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Chair: Mr. Milano (Vice-Chair) (Italy)

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In the absence of Mr. Chindawongse (Thailand), Mr. Milano (Italy), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

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

Agenda item 78: United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law (A/78/514)

1. **Mr. Agyeman** (Ghana), speaking as Chair of the Advisory Committee on the United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law, said that, during its fifty-eighth session, held on 3 October 2023, the Advisory Committee had reviewed the activities of the Programme during the reporting period, as outlined in the report of the Secretary-General (A/78/514), and had noted the activities proposed for 2024, including the resulting administrative and financial implications.

2. The Advisory Committee had taken note of the report on the United Nations regional courses in international law for Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean and on the International Law Fellowship Programme. It was particularly grateful to the host countries of the training programmes. The in-person training format continued to play an important role in facilitating contact among experts and professionals, which, in turn, assisted in the establishment and maintenance of friendly relations among States. At the same time, the Advisory Committee had encouraged the Secretariat to reinforce its programmes by drawing on the lessons learned during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, bearing in mind the increasing prevalence of information and communications technology. It had also reiterated the importance of having a balanced representation of the different legal traditions in the training programmes and had called for improved gender balance among the faculty of the International Law Fellowship Programme and training programme participants.

3. Regarding the United Nations Audiovisual Library of International Law, 32 lectures had been recorded and, on the basis of the Advisory Committee's previous recommendations, the Secretariat had taken steps to improve the gender balance and linguistic diversity of the lecturers. The Advisory Committee had suggested that the services offered by the Library be expanded and that online and social media platforms be leveraged in order to broaden dissemination of the Library's resources on international law. Support had also been expressed for the continuous enhancement of the Library's website to make it more user-friendly.

4. The Advisory Committee had noted the publication of the second edition of the *United Nations Legislative Series*, vol. 25; *United Nations Legislative Series*, vol. 26; *The Work of the International Law Commission*, 10th ed., vols. I and II; and the *Summaries of Judgments, Advisory Opinions and Orders of the International Court of Justice (2018–2022)*. It had also noted that the recipient of the 2020 Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship on the Law of the Sea, which had been postponed owing to the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, had now undertaken her fellowship.

5. The Advisory Committee had made recommendations on continuing cooperation with regional international law institutions in relation to the activities of the Programme of Assistance. It had expressed satisfaction with the funding of the activities of the Programme from the regular budget of the Organization, while also highlighting the importance of additional voluntary contributions for the purpose of expanding and enhancing those activities. In that regard, he wished to reiterate the appreciation of the Advisory Committee for the contributions received from Austria, China, Czechia, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Panama, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Singapore, Saudi Arabia and Slovakia. The commitment of the Office of Legal Affairs to further strengthening the Programme, including by creating synergies with other capacity-building programmes, had likewise been welcomed.

6. **Mr. de Serpa Soares** (Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, the United Nations Legal Counsel) said that, during the period when the Programme of Assistance had been seriously underfunded, he had thrown his weight behind the initiative to finance its activities from the regular budget and was committed to ensuring the full implementation of those activities. Notwithstanding the COVID-19-related public health restrictions, which had prevented in-person training programmes from being held, hundreds of applications from candidates had been received, thus demonstrating the continued interest in those programmes. Now that those restrictions had ended, in-person training had resumed in Addis Ababa, Bangkok, The Hague and Santiago; lectures and other legal materials had continued to be published on the website of the Audiovisual Library; and implementation of the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship on the Law of the Sea had restarted.

7. Like the Chair of the Advisory Committee, he wished to thank those Member States that had made voluntary contributions, which continued to play an important role in the expansion of the activities of the Programme of Assistance. In addition to the

contributions from the Member States already mentioned by the Chair of the Advisory Committee, much appreciated additional contributions had been received from Ireland and Spain since the end of the reporting period.

8. He recalled that, during the fifty-seventh session of the Advisory Committee, he had presented his vision and plans for enhancing the training efforts of the Office of Legal Affairs. His proposal to concentrate the oversight of all activities related to the promotion and dissemination of international law under his direct supervision had been approved in the programme budget for 2023. In that regard, he had appointed a Principal Legal Officer to coordinate capacity-building across the Office's various units, manage training efforts in a strategic and integrated way and improve the support provided to Member States, as well as serve as the Secretary of the Advisory Committee.

9. **Mr. Pallek** (Secretary of the Advisory Committee) said that, in 2023, with resources allocated from the regular budget, the Codification Division had been able to hold all four General Assembly-mandated training programmes, namely the International Law Fellowship Programme and the three United Nations regional courses in international law for Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean. Of the 100 participants who had attended those training programmes, more than 80 per cent, representing 68 different Member States, had benefited from fellowships covering the costs of attendance. Gender parity had been achieved among participants, while gender balance and geographical diversity had been maintained among lecturers.

10. The Audiovisual Library offered free, high-quality training to an unlimited number of persons around the world. It provided access to over 600 online lectures and had been consulted by almost 3 million users. Since September 2022, 32 new lectures had been recorded, with attention being paid to gender balance and linguistic and geographical diversity among lecturers. Off-site recordings had also been carried out at the Peace Palace in The Hague, with 20 lectures being recorded in Chinese, English, French and Spanish.

11. In addition to publishing the works mentioned by the Chair of the Advisory Committee, the Codification Division had advanced its work on preparations for the publication of the *United Nations Juridical Yearbook* (2017 and 2018) and the *Reports of International Arbitral Awards*, vol. XXXV.

12. The Office of Legal Affairs was grateful to the General Assembly for funding the Programme of Assistance from the regular budget; nonetheless,

voluntary contributions remained essential to enable it to reach its true potential.

