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## Sixth Committee

### Summary record of the 14th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 6 November 2020, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Pelkiö (Vice-Chair) ..... (Czechia)

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*In the absence of Mr. Skoknic Tapia (Chile), Ms. Pelkiö (Czechia), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

**Agenda item 79: United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law (A/75/389)**

1. **Ms. Pobee** (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 and also in her national capacity, said that the Advisory Committee had held its fifty-fifth session on 9 October 2020 to consider the report of the Secretary-General (A/75/389). It had also reviewed the activities undertaken during the reporting period and the activities proposed for 2021, including the resulting administrative and financial implications. Despite the difficult circumstances resulting from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the Advisory Committee had been able to meet in person.

2. Interest in the Programme of Assistance had not waned over the past year. While some events had had to be cancelled because of the pandemic, a level of business continuity had been maintained. The large number of applications received for the International Law Fellowship Programme and the regional courses in international law attested to the continued relevance of the Programme, in particular for developing countries, and justified further improvements. She was pleased that funds from the regular budget had been allocated to cover all three of the regional courses planned for 2020 and wished to express appreciation to the Member States that had hosted or made preparations to host courses, and to the United Nations regional commissions for their continued support.

3. The United Nations Audiovisual Library of International Law was a unique element of the Programme of Assistance. It had the potential to make high-quality learning resources readily available to students and international law practitioners worldwide at relatively low cost, but only where there was reliable Internet connectivity. The launch of the podcasts of the Lecture Series in 2018 had been a good step towards significantly increasing access to the Audiovisual Library for those who lacked high-speed Internet. However, there was also a need to serve those without any Internet access at all. Support for the Library's efforts to make materials available on flash drives and CD-ROMs, and for its desktop publishing activities, should therefore continue. She welcomed the

Secretariat's efforts to ensure broader geographical and linguistic representation and achieve gender parity by increasing the number of female participants and lecturers.

4. As had been consistently recognized by the General Assembly, the Programme of Assistance was a core activity of the United Nations that helped 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 Charter of the United Nations. She thanked the members of the Advisory Committee for their continued commitment to the Programme. Member States had provided constructive feedback and made a number of recommendations on how to enhance capacity-building and make the Programme accessible to participants from more geographical and linguistic backgrounds. She was also grateful to the Codification Division of the Office of Legal Affairs for its dedication to the effective implementation of the Programme against the backdrop of COVID-19. In conclusion, she reaffirmed her country's commitment to the Programme of Assistance and urged Member States to ensure that the Programme's activities were well funded through the regular budget and other voluntary contributions.

5. **Ms. Elbaz** (Office of Legal Affairs), speaking in her capacity as Secretary of the Advisory Committee, said that the regional courses in international law for Asia-Pacific and Africa had been held during the reporting period. The 55 participants had come from 45 Member States, and 41 had received fellowships covering all their expenses. Gender parity had been achieved among the participants and the lecturers, and geographical representation among the lecturers had been further improved. She thanked the Economic Commission for Africa and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the host countries, Ethiopia and Thailand, for their support.

6. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, it had not been possible to hold the regional course for Latin America and the Caribbean or the International Law Fellowship Programme. The Codification Division had developed an online training programme to provide capacity-building until in-person programmes could resume; however, it recognized that nothing could replace the in-depth exchanges and long-lasting bonds created through in-person training. She thanked the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the International Court of Justice and the host countries, Chile and the Netherlands, for their support in the preparation of the courses that had ultimately been cancelled.

7. The Audiovisual Library offered high-quality online training free of charge to an unlimited number of people across the globe. Since its creation in 2008, the Library had been accessed by more than 2.1 million users in all 193 Member States. During the reporting period, 40 new lectures had been added to the Library, bringing the total to more than 600. The proportion of women lecturers and the linguistic and geographical diversity of the lecturers had been improved significantly. The Audiovisual Library now included the Mini-Series, a series of lectures delivered by leading international law scholars with the aim of providing a general overview of core topics of international law for users with little knowledge of international law.

8. To support the professional development of former participants in the Programme, the Codification Division had launched a networking platform and, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, had organized virtual sessions, in English and French, during which alumni of the Programme could ask legal experts questions about their lectures in the Audiovisual Library.

9. The Codification Division was grateful to the General Assembly for having included funding for the Programme of Assistance in the regular budget. However, in order for the Programme to reach its full potential, voluntary contributions remained indispensable. She therefore wished to thank the Member States that had made contributions during the reporting period.

10. **Mr. Jares** (Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea) said that the General Assembly, in its resolution [74/19](#), had expressed its appreciation for the important contribution to the capacity-building of developing countries and the promotion of the law of the sea made by the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship on the Law of the Sea. Since 1986 the Fellowship had been awarded to 15 women and 18 men, who were now making important contributions in their respective countries and regions. Notably, a recipient of the 1994 Fellowship had recently been elected to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. The 2020 Fellowship had been awarded, but the activities had been tentatively postponed to 2021 owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

11. In his most recent report on oceans and the law of the sea ([A/75/340](#)), the Secretary-General had stated that the pandemic had provided the international community with an opportunity to rebuild in a more resilient and sustainable manner. In order for developing countries to build and maintain their capacity to implement the Sustainable Development Goals,

including Goal 14, and participate actively in ocean-related processes, they would need to develop a better understanding of the law of the sea, implement the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and participate effectively in the ongoing negotiations of the intergovernmental conference on an international legally binding instrument 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.

