

16 December 1998

Press Release for the Closing of the thirtieth session of the  
Governing Council

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The Governing Council of the United Nations Compensation Commission concluded its thirtieth session today under the Presidency of Ambassador Gonçalo de Santa Clara Gomes of Portugal. The delegations of Kuwait, Iraq, Bangladesh, Iran, Jordan and Sudan addressed the 15 member Governing Council at its opening plenary meeting.

The Council approved the appointment of nine Commissioners to serve on three panels of Commissioners, one panel to address environmental claims, one panel to address export credit guarantee and insurance claims and one panel to address Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti individual claims in excess of US\$100,000. The appointment of these three new panels brings the total number of panels of Commissioners to 15.

The Council considered the report and recommendations of the Panel of Commissioners concerning part two of the second instalment of Category "D" claims (individual claims for damages in excess of US\$100,000) comprising 150 claims filed on behalf of individuals by 16 governments and one international organization. The Council approved the award of US\$53,053,314.00 in respect of the 129 successful claims included in the report. The Council also approved the recommendations of the Panel of Commissioners concerning the first instalment of "E3" claims by corporations from six countries comprising ten large claims. The compensation awarded by the Council in respect of the claims is US\$181,596,849.00.

The Council discussed, in the course of the session, a report of the Executive Secretary on the summary of activities of the Commission during the period from 1 September 1998 to 18 November 1998. The report addressed the selection and appointment of Commissioners; the processing of claims; and, the payment of approved awards. The report also provided information on the implementation of the UNCC Work Programme.

On the issue of payment of claims, the Council took note of a report of the Executive Secretary on information received from Governments and international organizations. The Council reviewed the status of refunds to the Commission of funds received from the Compensation Fund that Governments had not distributed to successful claimants within the required time limits.

The Council also discussed the issue of priority of payment and the payment mechanism to successful individuals, corporations and governments and heard presentations from non-member states on this issue. According to Decision 17 of the Governing Council, all successful claimants in Categories "A" and "C" will receive up to US\$2,500 before the commencement of payments to other categories of claims. The Council will continue its discussion on this issue in future sessions.

Argentina, Canada, Malaysia, Namibia and the Netherlands will join the Governing Council as of 1 January 1999. These five new members will replace Costa Rica, Japan, Kenya, Portugal and Sweden that have served on the Governing Council since January 1997.

The Governing Council decided to hold its thirty-first session from 15 to 18 March 1998. A special session of the Council will be held in January 1999 to elect a new Council President and a Vice President.