

PERMANENT COURT OF ARBITRATION

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PRESS RELEASE

**Arbitration between the Republic of the Philippines
and the People's Republic of China**

The Hague, 7 July 2015

The Arbitral Tribunal Commences Hearing on Jurisdiction and Admissibility

On Tuesday, 7 July 2015, the Arbitral Tribunal commenced the hearing on jurisdiction and admissibility in the arbitration submitted by the Republic of the Philippines against the People's Republic of China under Annex VII to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The hearing is taking place in the Peace Palace, the headquarters of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, the Netherlands. The Arbitral Tribunal has decided not to open the hearing to the public. However, after receiving written requests from interested States, and having sought the views of the Parties, the Arbitral Tribunal has permitted the Governments of Malaysia, the Republic of Indonesia, the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, the Kingdom of Thailand and Japan, to send small delegations as observers.

The hearing will end on or before 13 July 2015. More details about the hearing, including photographs, will be published at that time.

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Background to the Case: The *Philippines v. China* arbitration commenced on 22 January 2013 when the Philippines served China with a Notification and Statement of Claim “with respect to the dispute with China over the maritime jurisdiction of the Philippines in the West Philippine Sea.” On 19 February 2013, China presented the Philippines with a diplomatic note in which it described “the Position of China on the South China Sea issues,” and rejected and returned the Philippines’ Notification. China has since continued to reiterate its position of non-acceptance of and non-participation in the arbitration. Nonetheless, the Arbitral Tribunal has noted that it remains open to China to participate in the proceedings at any time. The five-member Arbitral Tribunal is chaired by Judge Thomas A. Mensah of Ghana. The other Members are Judge Jean-Pierre Cot of France, Judge Stanislaw Pawlak of Poland, Professor Alfred Soons of the Netherlands, and Judge Rüdiger Wolfrum of Germany. The Permanent Court of Arbitration acts as the Registry in the proceedings.

Further information about the case, including the Rules of Procedure and earlier Press Releases, may be found on the website of the Permanent Court of Arbitration at http://www.pca-cpa.org/showpage.asp?pag_id=1529.

Background to the Permanent Court of Arbitration: The Permanent Court of Arbitration is an intergovernmental organization established by the 1899 Hague Convention on the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes. Headquartered at the Peace Palace in The Hague, the Netherlands, the Permanent Court of Arbitration facilitates arbitration, conciliation, fact-finding and other dispute resolution proceedings among various combinations of States, State entities, intergovernmental organizations, and private parties.

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