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Chair: Ms. McDougall (Vice-Chair) (Australia)

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In the absence of Mr. Gafoor (Singapore), Ms. McDougall (Australia), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 80: United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law (A/72/517)

1. **Mr. Okaiteye** (Ghana), speaking on behalf of the Advisory Committee on the United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law, said that the Advisory Committee had held its fifty-second session on 3 October 2017 to consider the report of the Secretary-General (A/72/517). A summary of the Advisory Committee meeting could be found in paragraphs 47 to 51 of the Secretary-General's report. The Committee had also reviewed the implementation of Programme activities undertaken in 2017 and the activities proposed for the 2018–2019 biennium, including the resulting administrative and financial implications.

2. The Programme of Assistance was a core United Nations activity, which continued to provide the foundation for the Organization's efforts to promote better knowledge of international law and thereby establish conditions under which justice and respect for international law could be maintained, as envisaged in the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations. It would be recalled that, when Ghana had proposed the Programme in the 1960s, the decolonization movement was spreading across three regions with a history of colonialism: Africa, the Asia-Pacific region and Latin America and the Caribbean. Ambassador Dadzie, a Ghanaian diplomat and very much the father of the Programme of Assistance, had set out his vision of providing international law training from different regions and legal systems, primarily for the benefit of lawyers from developing countries. That vision continued to guide the work of the Codification Division of the Office of Legal Affairs on the Programme of Assistance.

3. He wished to express appreciation to Ethiopia, Thailand, and Chile for hosting the regional courses in international law for Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean, respectively, and to the Director and staff of the Codification Division for their tireless efforts in ensuring the successful implementation of the Programme of Assistance. He was especially grateful to the Division for preparing and publishing the English version of the *International Law Handbook*, which would be used for training courses

under the Programme of Assistance and by academic institutions and training centres in developing countries. He noted that progress was being made in preparing the French version. Lastly, he wished to thank Ms. Virginia Morris, who had provided invaluable service to the Programme of Assistance over a period of 30 years, up to her retirement earlier in 2017.

4. **Ms. Germani** (Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea) said that it was a pleasure for her to provide an update on the implementation of the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship on the Law of the Sea, which had been established in 1981 to assist government officials and other professionals from developing States in enhancing their knowledge of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, in order to promote its wider application. In both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the "Our ocean, our future: call for action" declaration, adopted by the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, States had recognized that the implementation of international law as reflected in the Convention on the Law of the Sea was essential in order to enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources.

5. Capacity-building activities were one of the core mandates of the Secretary-General under relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, which had, on numerous occasions, recognized the important contribution made by the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship. It was critical that the necessary funding be made available so that the Fellowship could continue to be awarded. She noted in that regard that it had not been awarded for several years between 2007 and 2016, owing to lack of funding, and that in 2017 a modified award for a shorter period had been given, as there had not been enough funding for the standard award. She strongly encouraged Member States to make voluntary contributions to support the Fellowship, as called for in General Assembly resolution 71/257.

6. **Mr. Llewellyn** (Office of Legal Affairs), speaking in his capacity as Acting Secretary of the Advisory Committee, said that he, too, wished to pay tribute to Ms. Virginia Morris for her service as Secretary of the Advisory Committee on the Programme of Assistance. He also thanked the delegation of Ghana for its strong leadership of the Advisory Committee over several decades. The Government of Ghana and Ms. Morris deserved much of the credit for the current strength of the Programme.

7. The Programme of Assistance offered four training courses in international law, which brought together leading academics and practitioners from around the world to lecture on core topics of international law for lawyers and teachers from developing countries and countries with emerging economies. The International Law Fellowship Programme was held in The Hague, in conjunction with The Hague Academy of International Law lectures, and regional courses were offered in Africa, the Asia-Pacific region and Latin America and the Caribbean. In 2016 and 2017, the Programme had, for the first time, been able to hold all four of its training courses in both years of a biennium. That had been possible thanks largely to the availability of funding from the Organization's regular budget and also to the support received from the Governments of the countries that had hosted the courses: Chile, Ethiopia, the Netherlands and Thailand. He joined the representative of Ghana in thanking those Governments.

8. Regular budget funding had also made it possible to add 56 new lectures to the Audiovisual Library of International Law and had enabled the Codification Division to enlist a more diverse group of lecturers and offer lectures in more languages. The Library's collection now included more than 500 lectures, which could be accessed by the public free of charge on the Internet. To date, over 1.5 million individual users had accessed the Library. The Division was aware that access to high-speed Internet was limited in some parts of the world and was therefore converting all the lectures into podcasts, a project that it expected to complete by the end of 2018.

9. During the year, the Division had finalized and published the *International Law Handbook: Collection of Instruments*, a four-volume reference publication that would be used in the training courses offered under the Programme of Assistance and would also be distributed to government legal departments and law schools in developing countries. Currently, only the English-language version was available, but the French-language version was expected to be ready in time for the 2018 International Law Fellowship Programme. However, the Division's ability to complete the translation was dependent on the availability of voluntary funding.

