

DE WET, Johanna Gertruida Susanna (Sandea) (South Africa)

[original: english]

Statement of qualifications

Ms Sandea (JGS) de Wet is the former Chief State Law Adviser (International Law) of the Republic of South Africa, a position she held from 2004, until she retired in March 2023.

As the head of the Office of the Chief State Law Adviser (International Law) in the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, her main responsibility was to act as senior legal counsel to the South African government by providing advice on all matters related to international law. Additionally, she was the custodian of the Official Treaty Record of the Republic of South Africa.

She was also responsible for providing legal advice on all internal legal matters concerning the Department of International Relations and Cooperation and to South African diplomatic missions abroad. She managed domestic and foreign litigation against the Department and missions. She also has extensive managerial experience and in-depth knowledge of government processes and is well versed in contemporary developments in international relations.

She was actively involved in the development and conceptualisation of the global response to climate change in the context of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). She led the South African delegation involved in the international climate change negotiations for many years. She was instrumental in the successful outcome of the 17th Conference of the Parties chaired by South Africa in Durban in 2011 and played a key role in the finalisation and adoption of the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change. On 3 September 2018 the President of the French Republic awarded her with the *Ordre national du Mérite* for her career as Chief State Law Adviser (International Law) and the key role she played in the successful conclusion of the Paris Agreement. She is internationally recognised as a bridge builder with the ability to bring diverse groupings to a consensus position and is known as an excellent drafter of legal texts.

She has a deep understanding of multilateral negotiations and processes and served as member of many South African delegations to international conferences. She has extensive experience in multilateral negotiations, including those dealing with the Law of the Sea; the Conventions on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora; Biological Diversity and its Biosafety Protocol; Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes; Prior Informed Consent Procedure for certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade; Desertification; the Ozone Layer and the Antarctic Treaty system.

She led numerous multilateral processes serving as facilitator and chair and/or co-chair of working groups, including as the chairperson of the Enforcement Branch of the Compliance Committee established under the Kyoto Protocol of the UNFCCC.

She was the leader of the South Africa delegation to the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf and responsible for the legal defense of South Africa's Extended Continental Shelf claims under the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea.

She was also a member of The Hague Space Resource Governance Working Group that has developed an international regulatory framework for space resource activities.

Ms De Wet has comprehensive knowledge and experience in the practice of international law and a deep understanding of the general principles of international law. She appeared before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on behalf of South Africa in the advisory opinion proceedings in the cases concerning the *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory* and concerning the *Legal*

Consequences of the Separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965. She has also appeared before the International Criminal Court on behalf of South Africa in proceedings under Article 87(7) of the Rome Statute against South Africa on the non-compliance by South Africa with the request by the Court for the arrest and surrender of Omar Al-Bashir.

Ms De Wet represented South Africa in various bilateral and multilateral negotiations on issues relating to international criminal law, diplomatic and consular relations, space law, international organisations, border disputes, trade and investment, and international terrorism. She was also the drafter of the South African legislation relating to international relations, including the Diplomatic Immunities and Privileges Act, the Foreign Service Act and the South African Partnership Fund for Development Bill.

She holds a B Iuris (*cum laude*), LLB (*cum laude*) and a Masters degree in Private Law (*cum laude*) from the University of the Free State, as well as a Masters degree in Public International Law (*cum laude*) from the University of Pretoria. She was admitted as Advocate of the High Court of South Africa in 1985.
