WELCOMING REMARKS
Welcome Remarks

John Browne, TD*

Ambassadors, Judges, members of the diplomatic community, representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, distinguished guests: On behalf of the Government of Ireland, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to Dublin and to open the 30th Virginia Law of the Sea Conference. I would especially like to welcome the co-hosts of this year's conference, the Center for Oceans Law & Policy at the University of Virginia and the Law of the Sea Institute of Iceland, and to compliment the Marine Institute and NUI Galway on the excellent organisation for this event.

The Annual Virginia Conference is the leading international conference on the law of the sea and ocean policy. The aim of this year's conference is to build international understanding on the role of science and law in ocean management. We are very pleased that Ireland has been chosen to host this year's conference as we have a long tradition in the history of the law of the sea.

As I am sure you are aware, Ireland played a key role in negotiations on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, particularly with regard to the definition of the Continental Shelf. Continuing that tradition, Peter Croker, of my own department, has been an active member of the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf since 1997 and indeed is the current Chairman of the Commission.

The recently published Green Paper on Maritime Policy by the European Commission, acknowledges that oceans and seas can only be managed within multilateral fora. EU policy aimed at the oceans must be developed within that international context.

* Marine Minister of State, Republic of Ireland