10. The Codification Division was hopeful that regular budget funding for the Programme of Assistance would continue. Nevertheless, there would be an ongoing need for voluntary funding. He wished to thank the Member States that had provided voluntary funding in the previous 12 months: China, the Czech Republic, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Panama, Qatar and Switzerland.

11. **Mr. Oña Garcés** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Programme of Assistance was an effective means of enhancing knowledge of international law and thereby strengthening international peace and security and promoting friendly relations and cooperation among States. Jurists, academics, diplomats and other public officials from developing countries had derived great benefit from the Programme's regional courses, fellowships and publications, and from the Audiovisual Library. The Group therefore welcomed the allocation under the programme budget for the biennium 2016–2017 of the necessary resources for the International Law Fellowship Programme, the three regional courses and the Audiovisual Library.

12. The Audiovisual Library enabled lawyers around the world to access low-cost, high-quality legal training through the Internet. Access to and use of the Audiovisual Library by scholars and academics in developing countries should continue to be promoted. The Group was pleased to learn that the Codification Division was undertaking off-site recording sessions in various locations in order to promote broader geographical and linguistic representation among lecturers and to record lecturers who were unable to travel to New York. It also welcomed the Division's commitment to making all the lectures in the Lecture Series available as podcasts.

13. The Programme of Assistance played a vital role in promoting the rule of law at the national and international levels, which was one of the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 16. The capacity-building activities undertaken in implementation of the Programme enabled individuals to acquire a greater knowledge of international law, thereby fostering the participation of developing countries in various multilateral frameworks and instruments and ultimately helping to strengthen the rule of law. The Group remained committed to that objective, as reflected in the Ministerial Declaration adopted at the forty-first annual meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Group of 77, in which the Ministers had expressed their commitment to including the International Law Fellowship Programme, the seminars and regional training on international treaty laws and practice and the legal publications and training materials, as well as the funding necessary for the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship on the Law of the Sea, in the regular United Nations budget for the biennium 2018–2019. Regular budget funding would help to ensure the continuation of related activities in coming years. At the same time, voluntary

contributions, including in-kind contributions, remained vital.

14. **Mr. Remaoun** (Algeria), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that the Group was concerned that the report of the Secretary-General (A/72/517) did not contain detailed information on the use of the additional \$2 million provided by the General Assembly for the Programme of Assistance during the current budget biennium. The Secretary-General should comply with the Assembly's request to provide information on the implementation of activities under the Programme of Assistance and on plans for future activities, including details on the use of regular budget funding, and should inform Member States of the use of any Programme of Assistance funds for any other purpose.

15. The African Group hoped that all Member States remained committed to upholding the objectives of studying, understanding, teaching and disseminating knowledge of international law, which were essential for a world order based on the rule of law, and to taking the necessary steps to ensure the continuation of the Programme of Assistance. In particular, it urged all Member States to join in efforts to ensure the effective implementation of the Advisory Committee's recommendations and the provision of regular budget funding for the Programme, to the benefit of developing and developed countries alike. The Group stood ready to work with all Member States in that regard.

16. The Group supported the work of the Programme of Assistance, particularly as it related to the development of international law in Africa. It should be noted that the African Union contributed to the regional course for Africa, and that the African Institute of International Law had recently been established to undertake training and research aimed at progressively developing and codifying international law in the region, furthering the objectives and principles of the African Union, and working on the revision of treaties in Africa. Furthermore, it had been decided at the African Union Summit held in May 2013 that African States should support proper funding of the Programme of Assistance, including, if necessary, through the United Nations regular budget. For that reason, inter alia, the Group supported regular budget funding for the Programme.

17. In conclusion, the Group wished to pay tribute to Ms. Virginia Morris for her many years of service to the Programme of Assistance. Her work had been of benefit to generations of lawyers from around the world, including Africa.

18. **Mr. Celarie Landaverde** (El Salvador), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and

Caribbean States (CELAC), said that, from the early days of their independence, the Latin American and Caribbean States had proclaimed international law as the standard for the conduct of international relations and had incorporated its fundamental principles and norms into their domestic legal systems. The Community considered that knowledge of the substantive rules of international law was a prerequisite for their observance and therefore attached great importance to the teaching, study and dissemination of international law. The fellowships and courses offered through the Programme of Assistance were highly effective platforms for the teaching and dissemination of international law and had a multiplier effect within the community of students and professionals. CELAC was especially pleased that the regional course for Latin America and the Caribbean had been offered in 2017 and called for sufficient funding to be allocated under the regular budget for 2018–2019 so that all three regional courses could once again be held.

