Statement by H.E. Ambassador Liu Jieyi

Permanent Representative of China
to the United Nations

At the 69th Session of the UN General Assembly

On Agenda Item 74
Oceans and the Law of the Sea

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Mr. President,

This year, we have solemnly commemorated the 20\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the entry into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and taken stock of the achievements made in the past 20 years since the Convention came into force. The Convention provides an important guarantee for maintaining the just and reasonable international maritime order. China will work with other countries to further promote a harmonious maritime order, the peace, security and openness of the ocean and the proper preservation and rational utilization of the ocean on the basis of the international law, including the Convention in the interests of the common development and mutual benefit of all members of the international community.

The Chinese delegation has actively participated in the consultations regarding the draft resolutions on oceans and the Law of Sea and the sustainable fisheries. I wish to thank Ambassador Eden Charles of Trinidad and Tobago and Ms. Alice Revell of New Zealand for their contributions as the facilitators of the consultations on the two draft resolutions.

Mr. President,

I wish to take this opportunity to elaborate on the position and propositions of the Chinese delegation on the relevant issues concerning oceans and the Law of the Sea.

First, the Chinese government attaches great importance to the work of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf and positively evaluates the diligent efforts and results of the work of the members of the Commission. China supports the Commission in fulfilling its mandate strictly in accordance with the Convention and its own rules of procedure in order to maintain the quality and professionalism of its consideration of submissions and appreciates the contributions made by the Commission to a balanced handling of the legitimate rights and interests of the coastal states as well as the overall interests of the international community. In view of the increasingly heavy workload of the Commission, the Chinese delegation calls on all parties to continue to promote the
improvement of the working condition of the Commission and address the issue concerning the medical insurance for the members of the Commission so as to help the Commission to smoothly fulfil their responsibilities. China has once again contributed 20,000 US dollars to the relevant trust fund to help members of developing countries to attend the meetings of the Commission.

Secondly, the Chinese delegation congratulates the International Seabed Authority on its achievements over the past year. Among them, in particular, are the commemorative meeting on the 20th anniversary of the Authority, and the approval of seven applications for mining areas on the international seabed, which reflects the dynamic activities taking place on international seabed. China supports the Secretariat of the Authority in its continued effort to use questionnaires and seminars to seek the views of as many stakeholders as possible, including contractors, during the process of preparing the draft regulatory regime for the exploitation of resources on the international seabed. As a developing country, China gives great importance to the effective and comprehensive participation of developing countries in affairs concerning the international seabed and has provided help within our capacity. This year China made another contribution of 20,000 US dollars to the Voluntary Trust Fund of the Authority to finance the participation of members from developing countries in meetings of the legal and technical committee and the financial committee of the Authority.

Thirdly, The Chinese delegation takes note of the increasing case load of the International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea and the ever wider fields they cover. China values and supports the important role that the Tribunal continues to play in the peaceful settlement of maritime disputes, maintenance of international maritime order and dissemination of the Law of Sea. China appreciates the Tribunal's positive role in helping developing countries with capacity building. China is concerned about the first ever case of request for advisory opinion of the full bench of the Tribunal and has submitted its written statement in this context. China is of the view that neither the Convention nor the Statute of the Tribunal has provided for the advisory competence of the full bench of the tribunal and hopes that the Tribunal will give full consideration to the concerns of all parties and approach the relevant case with caution.
Fourthly, the international community attaches great importance to the preservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. The Chinese delegation believes that as high seas and international areas of the seabed are common interests of the international community as a whole, a proper approach to the marine biodiversity in the above areas are of great significance to the maintenance of a just and reasonable international maritime order. Relevant activities should proceed in an orderly and progressive manner so as to fully accommodate the need of all countries, in particular developing countries for reasonable use of marine resources.

Fifthly, the Chinese delegation takes note, with pleasure, of the establishment of the institutional framework of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, and of the near completion of the draft version of the first Integrated Assessment Report. China nominated an expert to the drafting group, who actively participated in its work. China stands ready to make further efforts in this regard. China attaches great importance to the Regular Process’s success as well as its due role, and we support enhancing the capacity building of DOALOS as the Secretariat of the Process.

Lastly, as a responsible fishing nation, China takes an active part in the work of various international fishery organizations and commits itself to the strengthening of the conservation and management of fishery resources. The Chinese government will continue to work with countries concerned to promote the development and refinement of the international regime for fisheries management and regulate fishing activities in order to achieve sustainable use of marine biological resources, conserve marine biological balance, and ensure the sharing of fishery benefits by all countries.

Mr. Chairman,

China staunchly defends and promotes the international maritime rule of law and peaceful settlement of maritime disputes. The Chinese government follows an independent foreign policy of peace. We maintain that maritime disputes should be resolved peacefully in accordance with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and the provisions of the Convention, and that the lawful rights of countries to independently choose means to peaceful settlement
should be respected. China looks forward to further strengthening cooperation with all countries so as to jointly address challenges, share the opportunities and wealth provided by the oceans and seas, and jointly seek sustainable maritime development. We will work for the building of harmonious oceans and seas so that they will forever benefit humankind.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.