



09 April, 2024

The Secretary General
International Seabed Authority,
ISBAHQ, 2nd Floor
14-20 Port Royal St
Kingston, Jamaica

Dear Sir,

Application for Observer Status at the ISA Assembly and Council

I. Introduction

I write on behalf of Centre for Community Law & Oceanic Law to express its desire to be granted observer status at the ISA Council. As part of the application, the mandatory information required are given below.

ANNEX 1 FORMAT DOCUMENT

- I. **Name:** Centre for Community & Oceanic Law
- II. **Address:** No. 9 Agho Street, of Ekehuan Road, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria; and Faculty of Law, University of Benin.
- III. **Addresses of all branches and/or regional headquarters:** Nil
- IV. **Telephone number:** +2347087452889; +2348068686412
- V. **Fax number:** Nil
- VI. **Email address:** cfcowlaw@gmail.com; info@cfcomlaw.com
- VII. **Name, title and contact details of focal point:**
Amos O Enabulele, PhD (Professor of Public International Law).
Amos.enabulele@uniben.edu; +2347087452889
- VIII. **Background information on the organization**

The Centre for Community & Oceanic Law is a non-for-profit organisation set up as an Incorporated Trustee (Charity), under the laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, in January, 2020. Its main aim is to bridge the knowledge gap between the ECOWAS regime and national regimes of laws, practices and expectations. Our work is aimed at maximising the economic potentials of the region for the economic good of the peoples. <http://cfcomlaw.com/>. The Centre is an emerging organisation with an array of experts in diverse fields of international

law, particularly integration law and the law of the sea, with a clear understanding of the legal regime of ECOWAS and of the law of the sea. Since the Centre became fully functional, we have been rallying lawyers and law students through the impartation of knowledge in regional integration, which cannot be successful unless achieved on both land and sea borders. One of the areas of our work is to conscientise the people on the huge blue economy potentials of the regions that are left untapped and the need to be environmentally compassionate towards the sea. Our few engagements with the ISA have shown us that there is much to be done even to make governments in our region, individually or as a collective (ECOWAS) to adopt strategies towards sponsoring activities in the Area.

We pursue our mandate through round tables, seminars, moot court competitions, workshops, and a journal: the Journal of Community and International Law (JCIL). We have successfully published the maiden edition of the Journal, which you can view at <https://journal.cfcomlaw.com/>, and the 2nd edition is underway.

To increase academic engagement with the academic community in, and across the region, we have signed an MoU with the University of Benin (our academic hub) and are still in consultation with other institutions. We are currently working on also collaborating with professional associations within the region to increase participation of various professionals with a view to enriching the Journal's output with more practical and experiential knowledge from an interdisciplinary perspective.

We have also been engaging university students, lecturers, and lawyers through our various programmes for the purpose of achieving the objectives stated above. We are of the firm view that we can deepen integration and safe exploration and exploitation of the vast ocean entitlement of the region through a well-informed citizens' participation and capacity building.

- IX. **Is the organization a member of, affiliated to or otherwise associated with another organization that has been granted observer status with the Authority?:** No
- X. **Is the organization affiliated to consultants of the Authority, contractors with the Authority, entities in connection with the law of the sea, the offshore and deep -sea mining industry, research institutes or the mineral marketing and processing industry?:** No
- XI. **Relationships with intergovernmental organizations:** depending on the topics we are addressing, the organisation works closely with relevant Faculties and Departments of the University of Benin. This is in line with the MoU between the University and the organisation. More of such MoUs with Universities in Nigeria and other ECOWAS member States are in the pipeline

XII. **List of publications and/or other relevant documentation:** some of our publications are on our website: <https://cfcomlaw.com/oceanic-law/>. You would find specific examples here: <https://cfcomlaw.com/election-of-members-of-the-international-tribunal-for-the-law-of-the-sea-whither-nigeria-and-other-ecowas-states/>; <https://cfcomlaw.com/how-nigeria-added-territory-without-war-litigation-or-purchase-a-rejoinder/>; and <https://cfcomlaw.com/what-the-extended-continental-shelf-means-for-nigeria/>. We are currently reviewing more articles and materials to be hosted on the website. You will also find our last webinar by Professor Lawrence Awosika at <https://journal.cfcomlaw.com/oceanic-law/>. This webinar was attended by judges and academics from some other ECOWAS States, particularly, Ghana.

