

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A PARTIAL SUBMISSION

BY

THE REPUBLIC OF THE FIJI ISLANDS FOR THE  
ESTABLISHMENT OF THE OUTER LIMITS OF THE  
CONTINENTAL SHELF OF FIJI PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 76,  
PARAGRAPH 8 OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION  
ON THE LAW OF THE SEA

PART I

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The present submission to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf ('the Commission') is made by the Republic of the Fiji Islands ('Fiji') pursuant to paragraph 8 of Article 76 of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea ('the Convention') in support of the establishment by Fiji of the outer limits of the continental shelf that lies beyond 200 nautical miles (M) from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea of Fiji is measured (hereinafter referred to as 'the territorial sea baselines') in the area of the Lau Ridge – northern South Fiji Basin Region.
- 1.2 Fiji is a small island nation located in the south-west Pacific Ocean and is a Contracting Party to the Convention. In this regard, Fiji signed the Convention on the day it was opened for signature on 10 December 1982.
- 1.3 Under Article 4 of Annex II to the Convention, as supplemented by the decisions of the Eleventh and Eighteen Meetings of the States Parties to the Convention respectively, regarding the ten-year period established by article 4 of Annex II to the Convention (SPLOS/72) and (SPLOS/183), a coastal State for which the Convention entered into force before 13 May 1999 is required to submit particulars of the outer limits of the continental shelf to the Commission, together with supporting scientific and technical data by 13 May 2009. This partial submission by Fiji satisfies that obligation.
- 1.4 In accordance with paragraph 3 of Annex I to the Rules of Procedure, this submission represents a partial submission in respect of a portion only of the Convention o1589e day it8l shelf claim PLO.1125 Tw 0 TdP Tdpa1577he c13.24CommissC

1.7 Fiji wishes to emphasise that this submission has been prepared notwithstanding significant challenges posed by geographical isolation, technical capacity and financial resources. In this regard, Fiji has received technical assistance from the Commonwealth Secretariat and support from the Trust Fund of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea during the preparation of the submission.

## 2.0 OUTER LIMIT OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF IN THE LAU RIDGE – - NORTHERN SOUTH FIJI BASIN REGION

2.1 As provided for under paragraph 1 of Article 76 of the Convention, Fiji has a continental shelf comprising the seabed and subsoil of the submarine areas that extend beyond its territorial seas throughout the natural prolongation of its land territory to the outer edge of the continental margin, up to the limits provided for in paragraphs 4 to 6 of Article 76 or, to a distance of 200 M from the territorial sea baselines of Fiji where the outer edge of the continental margin does not extend beyond that distance.

2.2 Paragraphs 4 to 6 of Article 76 of the Convention elaborate provisions by which a coastal State may establish the outer edge of its continental margin, and its extended continental shelf, wherever that margin extends beyond 200 M measured from the territorial sea baselines.

2.3 As set out in paragraph 7 of Article 76 of the Convention, a coastal State is to delineate the outer limits of the extended continental shelf by straight lines not exceeding 60 M in length, connecting fixed points ('fixed points') defined by coordinates of latitude and longitude.

2.4 The data submitted by Fiji in support of the submission establish that the outer edge of the continental margin appurtenant to the relevant land territory of Fiji in the Lau Ridge – northern South Fiji Basin Region extends beyond 200 M measured from the territorial sea baselines of Fiji.

## 3.0 PROVISIONS OF ARTICLE 76 INVOKED

For the purposes of this submission Fiji invoked paragraphs 4(b) and 7 of Article 76 of the Convention to support the submission delineating the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 M from the territorial sea baselines. Paragraphs 4 (a)(ii) and 5 of Article 76 are also invoked in respect of fixed points as outlined in Section 6 of this Executive Summary.

## 4.0 ABSENCE OF DISPUTES

4.1 Article 9 of Annex II to the Convention provides that the actions of the  
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Rules of Procedure that is intended to prevent the consideration of a submission in respect of disputed continental shelf without the consent of the parties in dispute.

