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Agenda item 87

Strengthening and promoting the international treaty framework

Report of the Sixth Committee

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I. Introduction

1. The item entitled “Strengthening and promoting the international treaty framework” was included in the provisional agenda of the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly pursuant to Assembly resolution [76/120](#) of 9 December 2021.
2. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 8 September 2023, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include the item in its agenda and to allocate it to the Sixth Committee.
3. The Sixth Committee considered the item at its 20th and 37th meetings, on 19 October and 17 November 2023. The views of the representatives who spoke during the Committee’s consideration of the item are reflected in the relevant summary records.¹

II. Consideration of draft resolution [A/C.6/78/L.4](#)

4. At the 37th meeting, on 17 November, the representative of Singapore, on behalf of the Bureau, introduced a draft resolution entitled “Strengthening and promoting the international treaty framework” ([A/C.6/78/L.4](#)). The Committee also had before it a statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly concerning the programme budget implications of draft resolution [A/C.6/78/L.4](#) ([A/C.6/78/L.20](#)).
5. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution [A/C.6/78/L.4](#), without a vote (see para. 6).

¹ [A/C.6/78/SR.20](#) and [A/C.6/78/SR.37](#).



III. Recommendation of the Sixth Committee

6. The Sixth Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Strengthening and promoting the international treaty framework

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions [23 \(I\)](#) of 10 February 1946, [97 \(I\)](#) of 14 December 1946, [364 B \(IV\)](#) of 1 December 1949, [482 \(V\)](#) of 12 December 1950, [32/144](#) of 16 December 1977, [33/141 A](#) of 19 December 1978, [51/158](#) of 16 December 1996, [73/210](#) of 20 December 2018, [75/144](#) of 15 December 2020 and [76/120](#) of 9 December 2021,

Recalling also its resolutions [71/328](#) of 11 September 2017, [73/346](#) of 16 September 2019 and [76/268](#) of 10 June 2022, which reaffirm that multilingualism is a core value of the Organization that contributes to the achievement of the goals of the United Nations, and requesting the Secretary-General to continue to make efforts to ensure that multilingualism is not undermined by the measures taken in response to the liquidity situation and the coronavirus disease (COVID-19),

Conscious of the obligations resulting from Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations and the importance of treaties in the development of international law and the international legal order,

Noting with appreciation the role of the Secretariat, in particular the Treaty Section of the Office of Legal Affairs, in the implementation of Article 102 of the Charter,

Noting that the considerable increase in the number of multilateral treaties deposited with the Secretary-General and treaties submitted for registration over the past years has led to the growth in the volume of work carried out by the Treaty Section,

Noting also that, while the authentic texts of registered treaties are promptly made available online through the electronic treaty database, there is currently a significant backlog in the publication of the United Nations *Treaty Series* due to the limited resources available for the translation and publication process, contributing to the accumulation of unpublished treaties,

Recognizing the importance of the expeditious processing, registration and publication of treaties and treaty-related actions,

Supporting the efforts of the Secretary-General to increase the efficiency of the registration and publication process within available resources and to enhance the role played by the Treaty Section in assisting Member States in this area,

Welcoming the measures taken by the Treaty Section to expedite the publication of the United Nations *Treaty Series* and to provide electronic access to all of its publications on the website of the United Nations Treaty Collection, and recognizing the role that new technology can play in the accessibility of the United Nations *Treaty Series*,

Recognizing that practice and technology have developed considerably over the past years, and acknowledging the importance of maintaining consistency with treaty-making practice in the international community,

Recognizing also the important role performed by depositaries of multilateral treaties,

Noting with appreciation the role of the Treaty Section in discharging the functions entrusted to the Secretary-General as depositary of over 600 multilateral instruments,

Bearing in mind the provisions of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, adopted on 22 May 1969 by the United Nations Conference on the Law of Treaties,¹

Convinced of the need to further gather and exchange views on practice relating to the strengthening and promoting of the international treaty framework,

