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Ministry of Foreign Affairs of
the Oriental Republic of Uruguay

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28 November 2020

Open-ended Working Group on the Conditions of Service of the Members
of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf

Excellencies,

In our capacity as Co-Coordiators of the Open-ended Working Group on the Conditions of Service of the Members of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, we have the honour to refer to the letters of the President of the thirtieth Meeting of States Parties dated 27 and 30 October 2020, regarding the timetable and modalities for the consideration of the pending items on the agenda of the thirtieth Meeting, as outlined in the annex to his letter dated 27 October 2020 (www.un.org/Depts/los/meeting_states_parties/documents/20201027NvLetEF.pdf)

Following the two rounds of informal virtual consultations of the Working Group that were held on 20 and 27 November 2020, we are pleased to transmit the annexed Draft Decision regarding the conditions of service of the members of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, which reflects the comments made by delegations during the second round of consultations.

In this connection, we have now written to the President of the thirtieth Meeting of States Parties indicating that additional consultations are needed and requesting that delegations be invited to provide written comments on the attached Draft Decision by 4 p.m. on Tuesday, 1 December 2020, following which we will provide the President with our comprehensive report of the work conducted by the Working Group since the twenty-ninth Meeting of States Parties.

In accordance with this request, delegations are kindly requested to provide any written comments on the annexed Draft Decision by 4 p.m. on Tuesday, 1 December 2020. Such comments should be sent by email to doalos@un.org (copying santosuosso@un.org).

Annex

Draft Decision regarding the conditions of service of the members of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf

The Meeting of States Parties,

Noting the importance of the delineation of the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles and that it is in the broader interest of the international community that coastal States with a continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles submit information on the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, and welcoming the submissions to the Commission by a considerable number of States Parties to the Convention on the outer limits of their continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles, that the Commission has continued to fulfil its role, including making recommendations to coastal States, and that the summaries of recommendations are being made publicly available

Reaffirming the importance of the work of the Commission for coastal States and the international community as a whole and noting with appreciation the continued efforts undertaken by the Commission to consider the submissions by coastal States in a timely, efficient and effective manner,

Recognizing the need to ensure that the Commission can effectively perform the functions entrusted to it under the Convention, while maintaining its high level of quality and expertise,

Recognizing the significant workload of the Commission in view of the large number of submissions received, which places significant demands and challenges on its members and the Secretariat as provided by the Secretary-General through the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs

Expressing concern about the implications of the workload of the Commission for the conditions of service of its members,

2. Reaffirms the obligation of States Parties under the Convention whose experts are serving on the Commission to defray the expenses of the experts they have nominated while in performance of Commission duties, including the provision of medical coverage, and urges these States to do their utmost to ensure the full participation of those experts in the work of the Commission, including the meetings of subcommissions, in accordance with the Convention;
3. Emphasizes the importance of the voluntary trust fund established by the General Assembly pursuant to resolution 55/7 in facilitating the participation of members of the Commission from developing States in the meetings of the Commission, and expresses its appreciation to States that have made contributions to this trust fund;
4. Reiterates its serious concern that the chronic underfunding of the trust fund referred to in paragraph 3 above may preclude the Commission from advancing its work as a result of the potential lack of a quorum at future sessions, and may prevent it from further implementing the decision of the twenty-sixth Meeting of States Parties that requested the Commission to meet for up to 26 weeks, and urges States, international financial institutions, donor agencies, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organization