12. It was critical that the necessary funding be made available so that the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship could continue to be awarded. He recalled that it 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. While the current fund balance was sufficient to cover the full award for the upcoming Fellowship, and might extend to the following one, continued efforts would be needed to ensure the long-term financing of the award. He wished to thank those Member States that had made voluntary contributions to support the Fellowship and urged States and other relevant stakeholders to continue to make contributions so that a full award could be granted for 2020 and beyond.

13. **Ms. Persaud** (Guyana), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Programme of Assistance was an effective means of strengthening international peace and security and promoting friendly relations and cooperation among States. The Group was pleased that the necessary budget resources had been allocated to enable the Programme to run over the past year and was grateful to the Member States that had made financial or in-kind contributions. It was essential to ensure continued funding for the Programme in future years, given its importance in promoting the increased participation of developing countries at the multilateral level.

14. The Group welcomed the efforts of the Codification Division to provide virtual training on an exceptional basis during the reporting period. However, in-person training had benefits that could not be replicated through virtual training and should be resumed as soon as it was safe to do so. In that regard, the Group was pleased that the individuals who had successfully applied to attend the cancelled regional course for Latin America and the Caribbean would be given priority consideration for the next course.

15. The importance of providing free, high-quality training to an unlimited number of individuals around

the world through the Audiovisual Library could not be overstated. The Group commended the Codification Division for conducting off-site recording sessions in order to promote broader geographical and linguistic representation among lecturers, and for implementing the podcast project to facilitate access to lectures for users with limited high-speed Internet. The Group applauded the efforts of the Office of Legal Affairs to promote knowledge of international law in an inclusive manner and encouraged it to continue its outreach activities to ensure that Member States were aware of the available resources. The Programme of Assistance had an important role to play in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 16, in particular target 16.3 on promoting the rule of law at the national and international levels.

16. **Mr. Kunene** (Eswatini), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that better knowledge of international law was a means of strengthening international peace and security and promoting friendly relations and cooperation among States. The Group noted with appreciation the various activities undertaken under the Programme of Assistance, which played a critical role in disseminating knowledge of international law and building capacity, particularly in Africa. Indeed, 374 of the 433 applicants for the 2020 International Law Fellowship Programme had been from Africa. The Group was pleased that the regional course for Africa had been held and welcomed the exceptional measures taken by the Codification Division to mitigate the impact of the cancellation of the course for Latin America and the Caribbean and the postponement of the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship.

17. Predictable funding was critical for the effective implementation of the Programme. The Group encouraged all Member States to support the provision of resources for the Programme from the regular budget and commended those States that had made voluntary or in-kind contributions. The Secretariat should continue to publicize the Programme and periodically invite stakeholders to make voluntary contributions, with a view to improving funding predictability and expanding the activities of the Programme. In that regard, the Group welcomed the ministerial-level commitment made by the Group of 77 and China to ensure that the regular United Nations budget included funding for the International Law Fellowship Programme, the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship, the seminars and regional training on international treaty law and practice, and the production of legal publications and training materials.

18. **Mr. Ke** (Cambodia), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that ASEAN commended the Codification Division for providing remote learning opportunities during the COVID-19 pandemic but wished to stress that remote self-paced learning should not replace in-person training. All in-person programmes normally implemented under the Programme of Assistance should be resumed as soon as it was safe to do so. Information and communications technology should be used to add value to in-person training, not to replace it. In-person training provided students with invaluable opportunities to broaden their world views, learn from each other and establish bonds with future colleagues. For those reasons, the level of regular budget funding provided for the Programme of Assistance should not be reduced. ASEAN strongly supported the financing of the Programme from the regular budget and encouraged States to make voluntary contributions.

19. The Programme of Assistance played a key role in the Organization's efforts to promote respect for the rule of law at the national and international levels, in particular in developing countries. ASEAN welcomed the holding of the regional courses for Asia-Pacific and Africa. The Codification Division should resume all in-person training activities as soon as it was safe to do so, and should give priority to individuals who had been due to attend courses that had been cancelled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. ASEAN welcomed the establishment of the alumni platform and trusted that it would serve as a useful tool. ASEAN would continue to support the Programme of Assistance in order to strengthen multilateral cooperation and foster friendly relations among States.

20. **Ms. Popan** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that her delegation supported all of the activities implemented under the Programme of Assistance, as they contributed to the establishment of a multilateral order grounded in international law and thus promoted global peace and security. Scholars and practitioners from different regions and legal systems should continue to be involved in the delivery of training through the International Law Fellowship Programme and the regional courses, in order to enhance the geographical and linguistic inclusivity of the Programme of Assistance.

21. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Audiovisual Library had become more important than

ever. Her delegation commended the efforts that had been made to enhance the Library and provide lectures in a variety of formats in order to make them more widely accessible. Additional e-learning platforms should be developed in order to benefit a greater number of students and scholars around the world, including those without reliable Internet connections or high-tech devices. Such initiatives were all the more important because the pandemic had widened the digital divide. Multilingualism also had a key role to play in guaranteeing equal access to the activities implemented under the Programme of Assistance.

22. The European Union commended those who contributed to the development of the Programme, and the States that had provided voluntary contributions to support its activities. The European Union remained ready to help support the wider dissemination of international law and train future generations of lawyers through the Programme of Assistance.