13. **Ms. Hicuburundi** (Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea) said that, in its resolution [77/248](#), the General Assembly had expressed its appreciation for the important contribution made by the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship on the Law of the Sea to capacity-building in developing countries and the promotion of the law of the sea. As of October 2023, the Fellowship had been awarded to 16 women and 18 men who were now making significant contributions in their respective countries and regions. Many had returned to New York, where they were active in important forums and processes related to ocean affairs and the law of the sea. She recalled that, although the 2020 Fellowship had been awarded, the recipient had opted to defer her participation owing to COVID-19 restrictions, which had prevented most in-person training. In early 2023, the recipient had finally been able to take up her fellowship and had undertaken a three-month internship in the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea. She was now completing her academic studies under the fellowship. In 2023, the Division had also resumed holding its in-person capacity-building activities, including regional training workshops for developing countries on ocean governance and the law of the sea.

14. It was more important than ever for developing countries to build and maintain the capacity to participate actively in ocean-related processes, including the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and related instruments; efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 14 (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development); and the implementation of the commitments under the Paris Agreement, which stipulated the importance of ensuring the integrity of all ecosystems, including oceans. It was therefore critical that the necessary funding be made available so that the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship on the Law of the Sea could continue to be awarded. As of 31 July 2023, the certified net assets of the relevant trust fund, minus programme support costs, had been approximately \$120,000, while the estimated costs of one fellowship could be as high as \$75,000. She recalled that the Fellowship had not been awarded for several years between 2007 and 2016, owing to a lack of funding, and that in 2017 a partial award had been made, as there had not been enough funding for the standard award. She wished to thank those Member States that had made voluntary contributions to support the Fellowship and urged States

and other stakeholders to continue to make such contributions in support of future fellows, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 77/248.

15. **Mr. Heidari** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, said that, as a means of promoting friendly relations and cooperation among States, the Programme of Assistance was one of the Organization's most important tools. The activities of the Programme of Assistance contributed greatly to enhancing knowledge of international law, promoting respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and strengthening the rule of law at the national and international levels.

16. While the Non-Aligned Movement attached particular importance to capacity-building, especially in developing countries, it also encouraged the Codification Division to continue to provide as much free, high-quality training as possible to a larger range of instructors around the world. Every effort should also be made to ensure that the courses and fellowships of the Programme of Assistance benefited future decision-makers. Moreover, while virtual learning should never replace in-person training, the Division should develop contingency plans for the delivery of virtual regional courses in case of future need.

17. Regarding the Audiovisual Library, the Non-Aligned Movement welcomed the initiative to conduct off-site recording sessions. Future recordings might include presentations made to the Sixth Committee by the Special Rapporteurs of the International Law Commission. It was also important to increase the geographical diversity of lecturers, both in Library resources and at the regional courses, provide lectures in a wider variety of languages and ensure that the world's principal legal systems were represented. With regard to the regional courses, while course curricula should address regional needs, the general topic of synergies between international law and international relations should be included.

18. The Non-Alignment Movement wished to highlight the role of the United Nations information centres, which contributed to the dissemination of international law by providing access to United Nations online resources in multiple languages. The Non-Aligned Movement reaffirmed its commitment to the Programme of Assistance and urged all Member States to ensure that its activities were well funded through the regular budget and voluntary contributions.

19. **Ms. Carral Castelo** (Cuba), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that, through the dissemination of international law and the provision of training, in particular in developing countries, the

Programme of Assistance continued to be an effective tool for strengthening international peace and security and fostering friendly relations and cooperation among States. The Group was pleased that the necessary budgetary resources had been allocated to the Programme and was grateful to those Member States that had made financial or in-kind contributions. It wished to reiterate the importance of ensuring the continued funding of the Programme's activities, which contributed to promoting the increased participation of developing countries at the multilateral level.

20. The Group commended the efforts of the Codification Division to ensure that the United Nations regional courses in international law for Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean could once again be held in person. It also welcomed the regional online workshops on the peaceful settlement of international disputes that had been held during the reporting period and was pleased that the International Law Fellowship Programme had been conducted in The Hague in August 2023.

21. Regarding the Audiovisual Library, the importance of providing free, high-quality online training to an unlimited number of individuals could not be overstated. The Group supported the off-site recording sessions conducted by the Division in order to promote greater geographical and linguistic representation among lecturers, and commended its efforts to facilitate access to lectures by users with limited access to high-speed Internet through the Library podcast. The Group likewise applauded the Office of Legal Affairs for its efforts to promote knowledge of international law in an inclusive manner and encouraged it to continue its outreach activities so as to ensure that Member States knew how to gain access to and use the available resources.

22. **Mr. Ikondere** (Uganda), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the Programme of Assistance had proven to be an indispensable tool for strengthening the rule of law at the international level by providing capacity-building that facilitated the equal participation of Member States in international affairs. In addition, by increasing knowledge of international law, it helped to ensure international peace and security and promote friendly relations and cooperation among States. The Group noted with appreciation the activities recently undertaken by the Programme, which were of paramount importance for Africa and had elicited high interest among African lawyers, government officials and experts.

23. The Group welcomed the resumption of in-person learning, in particular the regional course in

international law for Africa and the International Law Fellowship Programme, and commended in particular the fact that 11 of the 21 participants were women. It looked forward to the full resumption of all in-person activities. The Group also welcomed the provision of continuing education for alumni and encouraged the Secretariat to provide additional support for the International Law Seminar for African Universities.

24. The Group wished to reiterate the importance of securing predictable funding for the Programme of Assistance. It encouraged all Member States to support the provision of resources from the regular budget and thanked those that had continued to make voluntary and in-kind contributions. The Secretariat should continue to publicize the Programme of Assistance and periodically invite stakeholders to make voluntary contributions, with a view to ensuring funding predictability and expanding the activities of that Programme.

