

## Remarks by State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the Opening Ceremony of “UNCLOS at 40: Retrospect and Prospect”

国务委员兼外长王毅在“纪念《联合国海洋法公约》开放签署40周年国际研讨会”上的开幕致辞

## Joint Statement of the Coordinators' Meeting on the Implementation of the Follow-Up Actions of the Eighth Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation

中非合作论坛第八届部长级会议成果落实协调人会议联合声明

# Jointly Upholding True Multilateralism and Starting a New Journey of Maritime Governance

## 共同弘扬真正的多边主义 携手推进海洋治理新征程

### Remarks at the Opening Ceremony of “UNCLOS at 40: Retrospect and Prospect”

——在“纪念《联合国海洋法公约》开放签署40周年国际研讨会”上的开幕致辞

Wang Yi, State Councilor and Foreign Minister

国务委员兼外长 王毅

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The Honorable Under-Secretary-General Miguel de Serpa Soares,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Friends,

It is a pleasure to meet you all via video link to mark the 40th anniversary of the opening for signature of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Adopted in 1982, UNCLOS opened a new chapter of global maritime governance, and has greatly helped humanity better understand, protect and utilize the sea.

Friends,

As an extensive legal instrument on maritime affairs, UNCLOS, together with other international treaties and customary international law, constitute the main pillars of the global maritime order in modern times. A review of its conclusion process, purposes and application gives us three main inspirations in addressing today's global maritime issues.

First, it is important to uphold multilateralism. UNCLOS was concluded by over 160 countries including China through nine years of unremitting efforts of equal-footed consultation and mutual accommodation from 1973 to 1982. It made a set of arrangements to address humanity's common interests as well as the concerns of various types of countries, and thus has been

尊敬的苏亚雷斯副秘书长，

各位嘉宾，各位朋友：

很高兴同大家云端相见，共同纪念《联合国海洋法公约》开放签署40周年。1982年，《公约》正式诞生，开启了全球海洋治理的新篇章，对人类更好认识、保护和利用海洋起到了重要推动作用。

各位朋友，

《公约》作为海洋领域的综合性法律文书，与其他国际条约和习惯国际法一道，共同搭建了现代国际海洋秩序的四梁八柱。重温《公约》的缔约历程、宗旨目标及履约实践，对我们应对当前全球海洋问题，具有三大重要启示。

一是弘扬多边主义。从1973年到1982年，包括中国在内的160多个国家，平等磋商、互谅互让，历经9年不懈努力，最终达成《公约》。《公

widely accepted by the international community. The Convention entitles coastal States with sovereign rights and jurisdiction in their exclusive economic zones while protecting the lawful freedoms of navigation and overflight of other States in such zones. It provides multiple means for the peaceful settlement of maritime disputes, with full respect for States Parties' own choices of peaceful means. It also established three major regimes, the International Seabed Authority (ISA), the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, which are useful multilateral platforms for the discussions of and settlement of maritime issues. All these are a result of successful multilateral diplomacy and important outcomes of multilateralism.

Second, it is important to promote fairness and justice. China and other developing countries are committed to revising outdated maritime rules and to defending the legitimate rights and interests of all, especially medium and small countries, and have made good progress in these efforts. In its Preamble, UNCLOS stresses the imperative to realize “a just and equitable international economic order which takes into account the interests and needs of mankind as a whole”. It established management mechanisms and decision-making procedures concerning the international seabed. This has consolidated, by legal means, the principle of the common heritage of mankind, thus providing an institutional framework to ensure the effective participation of developing countries in matters related to the international seabed. Facts have proved that UNCLOS has been instrumental in opposing maritime hegemony, protecting maritime interests, and promoting maritime cooperation.

Third, it is important to stay open-minded and move forward. UNCLOS affirms that “matters not regulated by this convention continue to be governed by the rules and principles of general international law”. It also mentions several times that actions should be taken “through competent international organizations” and in compliance with “generally accepted international regulations”. This shows that UNCLOS respects other sea-related organizations and international rules. Following the adoption of the Convention, two agreements, one on the international seabed and the other on fish stocks, were concluded. Negotiations on an international agreement on maritime biodiversity are now well underway. All this shows that UNCLOS is not isolated or insulated, but rather inclusive and adjustable. It should keep pace with the times to better adapt to international maritime practices.

Friends,

As a major developing maritime country, China seeks to balance its legitimate rights and interests with the overall interests of the international community, and always stands together with other developing countries. We have participated in the whole process of UNCLOS negotiations, and was among the first countries to sign the Convention. China always honors the spirit of UNCLOS, strictly fulfills its obligations, and fully supports

《公约》立足全人类共同利益，兼顾不同类型国家诉求，达成一揽子安排，获得国际社会广泛接受。

《公约》既赋予沿海国在专属经济区内的主权利和管辖权，也保障其他国家合法的航行飞越等自由。《公约》为和平解决海洋争端提供多种途径，充分尊重争端当事国的自愿选择。《公约》还创设了国际海底管理局、大陆架界限委员会、国际海洋法法庭三大机构，为讨论和解决海洋问题提供了有益多边平台。这些内容，都是多边外交的成功实践，也是多边主义的重要成果。

二是促进公平正义。中国和广大发展中国家致力于改变已落后时代的旧海洋规则，积极维护各国特别是中小国家的正当合法权益，取得积极成果。《公约》开宗明义提出，要“实现公正公平的国际经济秩序”，“照顾到全人类的利益和需要”。