23. **Ms. Laukkanen** (Finland), 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, conflict and poverty. A rules-based international order depended largely on the professionalism and commitment of people acting on behalf of States. Through the Programme of Assistance, generations of government lawyers, judges and diplomats from around the globe had been able to gain a deeper understanding of international law in the current interconnected world, which had benefited the international community as a whole. Since 1965, the Programme of Assistance had made a remarkable contribution to achieving the goals of the United Nations by providing scholars and practitioners with access to international law training and other resources on international law. The Nordic countries commended the continued engagement of the Codification Division in pursuing its mandate regarding the Programme of Assistance.

24. The International Law Fellowship Programme and the regional courses were key components of the Programme of Assistance. While it was unfortunate that it had not been possible to hold the regional course for Latin America and the Caribbean in 2020, her delegation commended the Codification Division for exploring innovative ways to pursue the objectives of the Programme and developing a remote self-paced learning curriculum as an interim means of capacity-building.

25. The Audiovisual Library was an invaluable resource that continued to bring high-quality training free of charge to an unlimited number of individuals and

institutions around the globe. The Nordic countries welcomed the efforts of the Codification Division to facilitate access to lectures for users without reliable Internet and noted with appreciation the additional measures taken to raise awareness of the Library during the pandemic.

26. The Nordic countries would continue to examine in a positive light requests for Member States to make voluntary contributions to the Programme. They commended those Member States that had made such contributions and encouraged all States to consider doing so in order to sustain the continued operations of the Programme.

27. **Ms. Tan** (Singapore) said that her country strongly identified with the goals and purposes of the Programme of Assistance and had sought to contribute to the teaching, study, dissemination and wider appreciation of international law through the implementation of capacity-building and information-sharing activities. In 2019, it had held courses on the law of the sea, international trade law and international air law for participants from various developing countries. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the National University of Singapore had provided a wide range of training opportunities, including a conference series on the impact of the pandemic in different areas of international law.

28. Her delegation welcomed the launch of the Mini-Series of the Audiovisual Library and suggested that the Codification Division record additional lectures on all the topics covered by the Mini-Series, in order to give users with basic or little knowledge of international law a fuller overview of core topics of international law. The Division should further enhance the geographical diversity of the materials in the Library, including by conducting additional off-site recording sessions. It should also modernize the Library website by adding a search feature and other tools. Singapore reiterated its support for the Programme of Assistance and looked forward to continuing to contribute to the Programme's success in its capacity as a member of the Advisory Committee.

29. **Mr. Oddone** (Argentina) said that as a member of the Advisory Committee, Argentina placed great importance on the dissemination of international law and, consequently, on the International Law Fellowship Programme and the regional courses in international law. The objectives of the Programme of Assistance should be to build capacities in developing countries, make documents available in the official languages of the United Nations and provide effective means of

accessing those documents, in particular for persons in developing countries.

30. His delegation welcomed the efforts made by the Codification Division to provide virtual learning opportunities to those affected by the cancellation of the regional course for Latin America and the Caribbean, as an interim means of capacity-building until the regional course could next be held. It was pleased that the financial situation of the Programme of Assistance was stable and that funds were available to cover the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship in 2021. Argentina was strongly in favour of ensuring linguistic diversity and a gender balance among participants and lecturers involved in the Programme of Assistance.

31. **Ms. Șiman** (Republic of Moldova) said that the ability of the Codification Division to implement innovative solutions in a timely manner had been essential in ensuring the delivery of training in 2020. In that connection, further investment was needed to enhance the websites maintained by the Division and to ensure that they contained up-to-date scholarly content from a variety of regions and legal systems, so that the Programme could meet the constant demand for high-quality training in international law. Her delegation welcomed the establishment of the alumni network, which would help former participants in the Programme to remain abreast of academic discussions on the most important issues in international law.

32. The Republic of Moldova welcomed the launch of the Mini-Series and the Audiovisual Library podcast, which would help generate widespread interest in international law, in particular among younger generations of law students. The Codification Division should explore the possibility of creating online courses or virtual classrooms in which lecturers and participants could engage in active discussions, in case in-person training had to be replaced by remote learning again in the future. Her delegation commended those Member States that had made financial contributions to the Programme of Assistance.

33. **Ms. Ponce** (Philippines) said that her delegation commended the Codification Division for the adaptability that it had shown in implementing the activities of the Programme of Assistance amidst the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The participation of Filipinos in the activities of the Programme of Assistance over the years had strengthened her country's capacities in the field of international law and helped professionals to build a vital network of contacts. Based on that experience, her

delegation was convinced of the need to continue the traditional in-person training programmes.

34. The Philippines valued the publications produced by the Codification Division and the content available in the Audiovisual Library. However, there was a need for more geographical diversity and a better gender balance among the lecturers represented in the Library's materials. In particular, the Library should include more lectures delivered by experts from the Asia-Pacific region. The Philippines had contributed to the invaluable work of the Programme and encouraged all Member States with the means to do so to make voluntary contributions.

35. **Ms. Grosso** (United States of America) said that knowledge of international law was key to furthering the rule of law at all levels. The Programme of Assistance continued to make an indispensable contribution to the education of students and practitioners of international law and merited ongoing strong support. As a member of the Advisory Committee, the United States commended the agility with which the Codification Division had adapted to the changes in working conditions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. It hoped that the online training programmes created in 2020 could be further developed in order to reach an even broader audience. The United States appreciated the Programme's continued progress in improving the accessibility and reach of the Audiovisual Library, which had been a more invaluable resource than ever in a year when many scholars had turned to remote learning options.

