



**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE
OFFICE OF THE MINISTER**

MEDIA RELEASE

***"GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES THE LEGAL OPERATION OF THE MARITIME ZONES
ACT 2015"***

The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Hon. Rimbink Pato, LLB, OBE, MP is pleased to announce that the the Maritime Zones Act 2015 has entered into legal force as of the 1st of May 2017 (National Gazette No. G380 dated 16th of May, 2017) and subsequently repealed the National Seas Act of 1977.

The scope of Act articulates 6 key areas;

- I. provide for the delimitation of the maritime zones of Papua New Guinea;
- II. assert the rights of Papua New Guinea in relation to those zones;
- III. incorporate into the law of Papua New Guinea provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea;
- IV. regulate marine scientific research in the waters of Papua New Guinea
- V. make provision with regard to marine environmental protection and the underwater cultural heritage; and
- VI. repeal the National Seas Act

Minister Pato reiterated that Papua New Guinea, as a developing nation with a wealth of natural resources is committed to ensuring that the status of the environment remains a primary focus and that the rights and obligations of the Papua New Guinea as a coastal maritime State against rights of other coastal States are ably protected under internationally accepted rules and regulations, inter-alia, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

The Maritime Zones Act will act as an "umbrella" legislation to regulate all maritime activities whilst protecting, conserving and managing the natural resources, both living or non-living. This Act also recognizes existing Papua New Guinea Maritime Border agreements with neighboring countries including other agreements for sustainable economic developments.

The institutional and governance framework is being developed phase by phase, to provide advisory and coordination support for the implementation of the Maritime Zones Act. This is necessary to ensure a whole of government approach to ensuring sustainable development in all ocean related activities and policies, as required under our Constitution and Vision 2050.

A fully established National Oceans Office is therefore being developed to guide/ coordinate the implementation of the Maritime Zones Act including subsequent implementation of the National Oceans Policy (which is work in progress) to effect within the precincts of the said Act. The legislation is cross cutting in nature given there are several Ministerial responsibilities of other Ministers as well.

The Minister acknowledged that the Act has taken some time to come into operation; but it is important that it covers all cross-cutting ocean governance matters. It is now incumbent upon State Agencies to work together to start implementing the work under UNCLOS and this legislation. There are six new charts to be deposited with the UN Secretary General as required by UNCLOS and the Maritime Zones Act in due course.



Hon. Rimbink Pate, LLB, OBE, MP
Minister for Foreign Affairs & Trade