25. **Ms. Mark** (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), said that, since the early days of their independence, the Latin American and Caribbean States had proclaimed international law as the cornerstone of international relations and had contributed to its progressive development, with a view to strengthening international peace and security and promoting friendly relations and cooperation among States. CELAC was of the view that knowledge and understanding of the substantive rules of international law were a prerequisite for their observance and thus considered it important to strengthen the teaching, study and dissemination of international law. The fellowships and courses offered through the Programme of Assistance had a multiplier effect within the community of students and professionals and offered invaluable benefits for diplomats and professionals alike through the lessons provided by prominent experts in topics of international law.

26. CELAC considered the regional courses, in particular, to be highly effective platforms for the teaching and dissemination of international law. The Community was pleased that, in 2023, the regional course in international law for Latin America and the Caribbean had been held in person. It called for the necessary financial resources to be allocated from the regular budget to finance the activities of the Programme of Assistance, including to enable it to conduct the three regional courses.

27. CELAC wished to commend the Office of Legal Affairs for maintaining 26 user-friendly websites on international law, which contained valuable resources

for researchers. The Lecture Series, Historic Archives and Research Library of the Audiovisual Library provided a useful toolbox for the achievement of the Programme's goals and had the potential to reach millions of people worldwide. The publication by the Office 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.

28. Lastly, as the working languages of the International Court of Justice were only English and French, the publication of those summaries in all the official languages of the United Nations was of particular value, since it was often the only way for teachers, researchers and students in the countries of the Community to familiarize themselves with the Court's jurisprudence. No effort should thus be spared in updating the collection and ensuring its widest possible dissemination.

29. **Ms. Popan** (Representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova and Türkiye, and, in addition, Andorra, Georgia, Monaco and San Marino, said that the Programme of Assistance provided important opportunities and tools for strengthening understanding of and commitment to the multilateral rules-based order and international law.

30. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Programme of Assistance had swiftly adapted to the digital transition. The European Union was nevertheless pleased to note the resumption of in-person participation, in particular for the United Nations regional courses in international law and the International Law Fellowship Programme; such in-person training promoted in-depth discussions and cooperation among participants. To further increase the practical value of the regional courses, it would be useful to incorporate topics on contemporary issues of international law.

31. The European Union stressed the importance of ensuring linguistic and geographical diversity among participants and lecturers and welcomed the improved gender balance among those applying for the regional courses in international law and the International Law Fellowship Programme. Women and individuals from all backgrounds should be encouraged to apply in order to strengthen their ability to fully and equally participate in all levels of society. In that regard, social media

campaigns could be leveraged to raise awareness of the regional courses, thereby increasing application rates and the diversity of applicants.

32. Regarding the Audiovisual Library, the European Union welcomed the Mini-Series, which enabled greater access to information on core topics of international law, including among users with basic or little knowledge of the subject. The website could nevertheless be modernized, online material made more user-friendly and accessibility tools implemented to increase the participation of persons with disabilities.

33. Given the potential of the Programme of Assistance to enhance understanding of international law and provide current and future generations with the tools to improve justice, equality and peace worldwide, the European Union would continue to support its activities. The Union welcomed the financing of the Programme from the regular budget and also commended those States that had provided voluntary contributions to further strengthen its efforts.

34. **Mr. Seah** (Singapore), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that, while remote learning had been an appropriate short-term solution for capacity-building during the COVID-19 pandemic, it must not become a substitute for in-person training. ASEAN therefore greatly welcomed the resumption of the in-person format, in particular for the United Nations regional courses in international law for Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean and the International Law Fellowship Programme, since it provided the opportunity for participants to deepen their knowledge of international law and promoted in-depth discussions and friendly relations and cooperation among them.

35. ASEAN took note of the work carried out by the Codification Division, in particular its efforts to support alumni networks, including by providing online interactive sessions on lectures of the Audiovisual Library and a shared online repository of international law materials and publications. It was convinced that the repository would serve as a helpful tool for training programme participants. The Audiovisual Library had been an important resource for developing countries, including ASEAN, which was strongly in favour of its continued development.

36. ASEAN strongly supported the funding of the activities of the Programme of Assistance from the regular budget. It encouraged Member States to make voluntary contributions, with a view to further expanding and enhancing those activities, commended those Member States that had done so and reiterated its

continued commitment to and support for the Programme of Assistance.

37. **Mr. Laursen** (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden), said that rules-based international cooperation was crucial in order to tackle such problems as global warming, biodiversity loss, poverty and conflicts. In 2023, such cooperation had yielded positive results, most notably with the adoption of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction and the Ljubljana-The Hague Convention on International Cooperation in the Investigation and Prosecution of the Crime of Genocide, Crimes Against Humanity, War Crimes and Other International Crimes. It was now time to redouble efforts to promote respect for international law and the rules-based international order, which depended largely on the professionalism and commitment of persons acting on behalf of States.

38. Through the Programme of Assistance, generations of government lawyers, judges and diplomats worldwide had been able to gain a deeper understanding of international law, thus benefiting the international community as a whole. Since 1965, the Programme had made a significant contribution to achieving the goals of the United Nations by providing scholars and practitioners with access to high-quality international law training and other resources.

39. The Nordic countries commended the active and continued engagement of the Codification Division in pursuing its mandate regarding the Programme of Assistance. They commended the continuous development of the Audiovisual Library, an invaluable resource that provided accessible and high-quality training, free of charge, to individuals and institutions worldwide, and welcomed the efforts of the Division to facilitate access to the Library by persons and organizations in areas with limited Internet connection. The Library's resources had been of particular relevance during the COVID-19 pandemic, which had necessitated a rapid transformation to online education. The Nordic countries commended those Member States that had made voluntary contributions to the Programme and encouraged all States to consider doing so in order to sustain its continued operations and development.