- 4.2 In 2008 the Commission evaluated the “Northern Region” of the New Zealand submission which covers the continental margin of New Zealand from the Kermadec Trench in the east to the Three Kings Ridge in the west. This continental shelf region includes the prolongation along the Kermadec and Colville Ridges, north of the line 200 M from the New Zealand territorial sea baseline to the intersection with the line 200 M from the territorial sea baseline of Fiji and Tonga.
- 4.3 Fiji has not expressed objections to the Commission considering the submission of New Zealand on the basis that the submission and any recommendation on it are without prejudice to delimitation. New Zealand has confirmed that its submission has been made on the same basis.
- 4.4 Fiji and its eastern neighbour, the Kingdom of Tonga, have held consultations concerning Fiji’s submission of information to the Commission. The Government of the Kingdom of Tonga has agreed not to object to the consideration by the Commission of this partial submission. This partial submission of information by Fiji to the Commission is without prejudice to delimitation of maritime boundary with the Kingdom of Tonga.
- 4.5 In accordance with paragraph 2(a) of Annex I to the Rules of Procedure of the Commission, Fiji wishes to inform the Commission that there is no dispute related to the present partial submission.

## 5. DESCRIPTION OF THE OUTER LIMITS OF THE EXTENDED CONTINENTAL SHELF

- 5.1 This partial submission deals with the very distinctive Lau Ridge in the Southern Pacific region which comprises emergent and coral-capped parts of remnant volcanic arc, and the South Fiji Basin. The latter is a back arc basin flanked by the Lau Ridge in the east.
- 5.2 Fiji is of the view that the natural geological processes that contributed to the formation of the Lau Ridge formed also the southern-most island, Tuvana-ira, of the Lau Islands Group and hence the Lau Ridge is in geological continuity with, and comprises the submerged prolongation of the land mass of Fiji in the Lau Ridge-northern South Fiji Basin Region.
- 5.3 The outer limit of the extended continental shelf in the Lau Ridge - northern South Fiji Basin Region encloses an area extending beyond 200 M from the territorial sea baseline of Fiji. The outer limit of this area comprises 47 points, of which:

1 point (OL-FFI-O1), where the outer limit of the extended continental shelf intersects the line 200M from the territorial sea baseline of Fiji;  
 42 points are defined by arcs 60M from the foot of the slope (Article 76, paragraph 4 (a) (ii) of the Convention); and  
 4 points defined by the 350 M line from which the territorial sea baseline of Fiji is measured.

