



Maritime Boundary Office

Council for the Final Delimitation
of Maritime Boundaries
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The Maritime Boundary Office is the Secretariat for the Council for the Final Delimitation of Maritime Boundaries, which is responsible for the negotiation of permanent maritime boundaries with Indonesia and Australia.

Launch of the Timor-Leste Maritime Boundary Policy Paper

On 29 August, 2016 H.E. Prime Minister Dr Rui Maria de Araújo launched the Timor-Leste Policy Paper on Maritime Boundaries at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation in Dili. The Policy Paper outlines the story of Timor-Leste's struggle for sovereign rights over its seas – from the past to the present and what it means for the future. The Paper summarises the relevant principles of the law of the sea and where Timor-Leste's maritime boundaries would lie under international law. The Policy Paper has been distributed nationally and internationally. At the launch event, the open hearing of the compulsory conciliation at The Hague was broadcasted live for the audience. The Chief Negotiator launched the Policy Paper on the same day at The Hague.

*H.E. Prime
Minister Dr. Rui
Maria de Araújo
launches the
Timor-Leste
Policy Paper
on Maritime
Boundaries on
29 August 2016*



*Guests watch the
live broadcast
of the open
hearing of the
Compulsory
Conciliation at
The Hague*

United Nations Compulsory Conciliation

On 11 April 2016, the Timor-Leste Government initiated compulsory conciliation under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The aim of compulsory conciliation is to reach an agreement on permanent maritime boundaries with Australia. On 29 August, H.E. Minister Xanana Gusmão, Chief Negotiator, H.E. Agio Pereira, Minister of State and Ms Elizabeth Exposto MBO, CEO, as Agent and Deputy Agent, represented Timor-Leste at an open hearing at The Hague. Timor-Leste and Australia both had the opportunity to present their case to the Commission and to the world. Australia challenged the jurisdiction of the Commission, but on 26 September, 2016 the Commission announced that they had decided they did have jurisdiction and would continue with the proceedings. Subsequently, meetings between both parties have been held in Singapore in October with more meetings scheduled for early 2017. Timor-Leste believes the meetings



*H.E. Minister
Xanana
Gusmão, Chief
Negotiator at
The Hague on
29 July 2016*

so far have been very productive. Chair of the Conciliation Commission H.E. Ambassador Peter Taksoe-Jensen said: "Both sides are to be commended for being willing to move beyond past differences and work hard to create conditions conducive to achieving an agreement."

Visit to the United States of America

H.E. Prime Minister Dr Rui Maria de Araújo, H.E. Chief Negotiator Xanana Gusmão and H.E. Foreign Minister Hernâni Coelho visited the United States for the United Nations General Assembly in September 2016. This visit followed H.E. Prime Minister's visit to the United States in June and H.E. Minister Agio Pereira's visit in July. The role of the United States is important to Timor-Leste's efforts to delimit its maritime boundaries with Australia. Through these visits, Timor-Leste's leaders have raised awareness of Timor-Leste's pursuit of maritime boundaries with key American Government officials, influential academics and think tank experts, community groups and the media.

H.E. Prime Minister addressed the General Assembly in New York on 24 September and spoke about the importance of establishing permanent maritime boundaries to Timor-Leste's economic self-sufficiency. The delegation then visited universities and communities in Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Indiana who have strong Portuguese cultural ties and heritage. His Excellency thanked those communities for their solidarity and support during Timor-Leste's struggle for independence in the 1990s.

(L-R) H.E. Hernâni Coelho, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation; H.E. Domingos Sarmento, Timor-Leste Ambassador to the USA; H.E. Dr Rui Maria de Araújo, Prime Minister; The Hon Jon Mitchell, Mayor of New Bedford, MA; Representative Tony Cabral, Massachusetts House Representative; H.E. Minister Xanana Gusmão, Chief Negotiator and Ms. Elizabeth Exposto, Chief Executive Officer of Maritime Boundary Office



H.E. Prime Minister Dr Rui Maria de Araújo addresses the UN General Assembly on 24 September 2016



Bestowal of the Order of Timor-Leste

During their visit to Washington D.C, H.E. Prime Minister Dr Rui Maria de Araújo and H.E. Minister Xanana Gusmão, Chief Negotiator bestowed the Order of Timor-Leste medal to two eminent supporters of Timor-Leste, following approval by the President of the Republic of Timor-Leste, H.E. Taur Matan Ruak. Congressman Smith is a long-time supporter of Timor-Leste's independence, development, and pursuit of maritime boundaries. General John Castellaw led American forces in East Timor following the vote for independence in 1999. Both the Congressman and the General said they were honoured to have received one of the highest honours in Timor-Leste.

(L-R) General John Castellaw, H.E. Prime Minister Dr Rui Maria de Araújo and H.E. Minister Xanana Gusmão, Chief Negotiator

MBO Capacity Building

The MBO arranged for young Timorese lawyer, Adelsia Assunção da Silva, to visit Germany to attend the Hamburg International Foundation of the Law of the Sea (IFLOS) Summer Academy to learn about the international law of the sea and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) as an institution for the peaceful settlement of maritime boundary disputes. This initiative was part of the MBO's efforts to build national human resources in specialised areas. Adelsia said about her experience: "I really enjoyed the course. Not only did we listen and learn during the lectures, but we had the opportunity to implement and practise what we learned in workshops. The highlight for me was the mock court where I had the opportunity to act as an agent and defend the national interests of a mock country. The Summer Academy gave me a much deeper understanding of the international law of the sea and maritime law which will be very helpful for my future career."



Judge Vladimir Golitsyn, President of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, and the participants of the IFLOS Summer Academy 2016.

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