40. **Mr. Seah** (Singapore) said that his country was a strong supporter of the Programme of Assistance, which contributed to greater awareness of and respect for international law. His delegation welcomed the fact that in-person training had resumed, since it offered advantages in terms of enabling in-depth discussions

and interaction among participants. At the same time, online training programmes and resources continued to play a vital role. The Audiovisual Library was an invaluable resource, offering, free of charge, an archive of historical and contemporary material on international law. His delegation therefore commended efforts to revamp the Library's website. It also commended the endeavours of the Codification Division to conduct an off-site recording mission at the Peace Palace in The Hague. Additional improvements might be made through the remote recording of videoconferences, which could reap dividends by expanding the subjects covered by the Lecture Series, including the Mini-Series, and increasing linguistic and geographical diversity among lecturers. The Division might also consider leveraging social media to reach wider audiences and using podcasts to demystify international law and increase public interest in its role.

41. Singapore continued to contribute to the teaching, study, dissemination and wider appreciation of international law through its capacity-building initiatives. In 2023, for example, the Singapore Cooperation Programme had offered courses on the law of the sea and intellectual property, enabling 60 officials to develop expertise in those areas, and the National University of Singapore had held the fifth iteration of the ASEAN Law Academy Advanced Programme. Singapore had recently hosted the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law Academy, which had included capacity-building workshops for government officials on the United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements Resulting from Mediation. His delegation was grateful for the opportunity to have served as a member of the Advisory Committee for the four-year period ending on 31 December 2023.

42. **Ms. Patton** (United States of America) said that the work of the Codification Division in implementing the Programme of Assistance was foundational for promoting the understanding of international law. Among the Programme's activities, the United Nations regional courses in international law for Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean were effective, timely and practical, and the large number of applicants was proof of the great demand for such high-quality instruction. In addition, the growing catalogue of high-quality training materials provided free of charge by the Audiovisual Library to almost 3 million people was testament to the Programme's reach.

43. As a member of the Advisory Committee, the United States commended those Member States that had made generous financial and in-kind contributions in support of the Programme's activities, thereby

contributing to efforts to increase global appreciation of international law and promote international peace and security.

44. **Ms. Matos** (Portugal) said that her delegation welcomed the recommendations regarding the implementation of the Programme of Assistance, as contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/78/514), and was pleased to note that the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Programme had been mitigated. While the Programme was widely recognized as a contributor to the promotion of better knowledge of international law, and the training and resources it provided were in ever-increasing demand, it was crucial for States to continue their efforts to raise awareness of its existence, initiatives and resources in universities and among government officials.

45. Portugal commended the Office of Legal Affairs for its outstanding work concerning the dissemination of international law and its efforts to ensure administrative and financial efficiency, including the maintenance and expansion of the Audiovisual Library at relatively low cost. As the COVID-19 pandemic had shown, distance learning tools had a positive impact on individuals, communities and nations and helped to bridge inequality gaps. It was therefore important to continue to make good use of such tools, in particular the Library, which promoted digital, linguistic and geographical inclusion.

46. Her delegation was pleased that the General Assembly had once again included funding for the Programme in the regular budget; however, that funding would not cover all the costs associated with the Programme. While voluntary contributions offered added support, it would be useful to explore new and creative funding mechanisms, such as the establishment of partnerships with non-governmental organizations, universities, research institutes and law firms. As a member of the Advisory Committee, Portugal would continue to promote the dissemination of international law as a means of building the fair, free and peaceful society envisaged in the Charter of the United Nations.

47. **Mr. Diome** (Senegal) said that his delegation was pleased that it had been possible to hold the United Nations regional courses in international law for Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean. In particular, it noted the success of the regional course for Africa, which had been enriched by interactions with the Office of the Legal Counsel of the African Union. By bringing together prominent experts and legal practitioners, the regional courses contributed greatly to capacity-building, in a spirit of sharing that drew on, and was driven by, the diversity of legal traditions and languages. In that connection, his delegation also

appreciated the fact that the International Law Fellowship Programme, held in The Hague in August 2023, had been conducted in French and that an online interactive session had been organized for alumni.

48. As international law became increasingly complex, it was more important than ever to make every effort to promote and disseminate international law on every continent, in every format and in all of the official languages of the United Nations. His delegation was pleased to note the ongoing development of the Audiovisual Library, which contributed significantly to ensuring accessibility and knowledge-sharing. In cooperation with the Office of Legal Affairs and France, Senegal had hosted a subregional workshop on international law for French-speaking countries in West Africa. Participants had been able to engage in discussions with representatives from various units of the Office on topics including the law of the sea, treaty law and practice and the privileges and immunities of United Nations officials.

49. **Mr. Delgado** (Mexico) said that the right to education was critical to the comprehensive development of persons, the sustainable development of States and the attainment of peace and well-being. The dissemination and understanding of international law as a mechanism for the peaceful settlement of disputes was more important than ever. As a member of the Advisory Committee, Mexico was a proponent of the teaching of international law as an essential tool in achieving peace, fostering sustainable development and protecting human rights. At the national level, Mexico organized regular activities to disseminate international law, including seminars, workshops and moot court competitions around the country.

