/15, para. 73 – SPLOS/33/15, forthcoming). States Parties are thus encouraged to nominate female experts, with a view to promoting gender balance in the Commission.

Nominations must indicate the name of the candidate and be accompanied by a statement of qualifications. It is recalled that pursuant to article 2, paragraph 1, of annex II to the Convention, members of the Commission shall be experts in the fields of geology, geophysics or hydrography.



The statement of qualifications should not exceed 400 words, however the nominating State may additionally submit a more comprehensive *curriculum vitae* for publication on the web site of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs. Nominations must be addressed to:

The Secretary-General of the United Nations  
c/o Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea  
Office of Legal Affairs  
United Nations DC2-0450  
New York, NY 10017

The statement of qualifications of the candidate should also be transmitted electronically in MS Word format to: [doalos@un.org](mailto:doalos@un.org).

*Expenses of members while in performance of Commission duties – an undertaking by nominating States*

Pursuant to article 2, paragraph 5, of annex II to the Convention, “the State Party which submitted the nomination of a member of the Commission shall defray the expenses of that member while in performance of Commission duties”. In addition to defraying the costs associated with relevant travel and subsistence allowance, this may also include appropriate life, medical and other forms of insurance covering the period of service.

In addition, it is recalled that the General Assembly has also decided, on an exceptional basis, that the members of the Commission will have the option to join the Headquarters medical insurance scheme upon payment of the full premium (see, resolution 77/248, paragraph 112).

The twenty-sixth Meeting of States Parties “urged States parties that would nominate candidates for future elections of members of the Commission to formally undertake to support their candidates in accordance with article 2, paragraph 5, of annex II to the Convention. [...] Such an undertaking could be provided in the form of a note verbale that would accompany the nomination of a candidate to the Commission and would be brought to the attention of the Meeting of States Parties at the time of the election of the members of the Commission” (SPLOS/303, paragraph 79).

Moreover, the twenty-sixth Meeting of States Parties appealed to States “to ensure the full participation of the members of the Commission nominated by them in the work of the Commission, including by not scheduling conflicting activities for those members during the sessions of the Commission” (SPLOS/303, paragraph 80).

In this connection, it is recalled that the twenty-sixth Meeting of States Parties requested the Commission, as from 16 June 2017, to “meet at United Nations Headquarters for up to 26 weeks, but not less than an intended minimum of 21 weeks, per year for a period of five years, distributed in such a way that the Commission determines to be the most effective, and that no two sessions be sequential” (SPLOS/303, paragraph 84).

*Date of the resumed thirty-third Meeting of States Parties*

Pursuant to article 2, paragraph 3, of annex II to the Convention, “[e]lections of the members of the Commission shall be held at a meeting of States Parties convened by the Secretary-General at United Nations Headquarters.” States parties will be notified in due course about the date of the resumed thirty-third Meeting.

The Secretary-General avails himself of this opportunity to renew to the representatives of States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea the assurances of his highest consideration.

   
6 July 2023