19. He commended the Office of Legal Affairs for maintaining 26 user-friendly websites on international law, which contained valuable resources for researchers. The Audiovisual Library's Lecture Series, Historic Archives and Research Library provided a useful toolbox for the achievement of the Programme's goals and had the potential to reach millions of people worldwide. The Office's publication of the United Nations Legislative Series and the summaries of advisory opinions and judgments of the International Court of Justice and the Permanent Court of International Justice greatly benefited the academic community, as did its efforts to further expand its desktop publishing programme.

20. Since the working languages of the International Court of Justice were English and French, the publication of the summaries and decisions in all the official languages of the United Nations was often the only way for teachers, researchers and students in CELAC countries to familiarize themselves with the Court's jurisprudence and stay abreast of developments in international law. No effort should be spared in updating the collection and ensuring its widest possible dissemination.

21. **Mr. Chaboureau** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and Serbia and, in addition, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the Programme of Assistance had made a valuable contribution to the rule of law by addressing the need for international law training and dissemination of legal knowledge and material in benefit of all countries. He

commended the Codification Division for its efforts to strengthen and revitalize the Programme's activities in order to meet the changing needs of the international legal community in the twenty-first century, particularly through the expansion of the Audiovisual Library of International Law, which offered easy access to a vast range of legal resources, free of charge and in several languages. The Library remained an important resource for the legal community and warranted continued attention by the Codification Division.

22. The European Union noted with appreciation that the Codification Division continued to disseminate legal publications and information via the Internet. It welcomed the pilot project aimed at resuming the Division's desktop publishing activities, commended the Division for finalizing the English edition of the *International Law Handbook* and looked forward to the publication of the French edition. It hoped that the Division's efforts to cooperate with academic institutions for the preparation of the *Handbook* in other official languages of the United Nations would bear fruit.

23. The European Union noted that the regional courses for Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean had been held earlier in 2017 and that the course for Asia-Pacific would take place in November and December; it wished to thank the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific for the in-kind contributions and assistance they had provided for the regional courses. It recognized the contribution of the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship on the Law of the Sea to the wider appreciation and application of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and wished to acknowledge the work of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea in that regard.

24. The European Union commended those States that had provided voluntary contributions to the Programme and encouraged all States to consider making more frequent or larger contributions in the future. It also welcomed the continued commitment of the Office of Legal Affairs to the Programme of Assistance and noted the stabilization of financial resources for the Programme in the current biennium.

25. **Mr. Tuy** (Cambodia), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said the Programme of Assistance promoted a wider appreciation of international law, which helped to strengthen international peace and security, promote friendly relations and cooperation among States and

enhance respect for the rule of law at the national and international levels. ASEAN commended the work of the Codification Division and wished to express its appreciation to Ms. Virginia Morris for her steadfast commitment to implementing activities under the Programme, often in the face of limited budgetary resources. Voluntary contributions should not represent the sole source of financing for the Programme. Regular budget funding was essential to its effective functioning. He hoped that the budget for the next biennium would again adequately reflect all necessary financing for the Programme. ASEAN supported the language contained in the previous year's resolution on the Programme (A/RES/71/139) requesting the Secretary-General to continue to include resources under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 so as to ensure the effective operation of the Programme of Assistance.

26. Since 1965, the Programme of Assistance had been the cornerstone of the Organization's efforts to promote international law and had provided comprehensive training and invaluable opportunities for lawyers, especially those from developing countries and countries with emerging economies. ASEAN welcomed the International Law Fellowship Programme, which provided high-quality training to legal practitioners. Moreover, participants often formed close friendships and developed professional networks, which helped to foster friendly relations, greater understanding and closer cooperation among nations. The Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship promoted greater appreciation for the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, thereby facilitating the peaceful settlement of disputes. The regional courses were also an important component of the Programme of Assistance. ASEAN was hopeful that, after numerous cancellations in previous years owing to insufficient funding, all regional courses would continue to be held in the future. The Sixth Committee and the General Assembly as a whole should ensure their continuity.

27. ASEAN welcomed the use of advanced technology to disseminate information on international law to scholars, researchers and practitioners from both developing and developed countries. The Audiovisual Library was one of the Programme's most cost-effective and widely accessible tools of knowledge and should continue to be expanded.

28. **Ms. Muratidi** (Australia) said that compliance with international law required, among other things, the effective dissemination thereof, including through capacity-building and information-sharing. The Programme of Assistance was a vital tool for disseminating international law globally. Over the last

half a century, the Programme had made a strong contribution to the achievement of the goals of the United Nations by providing scholars and practitioners access to rich and varied training opportunities and other valuable resources on international law. Her delegation welcomed the Secretariat's active and continued engagement in pursuing its mandate regarding the Programme of Assistance and strongly encouraged it to continue that good work.