50. The regional courses in international law and the International Law Fellowship Programme were important resources, providing students, officials and legal practitioners throughout the world with opportunities and technical knowledge in order to foster the development of international law. His delegation welcomed in particular the regional course in international law for Latin America and the Caribbean held in Santiago in May 2023. In line with its feminist foreign policy, Mexico had been represented by women in all courses and fellowships of the Programme of Assistance in 2023. His delegation emphasized the important work of the Audiovisual Library and highlighted the potential of the Library's podcast to spur interest in international law, in particular among younger generations. It welcomed the publication of the *United Nations Legislative Series*, vols. 25 and 26, which raised the profile of the International Law

Commission and promoted the codification and progressive development of international law.

51. His delegation emphasized the need to continue efforts to achieve gender parity and more balanced geographical representation in programmes and content, with an emphasis on multilingualism. In the search for solutions, a focus on diversity helped to build bridges between different regions and legal systems.

52. **Ms. Botero Prieto** (Colombia) said that her delegation welcomed the Secretariat's efforts to restore the normal functioning of the activities of the Programme of Assistance, including the resumption of in-person training through the United Nations regional courses in international law and the International Law Fellowship Programme. It commended the efforts of the Codification Division to provide continuing education for alumni and to update the websites of the Audiovisual Library and of the Programme of Assistance.

53. Her delegation encouraged the Codification Division to continue its work to improve gender balance and ensure the representation of diverse legal traditions and academic and professional expertise among participants and lecturers. It was vital to include new voices in international law in order to combat stereotypes and better reflect the knowledge of a more heterogeneous base of experts and educators.

54. In the light of the importance accorded by Colombia to the Programme of Assistance, and with the objective of contributing more directly to its work, her delegation wished to be considered for one of the five vacant seats in the Advisory Committee for Latin American and Caribbean States. Given recent global events, the teaching, study, dissemination and wider appreciation of international law was increasingly important. The Programme of Assistance made an essential contribution by promoting the rule of law at the national and international levels; Colombia would therefore support any initiative aimed at strengthening the Programme.

55. **Mr. Nouh** (Egypt) said that the activities of the Programme of Assistance significantly contributed to efforts to uphold international law. The Office of Legal Affairs was therefore to be commended for its efforts to implement those activities, including by running training courses and fellowship programmes and disseminating materials and publications on international law. The regional course in international law for Africa had had a positive impact on African countries, enabling wider participation in capacity-building and facilitating the establishment of the necessary legal frameworks. There was, however, a need to review and modernize the content of such courses to

ensure that they remained aligned with developments on the international stage. His delegation appreciated the various initiatives of the Programme of Assistance, which sought to provide information relating to various fields of international law.

56. **Ms. Arumpac-Marte** (Philippines) said that her delegation appreciated the continued efficient implementation of the Programme of Assistance by the Codification Division. Philippine nationals had participated in the Programme's various activities, including the United Nations regional course in international law for Asia-Pacific, which had contributed to increased capacity-building and the establishment of vibrant national and regional international law networks. The Philippines had also taken part in the International Law Fellowship Programme and her delegation commended the efforts of partners, including The Hague Academy of International Law, which had provided critical support, benefiting many participants, including those from developing States. The Philippines was one of the delegations sponsoring a forthcoming side event being organized by the Academy at United Nations Headquarters, on the topic "Peaceful dispute settlement: the indispensable courts and courses of the Peace Palace".

57. Her delegation noted with appreciation the increasing variety of lectures and related legal materials on international law offered in the Audiovisual Library. It hoped that the full-time positions for which resources were provided in the programme budget for 2024 would contribute to the Library's further development, dissemination and maintenance. It also supported efforts to achieve gender balance and enhance diversity in the legal traditions represented by the academic and professional experts participating in lectures. To promote broader linguistic diversity, off-site recording missions, such as the one that had been conducted in The Hague, could be extended to other regions. Such missions could be organized to coincide with international law meetings, such as those of the Asian Society of International Law.

58. The Philippines applauded the Division for its publishing activities. It valued the dissemination of legal publications and information online, while noting that access to hard copies remained useful to developing States. In recognition of the importance of the Programme of Assistance and its contribution to promoting and upholding the rule of law at the national and international levels, the Philippines was committed to continuing to make contributions, including to the voluntary trust funds.

59. **Ms. Ma Yanbo** (China) said that the Programme of Assistance played an important role in supporting the

teaching, study and application of international law; providing capacity-building, in particular in developing countries; and contributing to the codification of international law. China welcomed the positive progress made in implementing the Programme's activities, in particular the resumption of in-person training. China attached great importance to the teaching and study of international law and had consistently supported the Programme and its activities, including through the provision of funding. In 2023, her Government would contribute \$27,000 to the Programme.

60. China provided capacity-building support to countries in Asia and Africa, including through collaborative projects and exchange and research programmes. It had recently held, for example, a training session that had been attended by participants from 40 Asian and African countries, as well as representatives of the African Union and ASEAN. China was committed to working with others in support of the Programme, contributing to the teaching, study and dissemination of international law and building the capacities of developing countries in the field of international law.

61. **Ms. Motsepe** (South Africa) said that her country recognized the importance of the activities of the Programme of Assistance in fostering a better understanding of international law. The United Nations regional courses in international law were of immense benefit to State officials of both developing and developed countries. Her delegation commended the Codification Division for its efforts to implement cost-saving measures with regard to the International Law Fellowship Programme and the regional courses in order to increase the number of fellowships available.

62. South Africa appreciated the Audiovisual Library, which was an invaluable tool for the study, research and dissemination of international law, and would like to see its archives expanded. It commended the Division on the publication of its *International Law Handbook*, which was an essential resource for international law education and was used by academic institutions worldwide, especially in developing countries. South Africa would continue to support the Programme, urged other Member States to make voluntary contributions and expressed its appreciation to those that had already contributed to the Programme's success.