36. With regard to the efficiency of the Programme of Assistance, her delegation welcomed the efforts that had been made to provide as many fellowships as possible, within existing resources, in order to accommodate the largest possible number of students. It was grateful to the States and organizations that had made in-kind and financial contributions to those courses. The United States commended the Codification Division for maintaining important programmes despite having limited resources and encouraged it to continue in its efforts to secure voluntary contributions to fund its work.

37. **Ms. Flores Soto** (El Salvador) said that international law was essential to fostering friendly relations and cooperation among States and ensuring international peace and security. In an already highly interdependent world, the COVID-19 pandemic had further underscored the importance of reducing inequality, strengthening the role of multilateralism and establishing an international legal order that would adequately guide the actions of States and international

organizations. The Programme of Assistance played an instrumental role in that regard by building the capacities of Member States, academics and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

38. Her delegation was grateful to the Organization, in particular the Office for Legal Affairs, for having organized the regional course for Latin America and the Caribbean and the International Law Fellowship Programme in past years. Those opportunities for strengthening the capacities of developing countries, which created a ripple effect as knowledge was passed on within national professional and academic sectors, should be maintained in future years. Documents in the Audiovisual Library should be made available in all official languages, to improve access to information in the various geographical regions, especially in those countries where specialized programmes were not available.

39. **Ms. Kebe** (Sierra Leone) said that her delegation welcomed the opportunities for capacity-building and training offered by the Programme of Assistance, as they enabled States to take an informed approach to emerging issues. Her delegation was pleased that nationals of Sierra Leone had been selected to participate in the regional course for Africa in 2020. The Programme equipped participants to address global issues of concern to the international community through international collaboration and cooperation.

40. Her delegation commended the Codification Division for developing a remote learning curriculum as an interim means of capacity-building following the cancellation of some of the activities scheduled for 2020. Gender parity and geographical distribution should continue to be taken into consideration in the selection of participants for the regional courses and the International Law Fellowship Programme. Sierra Leone welcomed the provision by the regional commissions of venues for the courses at no cost. The importance of the Audiovisual Library as a source of free, high-quality, easily accessible content had been highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

41. The Programme of Assistance must be financed in a sustainable manner, through the regular budget and voluntary contributions from Member States. In that connection, Sierra Leone was grateful to Member States and international organizations whose voluntary contributions enabled the continued implementation of the Programme.

42. **Ms. Abdul Ghani** (Malaysia) said that international law was the bedrock of inter-State relations and needed to be better understood in order to strengthen international peace and security and promote

friendly relations and cooperation among Member States. In that context, the significance of the objectives of the Programme of Assistance could not be overstated, and it was unfortunate that it had been necessary to cancel or postpone a number of activities, including the production of certain materials for the Audiovisual Library, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Her delegation commended the Codification Division for developing a remote self-paced learning curriculum as an interim means of capacity-building, and for continuing to engage with alumni of the Programme through online lectures and seminars. While the opportunities for in-depth exchanges and long-lasting bonds created with in-person training could not be replicated online, information and communications technology should be used to disseminate information to a broader audience.

43. The Audiovisual Library had an important role to play in ensuring the continuation of the activities of the Programme of Assistance during the current challenging times. Malaysia noted with appreciation the ongoing efforts of the Codification Division to increase the linguistic and geographical diversity of the materials in the Library. As a member of the Advisory Committee, Malaysia valued the contribution of the Programme of Assistance to the promotion of the rule of law and would continue to support its activities.

44. **Mr. Elsadig Ali Sayed Ahmed** (Sudan) said that his delegation attached great importance to the Programme of Assistance, which was one of the major tools used by the United Nations in its efforts to strengthen the rule of law. It commended the Codification Division for its valuable assistance in the implementation of the Programme, particularly in connection with the International Law Fellowship Programme, the regional courses in international law and the wider dissemination of international law, especially in developing countries. The Programme of Assistance had clearly helped to raise awareness of the principles and purposes of international law among students, lawyers and diplomats, and had helped Member States harmonize their national laws with the principles and provisions of international law. The Audiovisual Library played an important role in disseminating such law and providing training programmes that benefited institutions and individuals; in particular, it had made commendable efforts to increase the quantity of content available online amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

45. His delegation thanked the Codification Division and the regional organizations that had hosted the regional courses. It hoped that the courses that had been postponed would be rescheduled at the earliest

opportunity, and that more financial resources would be allocated to the Programme so that the regional courses could continue to be held, given their considerable value for Member States, especially developing countries. His delegation commended the States that had been providing financial contributions to the Programme. The African Institute of International Law should receive more support so that it could play a larger role in the conduct of studies and research that would enhance the contribution of African lawyers to the development of international law.

46. The deliberations of the Advisory Committee at its fifty-fifth session had been constructive. His delegation had engaged with other members to reinvigorate and strengthen the Programme and meet the challenges facing it, and looked forward to the adoption of the recommendations by the members of the Sixth Committee. The Programme must continue so that the desired goals were achieved; his delegation called on all Member States to give the Programme due importance so that it could continue to play its leading role in the dissemination and teaching of international law.

47. **Ms. Guardia González** (Cuba) said that the Programme of Assistance greatly contributed to the promotion of the rule of law at the national and international levels and fostered a deeper understanding of the substantive norms of international law. Such understanding improved compliance with international law, promoted international peace and security and fostered friendly relations and cooperation among States. It was unfortunate that it had not been possible to hold the regional course for Latin America and the Caribbean and the International Law Fellowship Programme in 2020, especially since the necessary resources had been secured and preparations had been under way. Her delegation hoped that those activities would be conducted in person in 2021.