29. **Mr. Elsadig Ali Sayed Ahmed** (Sudan) said that his Government attached great importance to the Audiovisual Library, the Programme of Assistance and the courses and other activities organized by the Codification Division. The Programme had increased understanding of the purposes and principles of international law among scholars, jurists and diplomats and had assisted countries in harmonizing their domestic legislation with international law. His Government had particularly appreciated the 2017 United Nations Regional Course in International Law for Africa, which had been organized by the Office of Legal Affairs in cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union. It hoped that additional resources would be made available so that the regional courses could continue, as they provided valuable training and opportunities for participants to share experiences. His delegation called for increased support for the African Institute of International Law to enable it to assume a larger role in teaching and disseminating international law and in strengthening the participation of African jurists in the development thereof.

30. His delegation had been an active participant in the deliberations of the Advisory Committee on the Programme of Assistance. The members' flexibility had made it possible to reach a positive outcome, which he hoped would meet with the approval of the Sixth Committee.

31. **Mr. Tang** (Singapore), expressing gratitude to Ms. Virginia Morris for her important contributions as Secretary of the Advisory Committee, said that the dissemination and wider appreciation of international law was a critical first step in securing a rule-based international order. The Audiovisual Library was an excellent tool for providing high-quality training and research materials on international law to users around the world, and his delegation strongly supported its continued development. It welcomed the use of off-site recording, including in Singapore, in order to promote broader geographic and linguistic representation among lecturers. Users would thus be able to benefit from the views and insights of lecturers who were unable to travel to New York. International law specialists from

Singapore had contributed lectures on a variety of topics. His delegation also welcomed the training courses conducted under the Programme of Assistance. The regional courses, in particular, were an important means of catering to the specific interests of countries in a given region. His delegation looked forward to the upcoming regional course for Asia-Pacific and encouraged the Codification Division to continue to explore opportunities to collaborate on the courses with countries and institutions in the various regions.

32. While his delegation applauded the various courses and initiatives successfully implemented under the Programme, it believed there was still scope for improvement. For example, in the various seminars organized by the Codification Division under the International Law Fellowship Programme, there could be greater representation of the major legal systems and better balance among geographical regions. His delegation encouraged the Codification Division to continue to invite prominent international law scholars and practitioners from different regions and systems to participate as lecturers.

33. The Programme of Assistance represented one of the most important means by which the United Nations helped to promote international law, thereby also strengthening international peace and security and encouraging friendly relations and cooperation among States. His delegation reaffirmed its support for the previous year's resolution ([A/RES/71/139](#)) requesting the Secretary-General to continue to include resources for the Programme's activities under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019.

34. **Mr. Figueredo Corrales** (Paraguay) said that the Constitution of Paraguay recognized international law, the principles of which governed both its international relations and its internal regime. His delegation therefore supported the teaching, study and wider dissemination of international law and welcomed the resumption, after a decade-long hiatus, of the regional course for Latin America and the Caribbean. The course was an important means of furthering the teaching and dissemination of international law in the region. It brought academics and professionals from around the world to give master classes on a wide variety of topics to a diverse group of participants, thereby affording an opportunity to enhance knowledge, share experiences and exchange views. Participants from Paraguay had taken part in the regional course in both 2016 and 2017. The formation of a network among the professionals who had participated in the courses could be a means of updating knowledge on international law topics.

35. His delegation supported the efforts of the Codification Division to identify recurring venues for the courses in order to ensure that they were organized on a regular basis. At the same time, it believed that some flexibility should be maintained so that the courses could be held elsewhere if another State offered to host them. It welcomed the courses given in The Hague during the summer under the International Law Fellowship Programme, which offered an invaluable opportunity to enhance understanding and broaden the dissemination of international law.

36. His delegation supported the continued efforts of the Codification Division to promote awareness of the Audiovisual Library and prepare training materials. In particular, it encouraged the distribution of the Division's publications in all the official languages of the United Nations. His delegation also called on Member States to ensure the financial resources needed to ensure the sustainability of the Programme of Assistance in all regions.

37. **Mr. Horna** (Peru) said that his Government remained committed to international law, the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and an international order based on the rule of law. International law placed all countries, whether small or large, developed or developing, on an equal footing because all were equal before the law. His delegation supported the Programme of Assistance, the aim of which was to contribute to the dissemination of international law throughout the world, and recognized the importance of continuing to strengthen the various components of the Programme. It welcomed the holding of the regional course for Latin America and the Caribbean in Chile in 2017.

38. With regard to the activities of the Audiovisual Library of International Law, new forms of dissemination, including social networks, might usefully be envisaged in order to reach larger numbers of interested persons in developing countries; the possible involvement of academic associations engaged in the dissemination of international law in the various regions of the world might also be considered. His delegation applauded the work of the Codification Division in updating legal publications. It reaffirmed its conviction that the rule of law and development were closely interrelated, as reflected in Sustainable Development Goal 16, and that the Programme of Assistance could play an important part in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

39. **Ms. Melikbekyan** (Russian Federation) said that the Programme of Assistance was an important means of promoting the rule of law at the international level

and should be expanded and supported. The Programme now had a stable and predictable source of funding from the regular budget, which had made it possible to implement all its key activities for the past several years. Her delegation was pleased to note that all the regional courses on international law had been held in 2017 and that new materials had been added to the Audiovisual Library on a regular basis. It wished to express its gratitude to the staff of the Office of Legal Affairs, in particular its Codification Division, without whose contribution it would have been difficult to maintain and develop the Programme of Assistance.