63. **Mr. Mohammed** (Sudan) said that his delegation attached great importance to the Programme of Assistance and commended the Codification Division for its efforts to implement the Programme's activities, in particular the International Law Fellowship Programme and the United Nations regional courses in

international law. The Programme of Assistance had clearly helped to raise awareness of the principles and purposes of international law among students, lawyers and diplomats. It had also helped Member States to harmonize their national laws with the principles and provisions of international law. The Audiovisual Library played an important role in providing study materials that benefited institutions and students.

64. His delegation was grateful to the Division and its partners, including regional organizations, for holding the regional courses in international law. It commended, in particular, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union for successfully convening the regional course for Africa, and was encouraged by the resumed implementation of those activities that had been interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. His delegation hoped that greater financial resources would be allocated to the Programme of Assistance to enable regional courses to continue to be held. The interactive nature of such courses enabled participants to exchange experiences, thereby strengthening regional cooperation.

65. The Sudan continued to make contributions in support of the Programme and called upon all Member States to ensure that the Programme had the necessary resources to fulfil its mandate. It also called for more support to be provided to the African Institute of International Law so that it could play a larger role in the dissemination of international law.

66. **Ms. Tran Thi Phuong Ha** (Viet Nam) said that international law was the cornerstone of peace and cooperation, ensuring stability, order and justice at the international level, providing a legal framework for dispute resolution and facilitating development. The dissemination of international law, including through the Programme of Assistance, was therefore essential not only to enhance States' capabilities but also to promote a greater understanding of contemporary issues of international law. Her delegation welcomed the resumption of in-person training, which played an instrumental role in advancing international law education, supporting legal experts, scholars and policymakers and fostering friendly relations and cooperation among participants. It appreciated the diligent work of the Codification Division to further expand the Audiovisual Library's repository of educational and research materials – which were of great value to legal scholars, students and other individuals seeking to deepen their knowledge of international law – and to disseminate them through various podcast channels.

67. Her delegation wished to express its appreciation for the role played by the Permanent Court of Arbitration and its various country offices, which offered valuable training on dispute resolution to government experts. Through its specialized training programmes and resources, the Permanent Court of Arbitration had significantly strengthened the legal capacity of officials, diplomats and legal practitioners, thereby assisting States to navigate international disputes with greater efficiency and efficacy. Lastly, as a strong supporter of the Programme of Assistance, Viet Nam looked forward to its expansion and encouraged its continued development and effective implementation.

68. **Mr. Nyanid** (Cameroon) said that his delegation commended the efforts of the Codification Division to implement the activities of the Programme of Assistance. While the continued quality of the International Law Fellowship Programme was appreciated, the number of fellowships should be increased. The unjustifiable lack of representation of lecturers and professionals from Africa must be addressed, including with regard to the summer course of The Hague Academy of International Law and the United Nations regional courses in international law.

69. His delegation welcomed the resumption of the regional courses in international law and noted with satisfaction the increased number of participants attending the regional course for Africa, held in Addis Ababa, as well as the range of fellowships and stipends available to cover participation costs. Further efforts could be made in that regard, including by holding courses in other African countries; the Institute of International Relations of Cameroon, for example, could serve as a possible venue. The courses could also cover new topics, such as grey areas in international law and the application of international law with regard to outer space and artificial intelligence. It might therefore be useful to incorporate a think tank component into the Programme of Assistance to address emerging issues in international law.

70. The Audiovisual Library served as a significant, low-cost complement to traditional training. However, in the light of the digital divide, the unstable energy supply in certain regions and the invaluable nature of human interaction, such online training could only ever play a supporting role. The Division might wish to consider adopting a clinical approach to the teaching of international law, in which students, working in teams, handled actual cases under the direct supervision of faculty and professionals.

71. His delegation commended the establishment of alumni networks pursuant to General Assembly

resolution 73/201. With a well-structured approach, those networks could be further enriched and become a highly effective tool for beneficiaries and the United Nations alike. His delegation welcomed the establishment of an online interactive space for alumni and suggested that a collaborative digital area be created where members could publish information on their academic or professional backgrounds.

72. By helping aspiring jurists to achieve their dreams, the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship on the Law of the Sea also helped to build a well-informed legal community. Cameroon hoped to see many more such initiatives. It thanked those Member States that had already made voluntary contributions to the Programme of Assistance and urged other Member States, organizations, institutions and individuals to make monetary or in-kind contributions. At a time of resource shortages and cutbacks, his delegation welcomed the allocation of funding from the regular budget and called for such provisions to be further strengthened.

73. **Ms. Lito** (United Kingdom) said that her delegation commended the Codification Division for its efforts in conducting the activities of the Programme of Assistance over the past year. The Programme continued to play an important role in the delivery of training on international law and the dissemination of legal knowledge globally, facilitating the effective participation of countries in multilateral frameworks and forums. In so doing, it made an effective contribution to the rule of law and helped to promote friendly relations and strengthen international peace and security.

74. The United Kingdom would continue to provide voluntary contributions in support of the Programme, in particular the International Law Seminar, the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship on the Law of the Sea, the trust fund for the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, and the Judicial Fellowship Programme of the International Court of Justice. It encouraged other States also to continue their support.

75. **Mr. Ganou** (Burkina Faso) said that, since its establishment in 1965, the Programme of Assistance had greatly contributed to improving knowledge of international law as a means of strengthening international peace and security. It had helped to promote multilateralism by fostering friendly relations and cooperation among States and played a fundamental role in the capacity-building of developing countries in international law and the rule of law.

76. Over the years, the Programme had been enhanced, including by ensuring more diversity in terms of participants, lecturers, formats used and topics covered. In that connection, his delegation appreciated the ongoing expansion and innovation of the Audiovisual Library, which was an invaluable source of knowledge and learning for legal practitioners worldwide.