1. *Recalls* Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations, reaffirms the importance of the registration and publication of treaties, as well as their accessibility, and stresses that the regulations to give effect to Article 102 should be useful and relevant to Member States and should be kept updated to assist States in implementing their obligations thereunder;

2. *Notes* that some Member States continue to consider that there remain outstanding issues where the regulations may need further consideration;

3. *Reaffirms its support* for the annual treaty event organized by the Secretary-General;

4. *Welcomes* the organization of workshops on treaty law and practice by the Treaty Section at Headquarters and at the national and regional levels as an important capacity-building initiative, encourages the Treaty Section to continue to organize these workshops as regularly as possible, including through the use of information and communications technology when necessary owing to extraordinary circumstances, and invites States and interested international organizations and institutions to continue to support this activity;

5. *Notes* that workshops on treaty law and practice at the national and regional levels could not be organized since 2016, including owing to insufficiency of funds, invites States and interested organizations and institutions to make voluntary contributions to the trust fund established by the Secretary-General for the Office of Legal Affairs to support the promotion of international law, towards the financing of such workshops, or otherwise to assist in their implementation and possible expansion, as a complement to workshops on treaty law and practice held at Headquarters, and expresses its appreciation for the voluntary contribution made to support the organization of such workshops;

6. *Welcomes* efforts to build the capacity of States in treaty law and practice, and invites Member States to consider providing targeted technical assistance, upon request, at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels, in particular to developing countries, in order to develop and enhance their treaty practice, including in the use of information and communications technology;

7. *Also welcomes* the efforts made to develop and enhance the United Nations electronic treaty database, which provides online access to comprehensive information on the depositary functions of the Secretary-General and the registration and publication of treaties under Article 102 of the Charter, and encourages the continuation of such efforts in the future, while bearing in mind the challenges that many developing countries face in accessing information and communications technology;

8. *Notes* that most submissions of treaties for registration are in electronic format, and encourages the Secretary-General to develop, in consultation with and on the basis of feedback from Member States and within existing resources, an online treaty registration system to facilitate submissions of treaties for registration, as an

¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1155, No. 18232.

additional option to the existing ways of submission in electronic or hard-copy format;

9. *Recognizes* the importance of the legal publications prepared by the Treaty Section, and stresses the need to update the *Summary of Practice of the Secretary-General as Depositary of Multilateral Treaties* in the light of new developments and practices;

10. *Acknowledges* the efforts of the depositaries in the registration of treaties under Article 102 of the Charter, and encourages the continuation of such efforts in the future;

11. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General to ensure the expedited publication of the United Nations *Treaty Series*, in accordance with the regulations, through the prompt provision of editorial and translation services, to enable effective dissemination of and access to treaties;

12. *Also calls upon* the Secretary-General to strengthen the capacity of the Treaty Section to perform its responsibilities and functions under the Charter, multilateral treaties deposited with the Secretary-General and relevant General Assembly resolutions, as well as to meet the increasing demands in the performance of these functions;

13. *Welcomes* the thematic debate on “Best practices of depositaries of multilateral treaties”;

14. *Takes note* of the subtopics suggested by some Member States for consideration for future thematic debates, and requests the Secretariat to maintain a non-exhaustive indicative list of such subtopics and circulate it sufficiently in advance of the meetings of the Sixth Committee on the agenda item;

15. *Decides* to undertake a regular thematic debate in the Sixth Committee to foster a technical exchange of views on practice relating to the strengthening and promoting of the international treaty framework, and in that regard invites Member States to focus their comments during the debate at the eightieth session of the General Assembly on the subtopic “The role of technology in shaping treaty-making practice”, and requests the Secretary-General to invite Governments and international organizations to submit information on their practice in this regard, and to provide, at its eightieth session, a report with information on practice related to the subtopic taking into account these submissions;

16. *Requests* the Secretary-General to strengthen the capacity of the Treaty Section to support the regular thematic debate in the Sixth Committee, including for the preparation of the report on the subtopic selected for each session so that it can be made available sufficiently in advance of the meetings of the Sixth Committee on the agenda item;

17. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its eightieth session the item entitled “Strengthening and promoting the international treaty framework”.