



# Malaysia

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

*(Please check against delivery)*

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Hussein Haniff,  
Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations,  
at the Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly,  
devoted to the commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the opening for signature of  
the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea,  
New York, 11 December 2012**

Mr. President,

It is indeed a great honour for me to be speaking today as we commemorate the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Opening for Signature of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982 (UNCLOS 1982) yesterday. It would be an understatement for me to say that UNCLOS 1982 has served as an important framework towards the governance and management of the sea. It is the most comprehensive instrument governing the conduct of States and the use of oceans.

2. At this juncture, we wish to align ourselves with the statement delivered by the distinguished Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea, as Chair of the Group of Asia-Pacific States for the month of December 2012.

3. My delegation wishes to pay a special tribute to the late Ambassador Arvid Pardo of Malta and the late Ambassador Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe of Sri Lanka, for their outstanding and remarkable contribution towards the development in managing the oceans and all its resources related to the international law of the sea. Our deepest appreciation also goes to the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, for its contribution throughout the years.

Mr. President,

4. Making up more than 70 percent of the earth's surface, the ocean is the largest component of earth's exterior. It is essential to the very existence of mankind. In today's world, it is not only a source for life, provider of food and a means for transportation, but it is also a source of minerals and more recently, with technology, is an ever-growing provider of clean water and energy. Because of its vastness, it used to be thought that the resources of the oceans are inexhaustible. However, with the growing needs of people for food, energy and resources, even the great oceans require protection. Furthermore, since time immemorial, the oceans and seas have been a source of conflict and wars. It is due to this that thirty years ago the international community agreed for a comprehensive legal regime to govern the conduct of people and nations on the use of oceans and seas. Therefore, it is most fitting that UNCLOS 1982 is known as the "constitution for the oceans".

Mr. President,

5. Malaysia signed UNCLOS on 12 December 1982, together with another 109 countries when it was first opened for signature, in which Malaysia ratified it on 14 October 1996. As a State Party,

Malaysia has always and continues to implement the various provisions under UNCLOS 1982 faithfully.

6. With a coastline of 4,492 kilometres and extensive maritime boundaries with a number of its neighbours, we conducted maritime boundaries negotiations with our neighbouring countries through peaceful means, in accordance with the letter and spirit of the recognized principles of international law, particularly UNCLOS 1982.

7. Malaysia had demonstrated and made use of the provisions under UNCLOS 1982 for settlement of disputes. Our clear adherence to the arbitration processes in settling the disputes was evident in the case of Ligitan and Sipadan, and in the case of Batu Puteh/ Pedra Branca, Middle Rocks and South Ledge before the International Court of Justice. In both cases, Malaysia have respected the decisions of the Court, irrespective of whether the decisions favoured Malaysia or otherwise.

Mr. President,

8. Closer to home, the Straits of Malacca is one of the most important international waterways which connect the Indian Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. Due to the positive growth and relevance of the Straits in facilitating international trade, it continues to pose a variety of challenges in balancing the economic viability and environmental sustainability of the area. As such, in line with Part III of UNCLOS 1982, on the Straits Used for International Navigation, Malaysia has put in place its Traffic Separation Scheme and Aids to Navigation in maintaining safety and security of the passage through the Straits. A Cooperative Mechanism on Safety and Navigation and Environmental Protection in the Straits of Malacca was also established with two other littoral States, as practical and effective framework for international cooperation in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore.

Mr. President,

9. In concluding, Malaysia will continue to support the work on the international oceans and the law of the sea, including its underlying provisions. UNCLOS 1982 has attested its relevance and importance by having 164 Member States as States Parties to the said Convention. It is a comprehensive testament to the international law-making in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Malaysia notes the establishment and operation of three important organs under UNCLOS 1982, which facilitate an international marine order as a whole, namely, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), the International Seabed Authority (ISA), and the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS). On this note, I am pleased to mention that Malaysia has been contributing actively in the work of the CLCS, through our current expert, Dr. Mazlan Madon and former expert, Dr. Abu Bakar Jaafar respectively.

10. I assure you of my delegation's firm support and cooperation in relation to the deliberations of oceans and the law of the sea at different fora. Towards this, Malaysia is convinced that with the recent developments and ongoing implementation of the principles and spirits of UNCLOS 1982, the said Convention will continue to be universally recognized and fully applied to the conduct of States on oceans.

I thank you, Mr. President.