B. Interest in matters under consideration by the Assembly

I. Briefly outline how your organization intends to demonstrate its interest in matters under consideration by the Assembly:

The sea is very vital to our work because twelve out of the fifteen member States of ECOWAS are coastal States. So far, ECOWAS has not been able to come up with a clear roadmap on how it would aggregate efforts towards the exploration and exploitation of the sea resources of its coastal States and address the needs of its three landlocked States. The organisation seeks to demonstrate its interest in matters under consideration through its website, the MoU it has entered with the University of Benin; its engagement with the ISA, students, members of the academia and professional bodies. Towards capacity building and knowledge transfer, we participated in the ISA workshop on “harnessing advanced technologies for the protection and sustainable use of the international seabed area” from 3-5 April 2024. We shall continue to seek such opportunities and transfer our knowledge to students and professionals to enhance the capacity of our target audience.

II. Briefly outline whether and how the purposes or activities of the organization relate to the work of the Authority.

- Given the low engagement of African States and African scholars with the regime of the sea, in general, and the Area, in particular, we share with the Authority, the desire to facilitate, not just the development of appropriate institutions at national levels of ECOWAS States, but also the development of well-informed personnel to man them.
- Our centre is a knowledge-driven Centre, which we are using and shall continue to use to promote integration, including deep-sea knowledge for the people of our regions, especially at higher

institutions across relevant disciplines. We are focused on increasing public awareness of the important work of the ISA

- We are working towards engaging member States of the ECOWAS through the ECOWAS Commission on the need to be more engaged in and positioned towards participation in sponsoring activities in the Area. Our intervention is not limited to the coastal States in that we also advocate the interest of the three (3) landlocked States of the Community.

III. **Briefly outline whether and how your organization intends to contribute to the work of the Authority**

- The Centre's main focus at the moment is to create the needed awareness among the people, especially students (with emphasis on capacity building for women) with a view to creating the needed interest in matters relating to the sea and the seabed within the region. We are also working to see that University curriculums are rejigged to capture the nuances of the law of the sea, especially the emerging knowledge from the economic exploration of the deep seabed. At the moment, there are no known academic projects in this field in Africa that is comparable with what is happening in other continents.
- We use our platforms to transmit information from the ISA website to the academic community.

IV. **Briefly outline whether and how your organization has the expertise and the capacity to contribute, within its field of competence, to the work of the Authority, in particular in connection with the law of the sea, the protection of the marine environment, the offshore and deep-sea mining industry, technology, minerals processing and marketing, activities in the Area and marine scientific research in the Area.**

- Given our in-house capacity and the possibility of drawing from the academia and from professional associations, we believe we are in the position to make realistic and helpful contributions to the work of ISA, if given the opportunity. We believe that an observer status before the ISA would boast our capacity to engage with activities in the Area and cascade knowledge and information to our region.
- The Centre, if judged only from the expertise of its members and the Editorial Board of its Journal, sufficiently demonstrates the capacity to contribute to the work of the Secretary General in the dissemination of the knowledge of the sea, through the encouragement of academic and professional mentorship in their respective Universities. The Centre is also now taking steps to bring experts in related fields to participate in its work. The centre possesses the capacity to contribute to raising a new generation of scholars and professionals within ECOWAS. We believe we can contribute to raising a new generation of experts who will be better placed to promote interest in activities on the continental

shelves of ECOWAS member States and in the deep sea, respecting exploitation, exploration, and environmental management.

- As part of capacity building, the Centre closely follows and monitors the ISA website for events and updates. In his capacity as a scholar and Director General of the Centre, Prof. Amos Enabulele virtually attended the ITLOS request for advisory opinion by the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law, with a view to getting further insights into emerging trends and knowledge regarding the intersection between the law of the sea and climate change.

v. **Briefly outline whether and how your organization intends to contribute to the capacity-building programmes and initiatives of the Authority (e.g., Secretary General's award, voluntary commitments of the Authority).**

- The centre already contributes through its enlightenment engagement with the academia, professional bodies and students, through:
 - Workshops;
 - Seminars;
 - Webinars;
 - Research;
 - Journal publication;
 - Social media platforms and our website; and
 - engagement with relevant stakeholders.
- Our desire is to do what the government and government agencies have not been successful at – taking deliberate steps to promote the knowledge of the law of the sea beyond the traditional knowledge of the sea.
- We believe we have the capacity, interest and zeal to make a good contribution to the work of the Secretary General towards the achievement of better capacity for the States in our region. The intended universal character of the regime with due attention to the interests and needs of developing countries, promotion of effective participation of developing States in activities in the Area with due regard to their special interests and needs will never be achieved if Africa as a whole and our region, in particular, continues in its limited engagements.

Please accept assurances of our highest respect and cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

Amos O. Enabulele, Ph.D
Professor of Law
Director General