Maritime Boundary Office

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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.

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Timor-Leste and Australia sign a maritime boundary Treaty

On 6 March 2018, Timor-Leste and Australia signed an historic Maritime Boundary Treaty at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The Maritime Boundary Treaty establishes for the first time permanent maritime boundaries between Timor-Leste and Australia in the Timor Sea. The signing of the Treaty concludes the compulsory conciliation process, under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which was initiated by Timor-Leste in April 2016. The Treaty sets permanent maritime boundaries in the Timor Sea based on international law, bringing an end to Timor-Leste's long-running maritime boundary dispute with Australia. In giving recognition to Timor-Leste's rights over its seas, the Treaty signing marks a momentous step for the Timorese people in their struggle towards full sovereignty and independence.

The Agent for Timor-Leste in the Conciliation, Minister Agio Pereira signs the Maritime Boundary Treaty with Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop at the United Nations Headquarters, New York, on 6 March 2018.

The Maritime Boundary Treaty secures a median line in the Timor Sea, with only a slight adjustment to achieve an equitable result as required by international law. Under the agreement, the Greater Sunrise resource is shared by Timor-Leste and Australia, with the majority sitting in Timor-Leste's maritime area and the majority of revenue flowing to Timor-Leste.

The agreed maritime boundary puts all of the resource fields in the former Joint Petroleum Development Area (JPDA) within Timor-Leste's continental shelf. This means that, unlike the previous revenue sharing arrangements, title to all future revenue from the Bayu-Undan and Kitan fields will be transferred to Timor-Leste.

The Maritime Boundary Office developed a suite of fact sheets relating to the Maritime Boundary Treaty to inform people about the agreement and how it was reached. These fact sheets can be found at www.gfm.tl

Now that maritime boundaries between Timor-Leste and Australia have been resolved, the Maritime Boundary Office will continue its work to support a resolution of maritime boundaries, consistent with UNCLOS and international law, with Indonesia.

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Development concept and local content regional site visits

As part of the UNCLOS Conciliation Commission process, Timor-Leste was asked to consider local content, training and national development aspects of the development and exploitation of Greater Sunrise. To assist in the process, the MBO supported the Chief Negotiator Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão as he led site visits to LNG plants in Bontang in Indonesia, and Papua New Guinea. Throughout the visits, the Chief Negotiator met with recognised industry leaders, expert in promoting local and regional development, national job creation and industry training, with a view to strengthening cooperation between the countries and gaining insights and lessons from their experience.

LNG Plant Training Centre in Papua New Guinea, December 2017

Atlantic Council Global Energy Forum in Abu Dhabi – January 2018

The Atlantic Council Global Energy Forum in Abu Dhabi is the premier international forum for government, industry, and thought leaders to set the global energy agenda for the year and anticipate and respond to changes in the world of energy.

Held under the Patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Armed Forces, the Forum is convened in partnership with the Ministry of Energy of the United Arab Emirates, ADNOC, and Mubadala.

Timor-Leste's Chief Negotiator Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão was invited to give a key note address at the Forum, speaking on "Economic Diversification in the Region, Sustainable Best Practices and Business Models: Lessons learned by Timor-Leste."

From 11 to 14 January 2018, the Chief Negotiator and a small delegation from Timor-Leste visited Abu Dhabi to participate in the Global Energy Forum and conduct a series of side meetings with prominent UAE leaders, Sovereign Wealth Fund managers, and oil companies.

The visit was successful in raising awareness of Timor-Leste and its recent maritime boundary agreement with Australia through the United Nations Compulsory Conciliation process and learning new approaches and best practises in resource wealth management from some of the largest sovereign wealth funds in the world.

Chief Negotiator Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão meets with UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Anwar Gargash.

Chief Negotiator Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão gives a key note address at the Atlantic Council Global Energy Forum.

Celebration of the 42nd Anniversary of the Proclamation of Independence of Timor-Leste (November 22-29, 2017), Covalima

Integrated in the celebrations of the 42nd anniversary of the proclamation of Timor-Leste's independence, the Maritime Boundary Office was invited to participate in an exhibition, from 22 to 29 November in Suai, Covalima Municipality.

The Maritime Boundary Office sent 11 staff to set up a pavilion at the exhibition to inform the community about Timor-Leste's maritime boundary agenda. Visitors to the pavilion included students, community members, government agents, diplomats, veterans, NGO representatives, military and police officers and academics, among others.

More than 1,140 people, of varying ages and professions, visited the MBO pavilion. Visitors expressed great interest in the maritime boundary issue and stressed support for this national cause, in particular urging for peace and stability for Timor-Leste, and that the resources to which Timorese are entitled to are safeguarded for future generations.

Visitors expressed great interest in the maritime boundary issue and support for this national cause.

Specialised Photography Course in Sydney, Australia

From 4 to 8 December, two communications officers at the Maritime Boundary Office attended a photography course, specialising in press techniques, presented by the Sydney Photographic Workshop.

The workshop covered the important aspects of photography, including camera orientation and operation, focus techniques, manual exposure, light metering, photo documentary and an introduction to photojournalism.

One of the staff described the training experience as "a magical week". The well-balanced course between theory and practice gave the staff strong foundations for taking professional quality pictures.

Stay curious!

Course in Human Resources and Management for Professionals and Executives, in Jakarta, Indonesia

From 2 to 8 December, three officers from the Maritime Boundary Office participated in a "Human Resources and Management for Professionals and Executives" and "Leadership and Management Skills" course in Jakarta. This course was provided by Indonesia's Reference Training Center, the Spectra Center, and promoted the competencies of key elements of management and finance.

MBO team with Mr. Hendra Kusnoto

MBO briefings

The MBO continued to brief organisations, community and religious groups and civil society on Timor-Leste's maritime boundaries.

On Wednesday 21 March, 2018, MBO gave a briefing to the team from La'o Hamutuk on the maritime boundary treaty between Timor-Leste and Australia.

The La'o Hamutuk and MBO teams

MBO gave two presentations to UNTL. One on Friday 30 March to about 65 students from the English Conversation Course (ECC) and another on Wednesday 4 April to about 40 students from the International Relations Department. The students were interested in the maritime boundary conciliation process and the resulting treaty.

MBO briefs students at UNTL

On Wednesday 28 March, MBO gave a briefing to about 30 students and lecturers at the João Saldanha University in Becora, Dili.

MBO supported the Chief Negotiator Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão as he gave two public briefings on maritime boundaries – one on 3 April to about 600 people at the Villa Verde Cathedral Hall and another on 8 April to about 2000 students at the Don Bosco Training Centre in Dili. Everyone who attended the briefings was engaged to learn about maritime boundaries and what the maritime boundary treaty with Australia means for the Timorese people.

The Chief Negotiator Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão gives public briefings in Dili, 03 April 2018

For more information contact:

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