40. **Mr. Celarie Landaverde** (El Salvador) said that his delegation supported the Programme of Assistance, which since its creation in 1965 had been making a significant contribution to the wider appreciation of international law as a means of consolidating international peace and security and promoting friendly relations and cooperation between States. International law was constantly adapting to changes in the international environment. New branches of international law had emerged, and it had been evolving to reflect the increasing emphasis on the protection of individual fundamental rights and freedoms and the collective interests of the international community. It was therefore important to continue to operate and strengthen the various components of the Programme of Assistance, which was contributing to the training of professionals from all regional and legal systems.

41. In that connection, his delegation was pleased that the regional course for Latin America and the Caribbean had been held in 2017. The course had been attended by 23 students from 17 countries, including El Salvador. The International Law Fellowship Programme was also an important component of the Programme, as it provided invaluable training opportunities for persons from developing States that not only benefited the participants but also had a ripple effect across the professional and academic sectors of their home countries. The distribution of legal publications should continue, as should the operation of the Audiovisual Library, which was an essential mechanism for the dissemination of international law, in particular in countries that did not have specialized international law programmes.

42. **Mr. Thathong** (Thailand) said that the tremendous contribution to the wider appreciation of international law that the Programme of Assistance had been making for over half a century had helped to promote the rule of law, maintain international peace and security and strengthen friendly relations among States. The Programme's activities had enabled Member States with limited access to resources to build their capacities and

knowledge and, as a result, participate more meaningfully in the progressive development of international law. His delegation was pleased that use of the Audiovisual Library had increased exponentially over the past five years in all regions of the world. It also welcomed the addition of lectures by Asian scholars over the past year, which had increased the diversity of breadth of the Library's materials.

43. The regional courses in international law had brought professionals from various sectors together and enabled them to expand their networks. Participants went on to play a crucial role in strengthening the rule of law by passing on the knowledge they had gained to others in their communities. Thailand had hosted several regional courses and was committed to continuing to do so. It was also open to exploring the possibility of hosting the courses on a regular basis, with a view to increasing efficiency and certainty in the organization of the courses, and therefore hoped that the funds necessary to run them would be forthcoming. The Programme of Assistance was extremely valuable but could only operate effectively if it received regular and adequate funding. His delegation therefore hoped that resources would continue to be allocated from the regular budget of the United Nations and that Member States would continue to make voluntary financial contributions, financial or otherwise, to ensure the continuous and smooth functioning of the Programme.

44. **Mr. Aliyu** (Nigeria) said that the Programme of Assistance was a valuable tool for providing a deeper understanding of the complex legal issues arising in the current interconnected world. His delegation welcomed the funding proposed for the Programme in the 2018-2019 budget and hoped that it would be adequate to enable the Programme to achieve its purpose and objectives. It was pleased that the funding provided in the current programme budget had made it possible to hold regional courses in international law for the Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia-Pacific regions.

45. His delegation commended the efforts of the Office of Legal Affairs, in particular the Codification Division, to promote international law through the Programme of Assistance. It noted with concern that the Division had not been able to issue legal publications since the discontinuation of its desktop publishing programme in 2014 and hoped that the Division would be provided with the resources necessary to restart those activities. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the pilot project undertaken by the Division in 2017, which was aimed at resuming its desktop publishing activities.

46. **Mr. Taye** (Ethiopia), paying tribute to Ms. Virginia Morris for her dedication and hard work in implementing the Programme of Assistance, said that his delegation appreciated the efforts made to ensure the sustainability of the Programme for the benefit of developing countries and was grateful to the Codification Division for organizing the regional courses in international law, maintaining the Audiovisual Library and finalizing the publication of the English edition of the *International Law Handbook*. A rule-based international order paved the way for strengthening international peace, security and cooperation. The sophisticated nature of today's international relations demanded an equally sophisticated knowledge of the intricate rules, customs and practices that governed those relations. Hence, it was crucial for States, especially developing countries, to have qualified experts and practitioners equipped with a comprehensive knowledge of international law. The Programme of Assistance played a key role in that regard.

47. The regional course for Africa provided a timely and much-needed opportunity for government legal officers and teachers of international law to expand their knowledge by creating a platform for knowledge transfer. It also provided essential exposure to contemporary issues and to the intricacies of the field. His Government, in close collaboration with the Secretariat, had successfully hosted the regional course for Africa for seven consecutive years, and it reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to continue doing so. Ethiopia called upon all Member States to extend their support in order to ensure the continuity of the Programme of Assistance.