48. Participants from many small and developing countries could not take part in the courses and fellowships offered through the Programme unless all of their expenses were covered. In the case of Cuba, the economic, commercial and financial embargo that had been imposed against it by the United States for almost 60 years was an obstacle to participation. It was therefore important for the activities under the Programme to be funded from the regular budget.

49. **Mr. Amaral Alves De Carvalho** (Portugal) said that knowledge of international law was a basic prerequisite for establishing the conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law could be maintained. The Programme of Assistance made an

important contribution to the dissemination of such knowledge, meeting the ever-increasing demand for training and access to resources on international law, including in developing countries. His delegation welcomed the efficient administrative and financial management of the Programme by the Codification Division.

50. Portugal was grateful to the regional commissions for hosting the regional courses and commended the Codification Division for maintaining and expanding the Audiovisual Library, an important tool for the study and dissemination of international law, at relatively low cost. The COVID-19 pandemic had shown that distance learning tools such as the Library had a positive impact on individuals, communities and nations and helped to overcome inequalities. The Division should continue to increase linguistic diversity by adding lectures and resources in languages other than the six official languages of the United Nations, including Portuguese, which was one of the most widely spoken languages in the world. The additional content should be produced at the initiative of interested Member States, in coordination with the Division, and should not entail any additional costs to the Organization.

51. His delegation was pleased that the General Assembly had included funding for the Programme in the regular budget; however, that funding would not cover all the costs associated with the Programme. It would therefore be important to explore new and creative funding mechanisms, such as the establishment of partnerships with NGOs, universities, research institutes or 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 world envisaged in the Charter of the United Nations.

52. **Mr. Park Young-hyo** (Republic of Korea) said that the Programme of Assistance had promoted friendly relations and cooperation among Member States by improving their understanding of international law. The International Law Fellowship Programme and the regional courses had contributed greatly to capacity-building, particularly in developing countries. His delegation was disappointed that it had not been possible to conduct all the training programmes during the reporting period but noted that efforts had been made to provide interim means of capacity-building until in-person training could be resumed. His delegation welcomed the launch of the Mini-Series of the Audiovisual Library and hoped that all of the planned lectures would soon be available. His delegation expected the Library to continue to serve as a vital

source for the dissemination of knowledge about international law.

53. His Government was engaged in its own efforts to promote the dissemination of international law, including by providing training for diplomats and government officials from States in the Asia-Pacific region through the Seoul Academy of International Law programme. In 2020, the Academy had offered virtual training for the first time, in order to allow training to continue amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The virtual courses had been a success overall, despite some difficulties.

54. **Mr. Giret Soto** (Paraguay) said that the Programme of Assistance facilitated positive interaction among academics, legal professionals and government officials. Capacity-building in the field of international law strengthened the multilateral system and promoted friendly relations among nations. The strong tradition of international law in Latin America and the Caribbean should continue to be developed through the regional course, the International Law Fellowship Programme and the Audiovisual Library. To that end, activities and resources should be available in all the official languages, including Spanish.

55. The use of technology in the delivery of the Programme's activities should be further developed, since, in the unprecedented situation experienced in 2020, it had been demonstrated that significant levels of interaction could be achieved through the use of technology. The Programme of Assistance was an important tool for the dissemination, strengthening and development of international law, and had a multiplier effect in judicial systems around the world. In order to ensure that the benefits of the Programme of Assistance reached all regions worldwide, efforts should be made to ensure appropriate geographical representation in its various activities.

56. **Mr. Skachkov** (Russian Federation) said that, following the cancellations that had taken place in 2020 owing to the outbreak of COVID-19, his delegation hoped that all the United Nations regional courses in international law, and the International Law Fellowship Programme, could be held in 2021. Doing so should be all the more feasible now that such activities were funded from the regular budget, a practice that should be continued. The Programme's success could be attributed in large part to balanced geographical representation among both its participants and its lecturers. The staff of the Codification Division of the Office of Legal Affairs had also directly contributed to promoting the primacy of international law through their diligent efforts to maintain and develop the Programme.

57. **Ms. Wronecka** (Poland) said that her delegation was grateful to those States that helped to promote a better understanding of international law, in particular in developing countries, by supporting the Programme of Assistance. The dissemination and wider appreciation of international law were crucial to strengthening the rule of law and the rules-based international order, which supported peace and security, development, respect for human rights, and friendly relations and cooperation among States.

58. Her delegation appreciated the efficient management of the Programme and the level of diversity among the participants in the most recent regional courses for Asia-Pacific and Africa. It was unfortunate that it had not been possible to hold the regional course for Latin America and the Caribbean and the International Law Fellowship Programme. Her delegation hoped that the situation would allow future training activities to be held as scheduled. Poland welcomed the addition of new materials to the Audiovisual Library and supported the steps that had been taken to increase its accessibility and reach. Innovative solutions should be found to enable the resumption of recording sessions and efforts should be made to increase the diversity of the lecturers.

59. Her delegation commended the Codification Division for implementing the Programme of Assistance with limited resources during a global pandemic. Poland would continue to support the Programme financially and to serve as a member of the Advisory Committee. It called upon Member States to ensure more predictable financing for the Programme by allocating the necessary resources under the regular budget and providing in-kind contributions. Seventy-five years after the adoption of the Charter of the United Nations, it remained vital to foster initiatives that would help establish the conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law could be maintained.

