Dr. Neeru Chadha elected as the first Indian Woman Judge to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea
14 June 2017, New York

Dr. Neeru Chadha has become the first Indian woman to be elected as a Judge to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), for the nine year term 2017-2026, elections for which were held today at the United Nations in New York. She is only the second ever woman Judge of ITLOS in its two decades of existence, where there have been a total of 40 Judges.

The Hamburg-based 21-member ITLOS (itlos.org), established in 1996, is one of dispute settlement mechanisms under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) that entered into force in 1994.

Dr. Chadha was the only candidate from four candidates for the two seats in the Asia Pacific Group (APG) to be elected in the first round of voting itself. She also secured the highest ever votes obtained by an Indian candidate to the ITLOS. Elections for a total of seven seats were being held. The candidate from Thailand won the other APG seat in the second round.

Dr. Neeru Chadha is a distinguished lawyer and one of the leading experts on different aspects of international law in India. Dr. Chadha has the distinction of...
serving as the first woman Chief Legal Adviser to the Government of India. She has advised the Government on diverse issues relating to the law of sea involving interpretation of various provisions of UNCLOS. These range from determining the extent of coastal state’s jurisdiction in different maritime zones, maritime delimitation with neighbouring states, legal issues relating to submissions on extended continental shelf, baselines, applications for exploration of minerals in the seabed and piracy.

Dr. Chadha has extensive international arbitration and litigation experience, having served as Agent for the Government of India in its maritime delimitation case with Bangladesh and the case concerning the Enrica Lexie Incident - both Annex VII arbitrations under UNCLOS. She has served as Agent before the International Court of Justice in the case concerning the Obligations concerning Negotiations relating to Cessation of Nuclear Arms Race and Nuclear Disarmament with Marshall Islands.

Dr. Chadha has also represented Government of India in various other multilateral meetings and conferences in the United Nations, AALCO (Asian African Legal Consultative Organisation), UNIDROIT (International Institute for the Unification of Private Law), UNCITRAL (UN Commission on International Trade Law), Hague Conference, SAARC and BIMSTEC on subjects relating to human rights, humanitarian law, international trade, international terrorism and international criminal law.

She has also represented India in numerous bilateral negotiations on issues relating to maritime delimitation, trans-boundary Rivers, international trade & investment protection, defence cooperation and disarmament.

Dr. Chadha’s independent judgment and honed expertise is recognized at both home and abroad.