48. **Ms. Beckles** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that her delegation recognized the significant contribution of the Programme of Assistance to strengthening international peace and security and promoting friendly relations among States, and it remained steadfast in its commitment to supporting and ensuring the full implementation of all the Programme's activities. Her delegation noted with appreciation that many of the activities under the Programme had been implemented in 2017, including all three regional courses. It was pleased that the candidate from the Philippines had successfully completed the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship during the year; it noted, however, that there were currently insufficient funds for a standard award to be given in 2018.

49. Her delegation welcomed the Codification Division's efforts to resume desktop publishing and commended the Division for finalizing the English edition of the *International Law Handbook*. It

recognized that the publication of the *Handbook* in other official languages would require voluntary financing and called upon States that were in a position to do so to contribute to that worthy cause and to make voluntary contributions to the financing of the overall Programme of Assistance with a view to ensuring its continued effectiveness.

50. **Mr. Kabir** (Bangladesh) said that the Programme of Assistance was a catalytic tool for enhancing developing countries' capacity to achieve the relevant goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The International Law Fellowship Programme covered a range of useful and relevant issues; however, his delegation would urge the Secretariat to continue reviewing the course design in order to ensure that participants were exposed to evolving issues in international law. It would be useful if future reports by the Secretary General included information about participants' feedback and suggestions on the Programme. His delegation believed that participants from the least developed countries should be given preference for admission to the Programme.

51. Bangladesh looked forward to participating in the forthcoming regional course on international law in Bangkok and thanked the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific for providing significant in-kind support for the course. It encouraged greater participation by women, including female public officials, in the course. The Secretariat's proposal to identify a regular venue for the regional courses was timely. Nevertheless, Bangladesh would be willing to consider hosting the regional course for Asia-Pacific in the coming years.

52. The Audiovisual Library was emerging as a solid resource platform. His delegation strongly recommended enlisting the support of United Nations country teams, especially information offices, to disseminate information about the Library to target audiences in developing countries. It welcomed the podcast initiative as a means of addressing technical challenges in accessing the Library. However, the lack of computers and high-speed Internet service might not be the only obstacle to use of the Library. A structured survey conducted with limited resources might help to determine whether its contents catered sufficiently to the needs of users in relatively less developed countries.

53. His delegation welcomed the Codification Division's resumption of its desktop publishing activities and would support the allocation of the necessary resources for that purpose in the programme budget for 2018–2019. In general, it considered the

Secretary-General's budget proposal for the Programme of Assistance for the next biennium to be a pragmatic one. Bangladesh thanked Member States for their voluntary contributions to the Programme of Assistance, including for the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship, and intended to make a small contribution of its own.

54. **Mr. Luna** (Brazil) said that the Programme of Assistance embodied the notion that peace could be achieved through law. The Programme's fellowships and courses had helped to educate successive generations of lawyers for more than five decades. As a fellow of the 2017 International Law Fellowship Programme, he could personally attest to the quality and professionalism of the work undertaken by the Codification Division in that regard. His delegation was pleased to note that it had been possible to hold all three regional courses in 2017 and was grateful to the host countries and to the Secretariat for organizing them. The inclusion of funding for the three regional courses in the Organization's regular budget for the current biennium was a significant achievement. There was an increasing demand for such courses, and it was therefore crucial that they should be funded at the same level in future bienniums. His delegation also welcomed the Secretariat's efforts to continue to seek voluntary contributions for the regional courses; it was important to ensure that such contributions were used to provide additional fellowships beyond those covered by the regular budget, so as to respond to the steadily increasing demand.

55. His delegation also welcomed the efforts to improve access to the Audiovisual Library in regions with limited access to high-speed Internet and to ensure broader geographical and linguistic representation among lecturers. It wished to stress, however, that hard copies remained valuable to persons who lacked affordable access to the Internet. The necessary resources should be provided to enable the Codification Division to resume desktop publishing. Indeed, adequate resources needed to be ensured for all activities under the Programme of Assistance, as they had been for the regional courses.

56. **Mr. Gorostegui** (Chile) said that his delegation was convinced that the promotion of international law benefited all societies, and it therefore appreciated the activities carried out by the Codification Division under the Programme of Assistance. The education of young lawyers in international law and the formation of professional networks among specialists in the field could have a positive impact on relations between States. His Government had been honoured to host the regional course for Latin America and the Caribbean in

2017 and reaffirmed its willingness to host the course again in 2018 at the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in Santiago. It remained committed to international law, as a source of guidance in relations with other States and the international community, as part of its development and as a means of ensuring international peace and security.