77. His delegation expressed its appreciation to those Member States, universities, foundations and organizations that had made financial contributions to the Programme, and to the States and institutions that had hosted the International Law Fellowship Programme and the regional courses in international law. It encouraged all Member States to make a greater commitment to financing the Programme so as to ensure its sustainability and expansion. Significant and predictable resources were needed to support efforts to increase the number and diversity of the Programme's beneficiaries and maintain multilingualism and innovation. To increase the Programme's effectiveness, specific technical assistance programmes and technical support missions could be organized for those countries most in need of them, with a view to building the capacity of the national legal services responsible for engagement with the international treaty framework.

78. **Mr. Khokar** (Pakistan) said that, for more than 50 years, the Programme of Assistance had been an invaluable resource, promoting knowledge of international law, benefiting innumerable legal experts and individuals, and producing countless alumni throughout the world. It was vital not only to recognize the Programme's success in achieving its objectives but also to invest in its future, since it played an essential role in the maintenance of international peace and security and, thus, in the achievement of the principles of the United Nations.

79. The services of the Audiovisual Library could be further improved and expanded through the allocation of additional resources, as a means of increasing awareness and knowledge of international law among a wider public. Training and seminars should be held regionally in order to ensure coverage of different legal systems, thereby fostering greater appreciation of the diversity of legal traditions and cultural perspectives and promoting inclusion and cooperation at the international level.

80. His delegation commended the Codification Division for its dedication in implementing the Programme. It called upon the United Nations to allocate additional funding to the Programme in order to enable a broader range of users to gain access to it and

ensure more equitable geographical representation. Making such an investment would contribute to the maintenance of the international rules-based order and the promotion of peace, justice and human rights worldwide.

81. **Ms. Sresthaputr** (Thailand) said that the importance of the Programme of Assistance, in particular for developing countries, could not be overstated. The Programme's activities, including fellowships, courses and online resources on international law, had had an influence on fellows, students and the wider public alike. The Programme had shed light on the rules and principles governing the international law system, helped to strengthen the rule of law at the national and international levels, fostered friendly relations and contributed to efforts for the maintenance of international peace and security.

82. Thailand reaffirmed its full support for the Programme. In particular, it appreciated the United Nations regional courses in international law for Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean, which provided an invaluable opportunity for professionals from developing countries to learn, network and share best practices on international law. Thailand was proud of its contribution to the hosting of the regional course in international law for Asia-Pacific and was pleased to continue to partner with the Office of Legal Affairs in that regard.

83. Her delegation commended the work carried out by the Codification Division to improve the online resources, including podcasts, of the Audiovisual Library, thereby reaching audiences far and wide and enabling the Programme to fulfil its objective of disseminating information on and strengthening wider appreciation of international law. In that connection, Thailand strongly encouraged the use of technology and the Internet to disseminate knowledge of international law. While the benefits of in-person training were undeniable, online training and remote capacity-building facilitated inclusive access to knowledge, thus ensuring that no one was left behind.

84. As an observer to the Advisory Committee, Thailand considered that, in view of the increased interest shown by Member States in contributing to the Programme, the Advisory Committee could benefit from the active participation of an enlarged membership.

85. **Ms. González López** (El Salvador) said that her delegation was grateful to the Codification Division for its efforts in implementing the activities of the Programme of Assistance, including preparing and issuing publications and developing and updating the content of the Audiovisual Library. Creating and

building human, scientific, technological and other capacities, including in the field of international law, had a multiplying effect and was essential for the sustainable development of countries and regions. For that reason, her delegation wished to express its appreciation to those Member States that had provided funding to strengthen the United Nations regional courses in international law, in particular for Latin America and the Caribbean, from which Salvadoran government officials had benefited.

86. Her delegation called for the continued strengthening of the Division's resources to ensure that it could employ lecturers who specialized in different areas of international law and represented every region. Her delegation supported efforts to ensure a gender balance and equitable geographical representation among participants.

87. The International Law Fellowship Programme and the Audiovisual Library had contributed to the training of government officials from different legal systems and regions. Her delegation welcomed the increase in the number of topics of contemporary international law covered in the Library, as well as the attention given to multilingualism. It reaffirmed its commitment to the Programme of Assistance and its interest in becoming a member of the Advisory Committee.

88. **Ms. Essaias** (Eritrea) said that, for more than 50 years, the Programme of Assistance had been an essential activity of the United Nations for furthering knowledge of international law, not only in order to strengthen international peace and security but also to promote friendly relations and cooperation among States. Eritrea attached great importance to the role of the Programme in promoting international law, in particular among mid-level government officials, lawyers and students in developing countries. In addition to the regional courses held in Ethiopia, from which Eritrea had benefited, her delegation was pleased that the Secretariat had recently held courses in Eritrea on contemporary issues of international law, such as the law of the sea. The Mini-Series of lectures in the Audiovisual Library were another important source of information on international law, in particular for those delegations whose representatives had little or no legal professional background.

89. International law was continuously developing and becoming increasingly more complex. More diverse professionals qualified in different aspects of international law, in particular within the Government and academic institutions, were therefore needed. Eritrea was strongly of the view that the activities of the Programme of Assistance could be of benefit in that

regard. They should continue to be part of the regular budget and should receive support from Member States, international and regional organizations, universities and institutions.

90. **Ms. Dime Labille** (France) said that her country attached great importance to the Programme of Assistance and would continue to support its activities. The Programme was a valuable tool since it promoted the rule of law and cooperation between States through the dissemination of international law. Given the growing demand for international law training and resources, France had made a voluntary contribution of €70,000 to support the Programme.

