

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE • BUREAU OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH • ISSUED BY THE GEOGRAPHER

# LIMITS IN THE SEAS

No. 69

MARITIME BOUNDARY:

**COLOMBIA - ECUADOR**

This paper  
of Intelligence  
aim of the  
arrangement  
division of

Intended for  
not represent  
Government  
necessarily  
the original  
requested by  
Washington,  
632-2021 or

The Governments of Colombia and Ecuador signed a maritime boundary agreement on August 23, 1975. Rati-  
fications were exchanged and the treaty went into force  
on December 22, 1975. Its full text is as follows:

The Governments of Colombia and Ecuador, based on  
the fruitful friendship governing relations between the  
two countries, and considering:

That their interests in the South Pacific region  
are identical and that it is therefore necessary to  
establish close cooperation between them, with a view  
to adopting, with respect to those marine and submarine  
areas over which they exercise or may hereafter exercise  
sovereignty, jurisdiction or supervision, adequate measures  
for the preservation, conservation and rational utilization  
of the resources existing therein;

That it is their duty to insure for their peoples  
the necessary conditions for subsistence and to provide  
them with the means for their economic development, for  
which reason they are entitled to use for their benefit  
the resources owned by them and to prevent their depredatory  
exploitation; and

That it is advisable to establish a delimitation of  
their respective marine and submarine areas,

They have for this purpose designated their Pleni-  
potentiaries, as follows:

His Excellency the President of Colombia; Dr. Indalecio  
LIEVANO Aguirre, Minister of Foreign Relations;

His Excellency the President of Ecuador; Dr. Antonio  
Jose LUCIO Paredes, Minister of Foreign Relations,

Who have agreed as follows:

Article 1

To determine, as a limit between their respective  
marine and submarine areas which are now established or  
that may be established in future, the line of the geo-  
graphical parallel intersecting that point at which the  
international terrestrial border line between Ecuador  
and Colombia reaches the sea.

Article 2

To establish beyond 12 nautical miles starting from the coast, a special zone, 10 nautical miles in width, on either side of the parallel which is the marine limit between the two countries, for the purpose of insuring that the accidental presence of local fishermen of either country in that zone should not be considered a violation of the marine boundary. This is not a recognition of any rights to engage in fishing or hunting activities within said special zone.

Article 3

To recognize and respect the procedures used by each State at present, and those that may be used in future, for exercising its sovereignty, jurisdiction or supervision in those marine and submarine areas which are adjacent to its coast as far as 200 miles, in conformity with the determinations made or to be made by each country and the regulations pertaining to their respective legislations.

Article 4

To recognize the right of each country to determine the baselines starting from which the width of the territorial sea should be measured by following straight baselines joining the outermost points of their coasts, and to abide by the provisions now adopted or to be adopted by each country for this purpose.

Article 5

To develop the most comprehensive cooperation between the two countries for protecting the renewable and non-renewable resources which are within the marine and submarine areas over which they exercise sovereignty, jurisdiction or supervision or may exercise them in future, and using such resources for the benefit of their peoples and their national development.

Article 6

To give each other the greatest possible facilities for purpose of developing the activities of exploitation and utilization of the living resources in their respective marine jurisdictional areas through an exchange of information,

cooperation in scientific research, technical cooperation and encouraging the establishment of mixed ownership companies.

Article 7

To coordinate, as far as possible, the laws and regulations adopted by each country in its sovereign capacity on the matter of issuance of fishing registration and fishing licenses.

Article 8

To encourage the most comprehensive international cooperation for the purpose of coordinating those measures for conservation applied by each State in the marine areas under its sovereignty or jurisdiction, particularly in reference to those species that migrate from their respective jurisdictional areas, by taking into account the recommendations of the pertinent regional organizations and the most reliable scientific data. Such international cooperation shall not interfere with the sovereign right of each State to adopt, within their respective marine jurisdictional areas, such rules and regulations as they consider advisable.

Article 9

To encourage the most comprehensive cooperation in facilitating an expeditious development of international navigation in the seas which are subject to their sovereignty or jurisdiction.

Article 10

This Agreement will go into force effective on the date when the proper ratification instruments are exchanged in the city of Bogota.

Article 11

This Agreement is signed in two copies the texts of which will be equally authentic and binding.

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Colombia and  
graphic Chart

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"buffer zone." If, however, "the coast" means the closest territory from each country, then the "buffer zone" begins at two different places along the boundary.

It is interesting to note that under both of these interpretations, part of Ecuador's "buffer zone" is landward of its straight baseline and in claimed Ecuadorean internal waters. It is possible that Ecuador may measure the 12 nautical miles from its straight baseline and thereby place the "buffer zone" seaward of its claimed internal waters. As stated in Article 2, the "buffer zone" is not a recognition of any fishing or hunting rights within the zone, but rather it is a zone in which accidental presence by local fishermen will not be considered a violation of the agreement.