



**Maritime Boundary Office**  
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## STRATEGY WORKSHOPS

The last few months have been a busy period for the Maritime Boundary Office.

In July 2015 we organised a two-day strategy workshop on Timor-Leste's national priority objective to settle permanent maritime boundaries with our neighbours. The event was attended by a number of key stakeholders, including ministers, ambassadors, representatives from the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, ANP and legal advisers.

The purpose of the workshop was firstly, to ensure that all members of Timor-Leste's team working on achieving permanent maritime boundaries have a detailed understanding of the issues; and, secondly, to provide a forum for discussion and different perspectives in order to develop a collaborative and whole-of-government approach on this issue.

The Maritime Boundary Office received a number of valuable suggestions for implementation and for discussion at the next Consultative Commission meetings.

## MEETINGS OF THE CONSULTATIVE COMMISSION

Following the strategy workshop, the Consultative Commission met twice in September 2015. At the first meeting, Timor-Leste's legal team, including Professor Vaughan Lowe and lawyers from DLA Piper, were invited to discuss legal aspects of maritime boundaries and options available to the Government.

## MARITIME BOUNDARY NEGOTIATIONS WITH INDONESIA

Timor-Leste began maritime boundary consultations with Indonesia for the first time on 18 September 2015, in Dili. Both parties affirmed that the position of a permanent maritime boundary should be negotiated in accordance with international law, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The parties intend to enter into negotiations as soon as the terms of reference and guiding principles are agreed.

The Maritime Boundary Office will work closely with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation throughout this process.





## LECTURE BY PROFESSOR LOWE QC

Professor Vaughan Lowe, Queen's Counsel, a world-renowned expert in the law of the sea and Emeritus Chichele Professor of Public International Law at Oxford University, presented a lecture and question and answer session on the law of the sea to a public gallery at the National University of Timor-Lorosaé (UNTL). The event was organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation and provided an opportunity for the Timorese public to gain an understanding of the principles of maritime boundary delimitation and why this is such an important issue for Timor-Leste.

## EXCLUSIVE JURISDICTION ARBITRATION

On 24 September 2015, the Government of Timor-Leste instituted proceedings against Australia in the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, Netherlands. Timor-Leste has asked the arbitration panel to consider whether Australia alone has the exclusive right to tax the companies using the pipeline to Darwin from the Bayu-Undan gas fields in the Joint Petroleum Development Area in the Timor Sea.

This is a complex legal matter which involves issues concerning the Timor Sea. The Maritime Boundary Office will provide advice in relation to any maritime boundary issues that arise in these proceedings.

## MEETINGS AT THE UNITED NATIONS IN NEW YORK

In September 2015, the Prime Minister gave powerful addresses about Timor-Leste's pursuit of permanent maritime boundaries as a matter of national priority at the United Nations General Assembly in New York, and the World Leaders Forum at Columbia University.



The Maritime Boundary Office supported the Timor-Leste delegation to the United Nations in New York, and promoted Timor-Leste's agenda on maritime boundaries at several side-events, and meetings with key institutions such as the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea.

On 29 September, the Prime Minister met with Senator George Mitchell, a great American statesman, who shared his thoughts and experience on the resolution of international disputes and conflict.



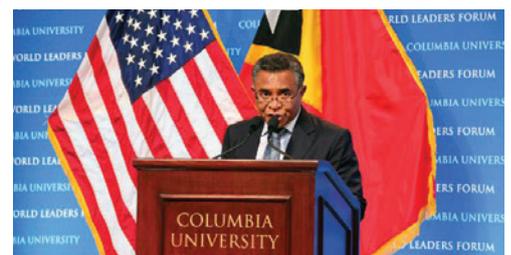
On 1 October, the Maritime Boundary Office and the International Peace Institute co-chaired a well-attended event with a distinguished panel of speakers including the Prime Minister Rui de Araújo, Minister Xanana Gusmão and former President Dr José Ramos-Horta, each sharing their insights and emphasising that Timor-Leste's objective to define permanent maritime boundaries with its neighbours is the next chapter in our struggle for sovereignty.

## RECENT PRESS

There has been renewed interest in the Timor Sea in the media recently, in Timor-Leste, Australia and internationally. The Prime Minister's speeches at the United Nations as well as a profile on Elizabeth Exposto, CEO of the Maritime Boundary Office, have both been featured.

**“What we are asking is simple. We want to settle our maritime boundary with Australia in accordance with international law... Then, even if someone does not know where Timor-Leste is, she or he will at least be able to find us in the world map as a fully sovereign nation with permanently defined land and maritime boundaries.”**

— Dr Rui Maria de Araújo, Prime Minister, as published in the *Washington Times*, 7 October 2015



**“For us, it's an issue of sovereignty... All we're asking for is what all other countries have, even Australia, which is the right to settle their maritime boundaries under international law.”**

— Elizabeth Exposto, CEO, MBO, as published in the *Saturday Paper*, 12 September 2015