91. Her delegation commended the Codification Division for its work and welcomed the resumption of in-person training, including the United Nations regional courses in international law and the International Law Fellowship Programme. Such training enabled participants not only to improve their knowledge of international law and its increasing complexity, but also to create long-lasting networks with other attendees. Her delegation encouraged the Secretariat to increase the number of fellowships granted.

92. Her delegation welcomed the measures that had been taken to achieve a gender balance among participants and lecturers. Geographical balance, linguistic diversity and the representation of the major legal systems must also be reflected in the choice of lecturers and participants. The Division should continue its efforts to publish documentation and enhance both the Audiovisual Library and the website of the Programme of Assistance. The Mini-Series of lectures by prominent lawyers on the core topics of international law was a positive development in that regard. Lastly, her delegation called upon those States with the capacity to do so to make voluntary contributions.

93. **Ms. Abd Karim** (Malaysia) said that international law, the bedrock governing inter-State relations, needed to be better understood to ensure its proper implementation. In that context, the importance of the activities of the Programme of Assistance could not be overstated. The Programme had contributed significantly to enhancing understanding of international law, and there continued to be strong demand for the various courses organized under its auspices, including the International Law Fellowship Programme and the United Nations regional courses in international law. Her delegation welcomed the resumption of in-person training and appreciated the efforts that had been made to improve gender parity and geographical diversity among beneficiaries of the

Programme of Assistance. Initiatives to extend the Programme's reach to the wider public were to be encouraged.

94. Her delegation commended the Codification Division for its efforts to further enhance the material available in the Audiovisual Library, conduct off-site recordings, produce the Mini-Series of lectures and make legal materials available in as many languages as possible. It was important to ensure that opportunities for the teaching, study, dissemination and wider appreciation of international law were accessible to as wide an audience as possible, including those with basic or minimal knowledge of international law.

95. Her delegation encouraged States to continue to promote the study and appreciation of international law at the national level and supported the continued financing of the Programme of Assistance from the regular budget. As a member of the Advisory Committee, Malaysia valued the contribution of the Programme to the promotion of the rule of law and would continue to support its activities for the benefit of current and future generations.

96. **Ms. Conde** (Guinea) said that, since its establishment in 1965, the Programme of Assistance had been a tool for the dissemination of international law and, consequently, for the achievement of one of the primary objectives of the Charter of the United Nations: the maintenance of international peace and security. Her delegation was grateful to the Office of Legal Affairs for its tireless efforts in support of the Programme of Assistance and, in particular, to the Codification Division for the implementation of activities such as the United Nations regional courses in international law and the International Law Fellowship Programme, the Audiovisual Library and the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship on the Law of the Sea. Through the legal publications that it produced, the Division also contributed to maintaining a large international legal community, with a view to promoting legal research and the teaching of international law.

97. The Programme of Assistance had helped to strengthen multilateralism by fostering international cooperation and friendly relations. In that regard, her delegation commended the establishment of the alumni network, which further contributed to meeting those objectives. Her delegation reaffirmed its support for the Programme of Assistance, which facilitated capacity-building, access to information and participation in the development of international law instruments, in particular for those in developing countries.

98. Her delegation highlighted the role of the Advisory Committee in monitoring the activities of the

Programme of Assistance, in particular with regard to ensuring gender balance and cultural diversity in its training programmes. While it appreciated the Advisory Committee's proposal that the Programme of Assistance be funded from the regular budget, it also encouraged voluntary contributions.

99. **Ms. Taye** (Ethiopia) said that the regional course in international law for Africa, which had been held in Addis Ababa since 2011, had benefited a broad range of professionals from 48 African countries, as well as representatives of organizations such as the African Union. Ethiopia would continue to provide all necessary support for the successful management and organization of the Programme of Assistance, which had greatly contributed to the teaching, study, dissemination and wider application of international law, enhanced multilateralism and provided opportunities to strengthen professional networks. Ethiopia commended those Member States and partners that had made financial contributions to the Programme.

100. Her delegation appreciated the ongoing efforts to improve the Audiovisual Library and believed that more should be done to promote that resource among potential users. Working with universities and academic and research institutions could facilitate the increased use and accessibility of the Library.

101. In its resolution [68/110](#), the General Assembly had encouraged cooperation between the Codification Division and the African Institute of International Law. In 2017, the Institute had conducted the International Law Seminar for African Universities, in Ghana, with support and financing from the Secretariat and financial contributions from China, Finland, Italy, New Zealand, Sweden and the African Union. Owing to financial constraints, it had not been possible to hold the planned second seminar, in Ethiopia. It was therefore important to revive that cooperation. Ethiopia encouraged the Secretariat to explore ways to provide the necessary support to enable the second seminar to be held in 2024.

102. **Mr. Skachkov** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation welcomed the fact that the United Nations regional courses in international law for Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean and the International Law Fellowship Programme had resumed in person. The Russian Federation wished to underscore the importance of ensuring an equitable geographical representation with regard to Fellowship Programme participants and lecturers. Fellowships should be awarded to the most deserving candidates with the most potential.

103. His delegation was pleased that material continued to be added to the Audiovisual Library, helping to raise

the profile of international law and spur its wider dissemination. It hoped that printed materials would continue to be distributed, in particular to university libraries in developing countries. As a member of the Advisory Committee, the Russian Federation stood ready to consider initiatives proposed by developing countries to further the objectives of the Programme of Assistance, including by boosting the potential of local higher education institutions in developing countries. His delegation also considered that the website of the Programme of Assistance could be revamped to provide more detailed information on courses and fellowships and facilitate access to teaching materials for students and lecturers alike.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.