60. **Mr. Hernandez Chavez** (Chile) said that, as a member of the Advisory Committee, Chile placed great importance on the dissemination and teaching of international law, in particular in developing countries. While his delegation commended those States that had made voluntary contributions to the Programme of Assistance, the Programme must be sustainably and adequately funded under the regular budget in order to strengthen and promote respect for international law.

61. The regional course for Latin America and the Caribbean was very important and should be held as soon as the situation allowed. Chile was willing to host the course at the Economic Commission for Latin

America and the Caribbean in 2021, if deemed appropriate, and his delegation stood ready to provide the Secretariat with whatever information it required to assess the feasibility of holding the course. By bringing together participants and lecturers from diverse legal systems and realities, in-person courses effectively promoted mutual understanding and an exchange of knowledge at the intraregional level. Virtual training had not been entirely satisfactory and should be considered as no more than an interim measure taken in response to the emergency situation caused by the pandemic. His delegation welcomed the continued efforts of the Codification Division to improve the gender balance among participants and was pleased that many of those who had attended recent courses had been women.

62. Chile encouraged the Codification Division to redouble its efforts to add more content to the Audiovisual Library, and to increase the geographical and linguistic diversity of materials and the variety of legal systems represented. In that regard, Chile welcomed the increasing inclusion of materials in Spanish from Latin American sources, as legal experts from the region had made significant contributions to the progressive development of international law.

63. **Mr. Ghorbanpour Najafabadi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the Programme of Assistance served to disseminate knowledge of international law and build capacities in developing countries. It was unfortunate that some of the Programme's activities had had to be cancelled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. While virtual learning should never replace in-person training, it would be worth planning for the potential need to resort to virtual regional courses again in the future.

64. The Codification Division should continue to enhance the content of the Audiovisual Library, which was an invaluable training resource for individuals and institutions around the world. His delegation welcomed the initiative of conducting off-site recording sessions and suggested that suitable presentations made by special rapporteurs of the International Law Commission to the Committee be uploaded to the Library. Adding lectures in more languages, including Persian, would be another way to enrich the content of the Library. The geographical diversity among lecturers represented in the Library and at the regional courses should be increased. United Nations information centres in Member States should ensure that local universities and other relevant institutions were aware of the resources available to them through the Library. To boost the impact of the Programme of Assistance, some fellowships and places on regional courses should be awarded to diplomats. As a member of the Advisory

Committee, the Islamic Republic of Iran would continue to support the Programme and contribute to its effectiveness.

65. **Ms. Jiménez Alegría** (Mexico) said that respect for international law was largely dependent on its being adequately promoted, taught and studied. As a member of the Advisory Committee, Mexico was proud of the role played by the Programme of Assistance in raising awareness of international law, enabling students and scholars to deepen their knowledge and promoting gender equality in law training. While Mexico was disappointed that it had not been possible to hold the regional course for Latin America and the Caribbean in 2020, it was confident that the international community would find innovative means of continuing to promote the study and dissemination of international law through the use of digital technology, even in the face of the new challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

66. The teaching, study and dissemination of international law had a positive impact on peacebuilding and national development efforts. Member States must therefore ensure equitable access, in all the official languages, to the resources available through the Programme. Mexico was committed to overcoming all sociocultural barriers in the teaching of international law and would continue to support efforts by the United Nations and the international community to reach users effectively and ensure the continuation of activities for the benefit of current and future generations of legal professionals.

67. **Mr. Hitti** (Lebanon) said that, as a member of the Advisory Committee, Lebanon supported the Programme of Assistance, which played an important role in strengthening the rule of law, ensuring peace and security and promoting friendly relations and cooperation among States. The large number of applications received for the various programmes and the increase in the number of users of the Audiovisual Library demonstrated the relevance of the Programme of Assistance and the growing need for capacity-building activities. Lebanon commended the Codification Division for the significant progress it had made towards improving the accessibility of the Library, including through the Library podcast, and encouraged it to continue its efforts in that regard. His delegation welcomed the steps that had been taken towards achieving gender parity among participants and lecturers and encouraged the Codification Division to enhance linguistic and geographical diversity as well. Lebanon also welcomed the holding of two interactive virtual sessions with lecturers in international law for former participants of training programmes organized

under the Programme of Assistance. That activity fell fully within the scope of the Programme's objectives.

68. Lebanon commended the agility of the Codification Division in providing remote learning curricula but such training must not be seen as anything more than a provisional measure taken to mitigate the impact of the necessary cancellation of the regional course for Latin America and the Caribbean and the International Law Fellowship Programme in 2020, and the postponement of the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship. In-person training was essential and should be resumed as soon as conditions allowed.

69. In the declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations (General Assembly resolution 75/1), the Heads of State and Government had undertaken to abide by international law and promote respect for human rights and the rule of law. In order to ensure that the Programme of Assistance was able to support those objectives, it was vital to further strengthen its activities and ensure that it would be funded over the long term.

70. **Mr. Awassam** (Nigeria) said that, as a member of the Advisory Committee, Nigeria would continue to support efforts directed towards sustaining the Programme of Assistance, in the knowledge that the teaching, study, dissemination and wider appreciation of international law contributed to a greater understanding of complex global issues. His Government commended the voluntary contributions made by some Member States.

71. Nigeria was pleased that the regional course for Africa had been held in 2020. The Office of Legal Affairs and the Codification Division were to be commended for their tireless efforts to implement the Programme of Assistance, which benefited students and practitioners of international law worldwide. His delegation welcomed the elaboration of a self-paced learning curriculum for the individuals who had successfully applied for the International Law Fellowship Programme in 2020. It urged the United Nations to continue to promote the use of the Audiovisual Library and hoped that the Codification Division would explore ways to sustain its desktop publishing activities beyond 2021.

