

Statement on behalf of Australia, Canada and New Zealand on the occasion of the commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, Kingston, Jamaica, 1 August 2022

To be delivered by the delegation of Canada

Mr. President, excellences, distinguished colleagues

I have the honour to speak on behalf of Australia, Canada and New Zealand on the occasion of this event to commemorate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Today also marks Emancipation Day, commemorating the date in 1834 when the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 came into effect across the British Empire. And Saturday, August 6, marks 60 years of Jamaican independence. Australia, Canada and New Zealand extend our best wishes to the people of Jamaica and assurances of our continued friendship.

On this momentous occasion, we would like to highlight the vital role and longstanding contributions of the Convention within the framework of international law, and what better place to do it then here in Jamaica where the Convention was adopted.

International law, particularly as reflected in the Convention and its implementing agreements, sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the ocean and seas must be carried out. Since it came into force, the Convention has been the legal blueprint for establishing all maritime zones, maintaining maritime peace and security, protecting and preserving the marine environment, supporting the sustainable development of marine resources, encouraging marine scientific research, and promoting international cooperation.

Now more than ever, the Convention upholds the values of the UN Charter, and underscores the importance of States settling disputes peacefully, including adhering to binding and final decisions of international courts and tribunals.

The Convention remains as relevant as ever in a world faced with an Ocean emergency as outlined by the UN Secretary General in his opening remarks at the recent UN Oceans Conference in Lisbon. Current challenges include the adverse impacts of climate change such as acidification, sea-level rise, recess of sea ice and the opening of the Arctic Ocean; marine pollution including plastics; eutrophication; maritime security; increased tensions over disputes; IUU fishing; and overexploitation of natural resources. We look forward to continuing to uphold the Convention's significance and building upon its strong legal foundation to address these challenges.

We remain committed to the important work of the three bodies established under the Convention: The International Seabed Authority, the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, and the International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea. We aim to conclude the negotiation of an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of

marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) in 2022 and are committed to the development of robust regulations for the exploitation of mineral resources in the Area that ensure the effective protection of the marine environment and the sound governance of this common heritage of humankind.

The Convention is a critical instrument in maintaining and strengthening a rules-based international order in the maritime domain. We must continue to work, both domestically and internationally, towards the full and effective implementation of the Convention, and we must further our commitment to dialogue and partnership in addressing oceans-related challenges.

Thank you