57. **Mr. Tupouniua** (Tonga) said that the dissemination of international law was an important means of enabling the effective participation of small island developing States such as Tonga in the international legal arena; it was also crucial to promoting the rule of law at the national and international levels and fostering friendly relations and cooperation among States. The Programme of Assistance played an essential role in that regard. It had helped legal professionals in Tonga to acquire foundational knowledge of international law and was the main tool for training lawyers, particularly those who served as government officials, to better appreciate, apply and act in accordance with international law. Tonga had benefited immensely from the training and materials made available through the regional courses and the Audiovisual Library. The regional courses provided a platform for the country's legal professionals to communicate and establish good relations with participants from other countries, thereby paving the way for present and future cooperation. He appreciated the range of topics covered by the regional courses; however, as a representative of a small island developing State, he would welcome the inclusion of the topic "international law and sustainable development" in future courses.

58. His delegation was pleased to see the proposed allocation of resources for the Programme in the regular budget for the biennium 2018-2019 and welcomed the voluntary contributions made by various countries to allow the good work of the Office of Legal Affairs to continue. He was grateful for the ongoing capacity-building partnership between his country and Italy, which had enabled three young technical experts in the fields of law, economics and environmental affairs to spend a year as advisers in the Permanent Mission of Tonga in New York in order to develop their skills in international law and diplomacy through academic training and practical experience at the United Nations. His delegation also wished to acknowledge the contribution of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature to that initiative. It looked forward to confirmation of the allocation of adequate budgetary resources to the Programme of Assistance in order to ensure that the United Nations could continue

to offer support to developing countries in the study and dissemination of international law, which was essential to the achievement of all that the Organization stood for.

59. **Ms. Pucarinho** (Portugal) said that for 52 years the Programme of Assistance had played a key role in the teaching, study, dissemination and wider appreciation of international law as a well-established means of strengthening international peace and security and promoting friendly relations and cooperation among States. That role was as crucial now as it had been in 1965. In the current globalized era, where there was a greater need than ever for knowledge of international law, the increasing demand for training in the field was a good sign. Her delegation commended the International Law Fellowship Programme for providing comprehensive high-quality instruction by leading scholars and practitioners on a broad range of core subjects of international law. It also commended the good work of the Office of Legal Affairs in conducting research, collecting legal materials, facilitating electronic research and organizing the regional courses in international law.

60. The Audiovisual Library provided quality online training globally at relatively low cost and was an important tool for the study and dissemination of international law. Her delegation was aware that users in some developing countries had limited Internet access and therefore welcomed the Secretariat's efforts to find alternative means of making the Library's resources available. It also welcomed the pilot project aimed at enabling the Codification Division to resume desktop publishing. There was still work to be done, however, to strengthen the Programme of Assistance and ensure that it met the needs of beneficiaries, including with respect to language. As a member of the Advisory Committee, Portugal reaffirmed its commitment to continue working towards a more just and peaceful world through the promotion and dissemination of international law.

61. **Mr. Korneliou** (Cyprus), paying tribute to Ms. Virginia Morris for her longstanding service to the Programme of Assistance, said that his delegation had been a strong proponent of the Programme since its inception and believed that it continued to contribute effectively to the rule of law through training in international law and dissemination of legal knowledge and materials, thus advancing the work of the United Nations. Regular budget support had been integral to the continuation of the regional courses and to the maintenance and expansion of the Audiovisual Library, which offered a wealth of information at no cost and in several languages. It was an important resource for the legal community and for students and historians.

62. His delegation welcomed the efforts of the Codification Division to identify regular venues for the regional courses, which could enhance cost-efficiency, and to resume desktop publishing activities. It noted that the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship on the Law of the Sea continued to contribute to the wider appreciation and application of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and to the work of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea. It encouraged the Codification Division to continue its efforts to secure voluntary contributions to supplement program budget resources for the continuation of all Programme activities.

63. **Ms. Pierce** (United States of America) said that the Programme of Assistance continued to make an indispensable contribution to the education of students and practitioners of international law, including some members of the Sixth Committee, and merited ongoing strong support. As a member of the Advisory Committee, her delegation had been impressed by the number of applicants for the International Law Fellowship Programme and the regional courses and was grateful to the Programme of Assistance for providing as many scholarships as possible within existing resources. It also wished to thank the countries and organizations that had made in-kind and financial contributions to make the courses a reality. Her delegation also appreciated the Programme's efforts to reach practitioners and students of international law who were not able to participate in the courses, in particular through Audiovisual Library. It noted the work done to translate the lectures available through the Library and to promote broader geographical and linguistic representation among lecturers. It acknowledged the efforts to make the lectures available via podcast, which should contribute greatly to increased access in developing countries.

64. The Programme of Assistance was an important tool for strengthening the rule of law. By fostering a firm understanding of international law, it was enabling new generations of lawyers, judges and diplomats to gain a deeper appreciation of the complex instruments that governed many aspects of an interconnected world. Her delegation appreciated the creative ways in which the Codification Division had managed to maintain important programmes despite limited resources and encouraged it to continue its commendable efforts to secure voluntary contributions to supplement programme budget resources. There was no question that the Programme's activities were valuable and worthy of support.

