AMENDED CLAIMS - SUBSTITUTE SHEETS

1. Floating unit for offshore drilling operations comprising at least one floating structure (2) which defines a main deck (3), above which a drill floor (4) is placed, and at least one drilling tower (5) having a box-like structure which extends above the drill floor (4) next to at least one moonpool (6) which vertically crosses the floating structure at the drill floor (4) as far as the bottom (8) of said floating structure, characterised in that the drilling tower (5) is directly supported by a support structure (10) structurally integrated with the floating structure (2) and in that the support structure (10) of the tower (5) and/or the tower (5) crosses the drill floor (4), the drill floor being structurally supported by the support structure (10)of the tower and/or by the drilling tower itself, the support structure (10) of the tower extending vertically inside the floating structure (2), wherein:

- the support structure (10) is structurally integrated with the main deck (3) resting thereon; or
- the floating structure (2) defines one or more secondary decks (7) positioned below the main deck (3), the support structure (10) of the tower being structurally integrated with one of said secondary decks (7) resting thereon; or
- the floating structure (2) is provided with a bottom (8)

the support structure (10) of the tower being structurally integrated with the bottom (8) of the floating structure (2) resting thereon.

2. Floating unit according to one or more of the previous claims, wherein the support structure (10) of the tower is a column structure.

3. Floating unit according to one or more of the previous claims, wherein the support structure (10) of the tower is a tubular or box-like structure.

4. Floating unit according to one or more of the previous claims, the support structure (10) of the tower (5) comprises a main portion (11) which extends along a main vertical extension axis (X), laterally to said moonpool (6).

5. Floating unit according to claim 4, wherein the support structure (10) of the tower (5) comprises a portion (12) of interface and connection with the base (5') of the tower (5), said interface portion (12) being offset in relation to the main vertical extension axis (X) of the support structure (10) and being at least partially overlapped with the moonpool (6), by means of the interface (12) portion the support structure (10) supporting the tower (5) at least partially to overhang above the moonpool (6).

6. Floating unit according to claim 5, wherein the

drilling tower (5) is fitted with at least one hoisting hook (50) of the drill strings, associated to the top of the tower (5) and positioned externally thereto and wherein said interface portion (12) extends in the moonpool so that the hoisting hook (50) is positioned above the moonpool (6), and is preferably aligned with the main vertical extension axis (Y) of said pool.

7. Floating unit according to claim 5 or 6, wherein the tower (5) is aligned perpendicular to the interface portion (12) of the support structure (10).

8. Floating unit according to claim 5, 6 or 7, wherein the support structure (10) of the tower (5) comprises a fitting portion (13) between the main portion (11) and the interface portion (12), said fitting portion (13) extending from the main portion (11) towards the moonpool (6) deviating from the main vertical extension axis (X) of the support structure (10) of the tower (5).

9. Floating unit according to one or more of the claims from 5 to 8, wherein the base (5') of the tower (5) and the interface portion (12) of the support structure (10) penetrate each other.

10. Floating unit according to one or more of the claims from 5 to 9, wherein the base (5') of the tower (5) is attached to the interface portion (12) by means of a flanged coupling.

11. Floating unit according to one or more of the previous claims, characterised in that it is a ship (1), comprising a hull which extends along a longitudinal axis (Z) between a bow (21) and a stern (22), said floating structure being the hull (2) of the ship (1).

12. Floating unit according to claim 11, wherein said at least one drilling tower (5) is positioned asymmetrically in relation to the longitudinal centreline axis (Z) of the ship (1), the tower (5) being shifted towards a first side (23) of the ship.

13. Floating unit according to claim 12, wherein the drill floor (4) is supported by at least one structural support element (30) which extends vertically from the main deck (3) next to the second side (24) of the ship, opposite the drilling tower (5) in relation to the longitudinal centreline extension axis (Z) of the ship (1).

14. Floating unit according to claim 13, wherein said structural support element (30) is composed of a wall, which delimits the storage and assembly area of the drill strings next to the tower (5).

15. Floating unit according to claim 14, wherein said wall extends vertically beyond the drill floor (4).

16. Floating unit according to claim 11, wherein said at least one drilling tower (5) is positioned on the

longitudinal centreline axis (Z) of the ship.

17. Floating unit according to one or more of the claims from 1 to 10 characterised in that it is a semi-submersible platform (100).