《公约》确立了国际海底的管理机制和决策程序，以法律形式巩固了“人类共同继承财产”原则，为发展中国家有效参与国际海底事务提供了制度保障。事实证明，《公约》为反对海洋霸权，保护海洋权益，促进海洋合作发挥了重要作用。

三是坚持开放进步。《公约》清晰载明，“未予规定的事项，应继续以一般国际法的规则和原则为准据”。《公约》多次提及“通过主管国际组织”采取行动，要求“符合一般接受的国际规章”，显示《公约》对其他涉海组织和国际规则的尊重。《公约》出台后陆续制定关于国际海底和鱼类种群两份执行协定，目前各方正在谈判关于海洋生物多样性的国际协定。这些都充分表明，《公约》不是自我封闭的“绝缘体”，而是兼收并蓄的“调节器”，应当始终与时俱进，以更好地适应国际海洋实践。

各位朋友，

作为发展中国海洋大国，中国兼顾自身正当权益与国际社会整体利益，始终与广大发展中国家站在一起，全程积极参与《公约》谈判，是最早签署《公约》的国家之一。中国一贯恪守《公约》

the work of the three major institutions under the Convention. It actively carries out international maritime cooperation, and does its best to help other developing countries with their maritime capacity-building. China firmly defends the integrity and authority of UNCLOS, and opposes attempts at abusing the dispute settlement procedures of the Convention. China always believes that maritime disputes should be settled by the parties directly concerned through friendly consultation on the basis of respecting historical facts and international laws including UNCLOS.

Friends,

As we speak, the world is facing once-in-a-century changes that are evolving more rapidly, and the international maritime order is undergoing profound adjustments. At this new historical starting point, we should safeguard firmly the UN-centered international system and the international order underpinned by international law. We should continue to embrace the spirit of multilateralism in UNCLOS, promote the development of international maritime laws including the Convention, and build an equitable and just international maritime order, as part of our collective efforts to usher in a new journey of maritime governance.

We need to act as a community with a shared future to promote sustainable development of the sea. We need to pursue the purpose of the Convention to “promote the economic and social advancement of all peoples of the world”, and act on the Global Development Initiative proposed by President Xi Jinping. We need to deepen practical maritime cooperation, develop blue partnerships, build a high-quality 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, and fulfill the UN sustainable development goals. We need to tap into the development potential of the sea and turn it into an enduring driving force for sustainable development of all countries.

We need to champion dialogue and consultation to maintain peace and tranquility of the sea. The Global Security Initiative proposed by President Xi Jinping provides China’s solutions to global security challenges. We should remain faithful to the Convention’s founding aspirations to maintain “peace, justice and progress for all peoples of the world”, take coordinated efforts to safeguard both traditional and non-traditional maritime security issues, always settle maritime disputes through peaceful means, and jointly tackle challenges such as piracy and armed robbery against ships. We should uphold “freedom of navigation” and oppose “freedom of willfulness”. We should advocate dialogue and consultation, and say no to saber-rattling. All parties must bear in mind that humanity is an indivisible security community, and all should work together to safeguard maritime peace and tranquility of the world.

We need to promote international cooperation to preserve the ecological environment of the sea. We need to aim at the goal of the Convention to realize “protection and preservation of the marine environment”, act on the philosophy of green development, fulfill environmental protection obligations under the Convention, and advance global cooperation to protect the marine

精神，严格履行《公约》义务，全力支持《公约》三大机构工作，积极开展海洋国际合作，尽己所能支持其他发展中国家海洋能力建设。中国坚定维护《公约》的完整性和权威性，反对滥用《公约》争端解决程序。中国一贯主张在尊重历史事实和包括《公约》在内的国际法基础上，由直接当事国通过友好协商解决有关海洋争端。

各位朋友，

当前，世界百年未有之大变局加速演进，国际海洋秩序正在经历深刻调整。站在新的历史起点上，我们应坚定维护以联合国为核心的国际体系和以国际法为基础的国际秩序，继续弘扬《公约》体现的多边主义精神，不断发展包括《公约》在内的国际海洋法，持续强化公平正义的国际海洋秩序，携手推进海洋治理新征程。

我们要坚持命运与共，推动海洋可持续发展。秉承《公约》“促进全世界人民经济社会发展”的宗旨，落实习近平主席提出的全球发展倡议，深化海上务实合作，发展蓝色伙伴关系，高质量共建21世纪海上丝绸之路，促进联合国可持续发展目标落地生根。充分发挥海洋的开发潜力，努力使海洋成为各国可持续发展的不竭动力。

我们要坚持对话协商，维护海洋和平安宁。习近平主席提出全球安全倡议，为破解全球安全难题贡献中国方案。要坚守《公约》“维护和平、正义和全世界人民进步”的初衷，统筹维护海上传统安全和非传统安全，坚持以和平方式解决海上争端，共同应对海盗与武装劫船等挑战。要维护“航行自由”，反对“横行自由”。要倡导对话协商，反对炫耀武力。各方应坚持人类是不可分割的安全共同体，维护全球海洋和平与安宁。

我们要坚持国际合作，守护海洋生态环境。要牢记《公约》“保护和保全海洋环境”的目标，坚持绿色发展理念，履行《公约》环保义务，推进全球海洋环保合作。要坚持科研先导，重视陆地