



PHILIPPINES MAKES OFFICIAL SUBMISSION TO U.N. ON ENTITLEMENT TO AN EXTENDED CONTINENTAL SHELF IN THE WEST PHILIPPINE SEA



NEW YORK 14 June 2024 – The Philippines today, through the Philippine Mission to the United Nations in New York, submitted information to the United Nations (UN) Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) to register the country’s entitlement to an extended continental shelf (ECS) in the West Palawan Region in the West Philippine Sea/South China Sea.

Under Article 76 of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), a coastal State such as the Philippines is entitled to establish the outer limits of its continental shelf comprising the seabed and subsoil of the submarine areas extending beyond 200 nautical miles (NM) but not to exceed 350 NM from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured.

The National Mapping and Resource Information Agency (NAMRIA) led the Extended Continental Shelf Technical Working Group (ECS-TWG) that worked on the submission for over a decade and a half. NAMRIA Administrator Peter N. Tiangco welcomed the official ECS submission and thanked the ECS-TWG for their work in gathering and processing of data on geodetic and hydrographic information, and geophysical and geological information to substantiate the submission.

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DFA Assistant Secretary for Maritime and Ocean Affairs Marshall Louis M. Alferez emphasized that the submission is a declaration not only of the Philippines' maritime entitlements under UNCLOS but also of the country's commitment to the responsible application of its processes. He also underscored the significance of the submission in securing the Philippines' sovereign rights and maritime jurisdictions in the West Philippine Sea, noting that the 2016 Award on the South China Sea Arbitration confirmed the Philippines' maritime entitlements and rejected those that exceeded geographic and substantive limits under UNCLOS.

“Incidents in the waters tend to overshadow the importance of what lies beneath”, said Assistant Secretary Alferez. “The seabed and the subsoil extending from our archipelago up the maximum extent allowed by UNCLOS hold significant potential resources that will benefit our nation and our people for generations to come. Today we secure our future by making a manifestation of our exclusive right to explore and exploit natural resources in our ECS entitlement.”

Assistant Secretary Alferez added that the Philippine submission does not prejudice discussions with relevant coastal States that may have legitimate ECS claims measured from their respective lawful baselines under UNCLOS. “We consider our submission as a step in discussing delimitation matters and other forms of cooperation moving forward. What is important is that the Philippines puts on record the maximum extent of our entitlement.”

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Ambassador Antonio Lagdameo, Permanent Representative of the Philippine Mission to the United Nations in New York likewise stressed that this submission “can reinvigorate efforts of States to demonstrate their readiness to pursue UNCLOS processes in the determination of maritime entitlements and promote a rules based international order.”

This is the second time the Philippines has made a submission on an ECS entitlement. In April 2009, the Philippines made a partial submission on the Philippine Rise, which the CLCS validated in 2012, resulting in an additional 135,506 square kilometers of seabed area for the Philippines. In that submission, the Philippines stated that it reserved the right to make submissions in other areas in the future.

The first submission was also undertaken by the ECS-TWG, an inter-agency body composed of technical, legal, diplomatic, political, and law enforcement experts from several Philippine offices and agencies, including NAMRIA, DFA, Department of Justice, Department of Energy, National Security Council, Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Mines and Geosciences Bureau, University of the Philippines (UP) Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea, UP National Institute of Geological Sciences, the former National Coast Watch Council Secretariat, Department of National Defense, Office of the Solicitor General and Philippine Coast Guard. END

