



## environmental affairs

Department:  
Environmental Affairs  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

# **Extended Continental Shelf Briefing**

October 2016

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# United Nations Law of the SEA - 1

UNCLOS - 1982

- UNCLOS is the primary legal tool of the United Nations – took about 10 years to negotiate.
- Establishes the Exclusive Economic Zones for Coastal Countries (EEZ)
- Allows for Coastal Countries to claim 200 nautical miles from the coast into the ocean as exclusive to the country for economic exploitation such as fishing and mining. (1 nautical mile = 1.8 km)
- In the EEZ, all resources in the water, on and under the seabed belong to the country.



# UNCLOS - 2

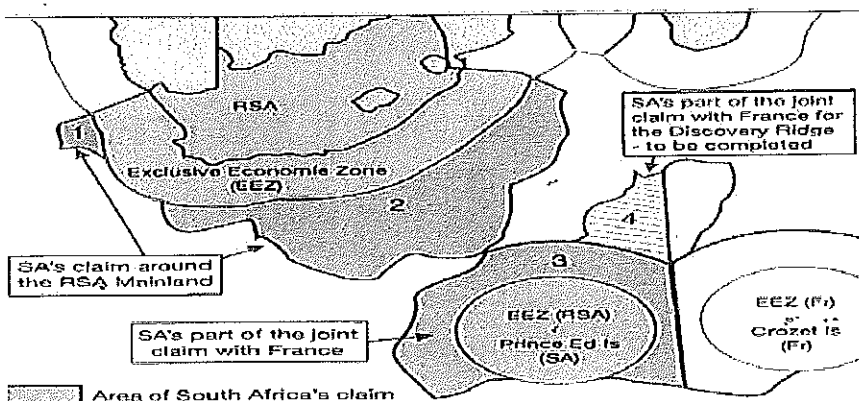
- UNCLOS also allowed Coastal States to claim the ocean areas beyond 200 nautical miles
- This extended claim is based on the country proving that continental shelf continues from the coastal area into the ocean.
- In the Extended continental shelf area all resources on and under the seabed belong to the country but not those in the water, so fish are excluded.
- These open ocean fish like tuna are managed by Regional Fisheries Management Agencies like the Atlantic Tuna Commission or the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission.



# SA Ocean EEZ and Continental Shelf Claim



The landscape of the ocean floor as revealed by satellite imagery. The blue areas depict the deep ocean floor (6000m deep) which is a vast plain cut by trenches and ridges which follow fault lines. The green and yellow areas depict enormous underwater plateaus and mountain ranges. South Africa's remote and tiny Prince Edward Islands are seen to be the peaks of underwater volcanoes on the flank of the SW Indian Ridge.



KEY	
—	National boundary or maritime median line
—	200 nautical mile Exclusive Economic Zone
—	Boundary of the Extended Continental Shelf (still to be confirmed by UN Committee)

SOUTH AFRICA'S EXISTING TERRITORY	
Land – RSA Mainland	1,220,000
Sea – EEZ of RSA Mainland and Prince Edward Islands	1,840,000

NEW EXTENDED CONTINENTAL SHELF	
1. West Coast	45,000
2. East and South Coast	1,075,000
3. Prince Edward Islands	560,000
4. Discovery Ridge (yet to be submitted) - SA's part (50%)	~190,000
<b>Total Area of Claim</b>	<b>1,870,000</b>



For further details contact The Chief Executive Officer, Petroleum Agency SA, tel: 021 938 3500, xiphum@petroleumagencyrsa.com

# The Continental Shelf Claim of South Africa

- Led by the Petroleum Agency of South Africa
  - Agency first submitted claim in 2009 with work on the claim beginning well before then.
- DEA is on a multi-department steering committee that meets once a year.
- Extended claim submitted in 2 parts: the area around South Africa and a joint claim with France on the area around Marion & Prince Edward Islands – France has claimed an island next to these South African Islands called Crozet Island.



# United Nations Evaluation Process

- Most coastal countries have submitted claims
- The United Nations Division for Legal Services processes these claims
- Specialist Scientific review panels evaluate countries claims
- Claims may be rejected, awarded in full or awarded in part depending on the scientific evidence provided, such as calculation of the continental slope and seabed geology.



# The Status of South Africa Claim

- The South Africa is undergoing evaluation in 2016, with an outcome likely to be reached by February or March 2017.
  - Present feedback from Petroleum Agency is that while there is confidence on the major areas of the claim, additional data may be required more data maybe required for some areas.