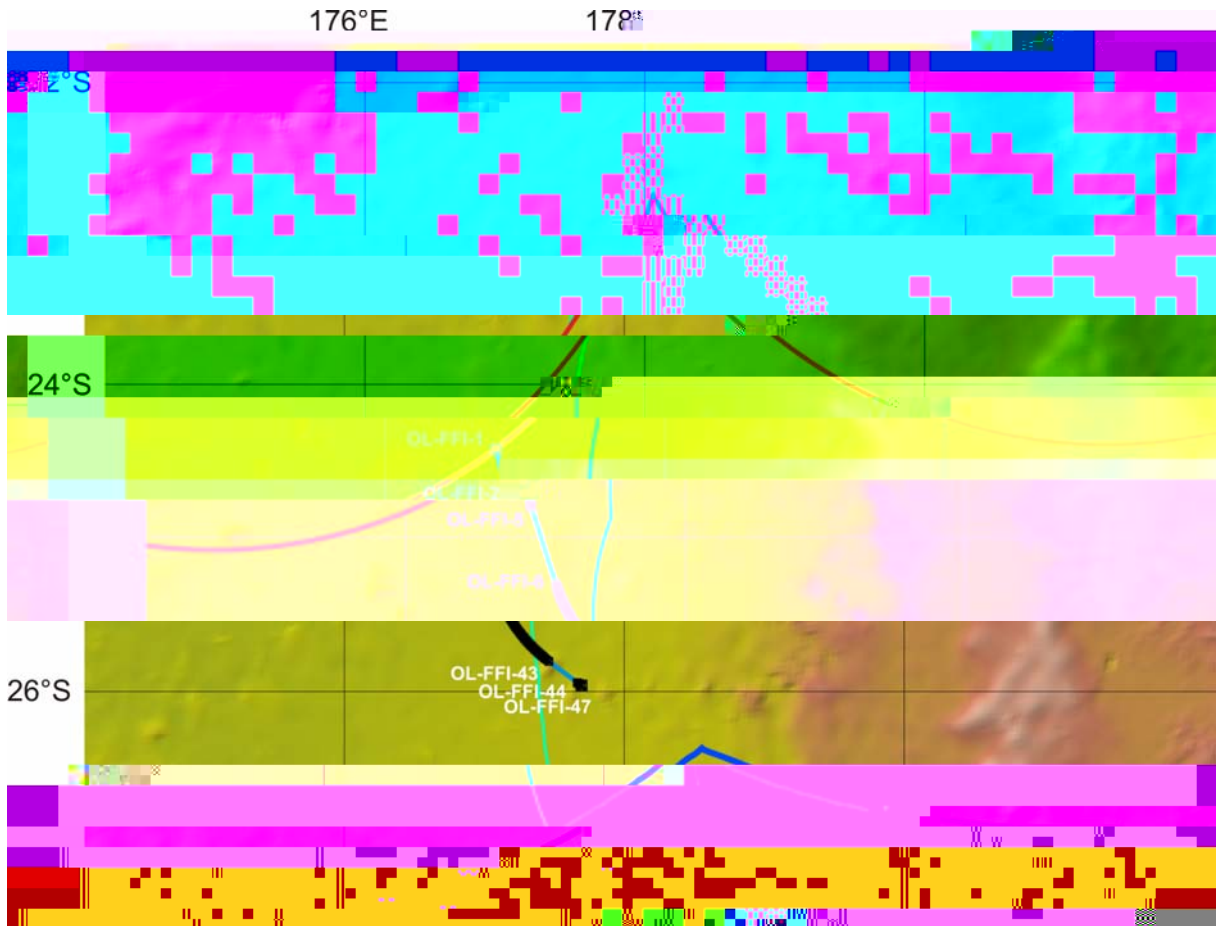
5.4 The fixed points and the straight line segments connecting them are shown in Figure 1. The geographical coordinates of the 47 points and the length of the straight line segments connecting them is indicated in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Geographical coordinates of fixed points defining the outer limits of Fiji's Continental Shelf beyond 200 nautical miles in the Lau Ridge – South Fiji Basin Region, and the length of the straight line segments connecting them.

**OL Point**

Point-ID	Latitude (DMS)	Longitude (DMS)	Article 76 criterion	Distance to next point [M]
OL – FFI – 01	24°25'17.960"S	176°47'24.309"E	1: 200 M	20.562
OL – FFI – 02	24°45'17.886"S	176°52'56.523"E	4(a)(ii): 60 M from FOS	1.000
OL – FFI – 03	24°46'15.999"S	176°53'13.663"E	4(a)(ii): 60 M from FOS	1.000
OL – FFI – 04	24°47'13.846"S	176°53'31.862"E	4(a)(ii): 60 M from FOS	1.000

OL – FFI – 36	25°43'43.881"S	177°21'40.962"E	4(a)(ii): 60 M from FOS	1.000
OL – FFI – 37	25°44'25.152"S	177°22'29.318"E	4(a)(ii): 60 M from FOS	1.000



**Figure 1:** Map showing the outer limit line and provisions of article 76 invoked (light blue line) of Fiji in the Lau Ridge – northern South Fiji Basin Region. Further indicated are: The 200 M line of Fiji (red line), the 350 M line (dark blue line), and the 2500 m isobaths plus 100 M (green line)



8. LIST OF MINISTRIES AND DEPARTMENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF FIJI INVOLVED IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS SUBMISSION

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Civil Aviation  
Attorney General's Office and Ministry of Justice  
Ministry for Fisheries and Forests  
Ministry for Home Affairs, Immigration and National Disaster Management  
Ministry for Lands, Mineral Resources and Environment  
Ministry for Transport and Works  
Ministry for Local Government, Housing and Squatter Settlement

9.