72. **Ms. Lito** (United Kingdom) said that her delegation commended the Codification Division for its efforts over the past year, especially in exploring innovative ways to implement the Programme of Assistance despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Programme made an effective contribution to the rule of law at the global level by meeting a need for training and the

dissemination of knowledge. The United Kingdom would continue to provide voluntary contributions to support various aspects of the Programme, in particular the Audiovisual Library, the *International Law Handbook* and the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship on the Law of the Sea, and encouraged other States to continue to provide support in order to ensure the further development of the Programme of Assistance.

73. **Mr. Elgharib** (Egypt) said that, 75 years after the founding of the United Nations, at the onset of a new era in which the rule of law would prevail, the significance of the Programme of Assistance could not be overemphasized. Efforts to foster the rule of law at the national and international levels and consolidate the multilateral legal system were dependent on there being a sufficient number of legal scholars and practitioners to teach and practise international law, and to advise Governments and develop policies in a manner consistent with international law. The regional courses in international law, the International Law Fellowship Programme and the Audiovisual Library had an important role to play in that regard. His delegation supported calls to enhance the accessibility of the Library, which had become a more significant resource during the COVID-19 pandemic, and bridge the digital gap that put many people in developing and least developed countries at a disadvantage. Egypt welcomed the interim measures taken by the Codification Division to continue to implement the Programme during the COVID-19 pandemic.

74. **Mr. Srivihok** (Thailand) said that the Programme of Assistance had played a significant role in fostering a deeper understanding of international law, which could help strengthen international peace and security and support the rule of law at all levels. The regional courses were one of the most effective tools of the Programme of Assistance. Thailand had hosted the course for Asia-Pacific eight times and looked forward to continuing to do so once it was possible to resume in-person training. Participants from Turkey and Palestine would attend the course for the first time at the next session. His delegation commended the improvements that the Codification Division had made to the website of the Audiovisual Library. It encouraged the Division to upload more recent videos to the website and to add a section on recent developments in international law. The Division should also continue to explore innovative ways to use technology to help it achieve its objectives. Such initiatives might include organizing more online training and developing mobile applications to facilitate the dissemination of international law.

75. Regular and adequate funding was crucial for the effective implementation of the Programme of Assistance. His delegation hoped that regular budget funding would continue to be allocated and that Member States would continue to make voluntary financial or in-kind contributions.

**Agenda item 180: Observer status for the Small Island Developing States Dock (SIDS DOCK) in the General Assembly (A/75/142; A/C.6/75/L.5)**

*Draft resolution A/C.6/75/L.5: Observer status for the Small Island Developing States Dock (SIDS DOCK) in the General Assembly*

76. **Mr. Smith** (Belize), introducing the draft resolution, said that Ireland, Italy, Portugal and Singapore had joined the sponsors. The Small Island Developing States Dock (SIDS DOCK), which had its headquarters in Belize, helped connect the energy sectors of small island developing States to global financing, sustainable energy and carbon markets. It had 17 member States, of which 16 were also States Members of the United Nations.

77. SIDS DOCK sought to respond to transboundary challenges through multilateralism, collaboration and cooperation, and its statute and rules of procedure were aligned with the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. It was the only international platform led by small island developing States that addressed energy security in the context of climate change and the need to build resilience in those States.

78. SIDS DOCK facilitated the sharing of experiences and knowledge among small island developing States, served as a catalyst for the uptake of renewable technology, and provided capacity-building opportunities to States parties on all matters related to renewable energy, energy efficiency and conservation. Its efforts to address the vulnerabilities and aspirations of small island developing States were aligned with the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and other international legal frameworks. It supported States parties in their efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goals 5, 7, 13 and 14. In that regard, it had developed a flagship initiative to support the efforts of small island developing States to protect and preserve oceans, seas and marine resources while harnessing the potential of the oceans as their largest available source of renewable energy. SIDS DOCK was also helping those States meet targets for gender equity and the empowerment of

women and girls through the SIDS DOCK Island Women Open Network.

79. **Mr. Rasidi** (Malaysia) said that SIDS DOCK was a transregional international organization whose objectives and activities supported the implementation of several United Nations environmental conventions, global environmental objectives and the 2030 Agenda. They therefore covered matters of interest to the General Assembly. SIDS DOCK supported projects and programmes that promoted the development and long-term use of sustainable energy, the development of renewable energy and participation in the global carbon market. For those reasons, Malaysia supported the granting of observer status to SIDS DOCK.

80. **Mr. Mulalap** (Federated States of Micronesia) said that his delegation supported the draft resolution. His country had been actively involved in the establishment of SIDS DOCK and considered its activities to be closely related to the core objectives and mission of the United Nations. SIDS DOCK was an important international platform uniquely positioned to represent small island developing States and facilitate their access to investment financing, capacity-building and sustainable energy technology.

81. Furthermore, SIDS DOCK was the only multilateral organization recognized by the United Nations with the right to represent the interests of small island developing States as a whole. It regularly interacted with representatives from all 37 small island developing States that were Members of the United Nations. Its close ties to those States and its unique understanding of their circumstances would help them achieve their development goals and move towards a more sustainable future. SIDS DOCK had been established in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations and attached great importance to multilateralism and the use of collaboration and cooperation to address global challenges. It was also helping small island developing States to achieve several of the Sustainable Development Goals.