65. **Ms. Hnyinn** (Myanmar) said that the Programme of Assistance had contributed to better knowledge of

international law as a means of strengthening international peace and security and promoting friendly relations and cooperation among States. A wider appreciation of international law was important for strengthening the rule of law at the national and international levels and for preventing conflicts. Continued investment in the Programme was therefore essential. At the previous session, her delegation had joined others in calling for the Programme of Assistance to be funded under the regular budget. It remained of the view that voluntary contributions alone were not a sustainable source of funding for the Programme and welcome the allocation of regular budget funding for the 2018–2019 biennium.

66. The courses and other training activities provided under the Programme of Assistance were laying a foundation of legal knowledge and promoting a wider awareness of international law among young people, which would help to strengthen the rule of law. As the representative of a country undergoing a democratic transition and a young democracy that placed heavy emphasis on the rule of law to promote peace, stability, democracy and the economic development of its people, she hoped that nationals of Myanmar would be considered as priority recipients of training under the Programme of Assistance in coming years.

67. Her delegation welcomed the successful convening of the International Law Fellowship Programme and the regional courses in 2017 and thanked the respective host countries and the countries that had made voluntary contributions to help make the courses possible. The interactive nature of the regional courses made them useful platforms for sharing ideas and experiences and for promoting greater understanding and cooperation on legal matters. The Audiovisual Library was an essential tool that enabled lawyers all over the world to access low-cost, high-quality legal training via the Internet. It was useful not just for lawyers but also for diplomats and other officials seeking to gain a greater understanding of international law. Her delegation welcomed the publication of the *International Law Handbook*, which it noted was available free of charge on the Audiovisual Library website, and commended the efforts of the Codification Division to distribute the *Handbook* and other legal materials to academic institutions and government training centres in developing countries.

68. Lastly, she noted that, with the support of the United Nations and in cooperation with several other countries, the Government of Myanmar had organized seminars and workshops for legal officials at the national level. In April 2017, in collaboration with the Government of Singapore, it had conducted a workshop

on the negotiation of international treaties. Other workshops relating to international law had also been held.

69. **Mr. Atlassi** (Morocco), welcoming the holding of the regional course for Africa in Addis Ababa in 2017, said that the regional courses were of utmost importance for promoting greater understanding and dissemination of international law and as an effective tool for promoting the rule of law, strengthening international peace and security, fostering friendly relations and building capacity, especially in developing countries. In order to ensure that the regional courses could continue to be held, his delegation called for continued funding for the Programme of Assistance under the regular budget. It thanked the countries that had made voluntary contributions for the regional courses. His delegation also applauded the activities of the Audiovisual Library, which enabled diplomats, students and researchers to access legal instruments and other materials via the Internet. It encouraged the Codification Division and the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea to continue their efforts to strengthen the Programme of Assistance in their respective areas of focus. His delegation wished to pay tribute to Ms. Virginia Morris for her exemplary devotion to the Programme. It continued to support the Programme and stood ready to contribute to its success, including within the framework of triangular cooperation.

70. **Ms. Fierro Obregón** (Mexico) said that her Government recognized the great value of the Programme of Assistance and had made a voluntary contribution to support it. Nevertheless, it believed that continued regular budget funding for the Programme was crucial. She was pleased to report that her country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs had hosted an international law workshop, the twenty-fourth such workshop to be held. Through those annual workshops, her Government aimed to promote a better understanding of international law, which was essential to strengthening international peace and security and promoting friendly relations and cooperation among States. Her delegation commended the work of the Office of Legal Affairs in ensuring the continuity of the Programme of Assistance and welcomed the holding of the 2017 regional course for Latin America and the Caribbean in Chile.

71. **Mr. Hitti** (Lebanon) said that the Programme of Assistance had benefited a host of jurists, diplomats, students and practitioners, especially in developing countries. The large number of applications submitted for the regional courses in 2017 attested to the quality of the Programme. His delegation paid tribute to the Codification Division for its work in implementing the Programme and its collaboration with the Advisory

Committee, of which Lebanon was a member. It supported the proposals put forward in the Secretary-General's report (A/72/517) for regular budget funding for the International Law Fellowship Programme, the regional courses and the Audiovisual Library in 2018-2019. It welcomed the podcast initiative intended to enhance access to the instructional materials in the Audiovisual Library for users in developing countries where access to the Internet was limited. His delegation also welcomed the publication of the English edition of the *International Law Handbook* and looked forward to the finalization of the French edition. It hoped that the *Handbook* would also be translated into other languages. Voluntary contributions and collaboration with partners, especially universities, would be needed for that purpose and to support Programme activities in general.

72. **Mr. Ahmed** (Iraq) said that his delegation commended the activities organized by the Codification Division, which had helped foster respect for international law and the rule of law at the national level. Regional courses, in which Iraqi jurists were active participants, provided an opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences and helped to encourage cooperation in legal matters. His delegation was grateful to Member States for their contributions in that regard.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.