82. SIDS DOCK was the only multilateral organization led by small island developing States that addressed energy security through an approach focused on building resilience to the effects of climate change, taking into account the unique relationship of island States to the ocean and the potential of oceans as a source of renewable energy. Micronesia and many other small island developing States were planning to develop robust renewable energy portfolios and would greatly benefit from the support provided by SIDS DOCK in that regard.

83. **Ms. Tan** (Singapore) said that SIDS DOCK aimed to support and complement the efforts of small island developing States to mobilize financing for climate change adaptation measures by transitioning to low-carbon economies. It also helped those States to protect oceans, seas and marine resources and make the most of the oceans as the world's largest source of renewable energy. The objectives and activities of SIDS DOCK thus covered matters of interest to the General Assembly. Moreover, the granting of observer status to SIDS DOCK could enhance its ability to help small island developing States implement the 2030 Agenda. Singapore therefore supported the draft resolution.

**Agenda item 181: Observer status for the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Institute in the General Assembly (A/75/143; A/C.6/75/L.6)**

*Draft resolution A/C.6/75/L.6: Observer status for the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Institute in the General Assembly*

84. **Mr. Geng Shuang** (China), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors, said that its format was consistent with the template for observer status requests. The Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Institute was an intergovernmental organization with full legal personality. Its mission was to enhance the quality of regional economic cooperation and accelerate economic growth in Central Asia through knowledge generation and capacity-building. The Institute maintained long-term partnerships with international and regional entities such as the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the Asian Development Bank, and it had observer status at the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Asian Development Bank. It fully met the eligibility requirements for observer status set out by the General Assembly in its decision 49/426. Granting the Institute observer status would deepen its cooperation with the United Nations and facilitate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in Central Asia.

85. **Mr. Lutfi** (Afghanistan) said that the CAREC Institute was the knowledge support arm of the CAREC Programme, which facilitated regional projects and policy initiatives to promote sustainable economic growth and prosperity in Central Asia. Afghanistan had benefited greatly from its participation in energy, trade, transport and capacity-building projects under that Programme. His Government's cooperation with the CAREC Programme was consistent with its objective of strengthening the position of Afghanistan as a hub for regional trade and connectivity and a land bridge between the surrounding regions. It therefore attached

great importance to the Institute's efforts in support of the CAREC Programme. The CAREC Institute met the conditions for being granted observer status, as its objective of promoting knowledge and capacity-building in order to foster effective regional economic cooperation was aligned with the mandate of the United Nations and was a matter of interest to the General Assembly.

86. **Mr. Musayev** (Azerbaijan) said that the aim of the CAREC Institute was to enhance the quality and effectiveness of economic cooperation in the region. It maintained long-term partnerships with international and regional organizations, including the United Nations, and had observer status with several international financial bodies. It clearly met the criteria for the granting of observer status set out in General Assembly decision 49/426. Observer status would give the Institute additional opportunities to work towards the achievement of its objectives and enhance its cooperation with the United Nations. His delegation therefore fully supported the draft resolution.

87. **Mr. Warraich** (Pakistan) said that, as a participant in the CAREC Programme, Pakistan supported the granting of observer status to the CAREC Institute. Since its establishment in 2006, the Institute had promoted innovative means of enhancing regional cooperation and fostering the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 1 on ending poverty. Its activities thus covered matters of interest to the General Assembly.

**Agenda item 182: Observer status for the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization in the General Assembly (A/75/192; A/C.6/75/L.7)**

*Draft resolution A/C.6/75/L.7: Observer status for the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization in the General Assembly*

88. **Mr. Cho Hyun** (Republic of Korea), introducing the draft resolution, said that Bangladesh, Qatar and Turkey had joined the sponsors. The destruction of wildlife habitats, including through deforestation, was increasingly pushing disease-carrying wildlife into closer contact with human beings, which increased the risk of zoonotic pandemics. The request for observer status for the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization, which sought to promote sustainable forest management, was thus particularly relevant in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

89. The Asian Forest Cooperation Organization met the requirements for observer status: it was an intergovernmental organization whose activities covered matters of interest to the General Assembly. Its

establishing agreement had been adopted by 14 countries in 2015 and had entered into force in 2018. Its activities involved strengthening cooperation among its members and between members and relevant partners with a view to promoting action-oriented and sustainable forest management practices and addressing the adverse effects of climate change through policy support, capacity development and inclusive partnerships. Granting it observer status would therefore enrich the work of the General Assembly.

90. **Ms. Ponce** (Philippines) said that as a member of the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization, the Philippines was pleased to sponsor the draft resolution. The entity's work covered matters of interest to the General Assembly and thus met the criteria for the granting of observer status. It aimed to promote sustainable forest management with a view to addressing the impact of climate change. Its projects and programmes were developed and implemented in accordance with the needs and policy priorities of member countries, which included forest rehabilitation, reforestation, the prevention of forest degradation, the conservation of biodiversity, the enhancement of livelihood opportunities involving non-timber forest products, and capacity development.

91. **Ms. Nguyen** Quyen Thi Hong (Viet Nam) said that her country was a member of the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization and had sponsored the draft resolution. The entity had been established as an international organization in 2011 on the basis of an agreement on forest cooperation between the States members of ASEAN and the Republic of Korea. Its activities covered matters of interest to the General Assembly, as they concerned the promotion of international cooperation, capacity-building and the sharing of experiences with a view to fostering sustainable development and addressing the impact of climate change in the region. Observer status in the General Assembly would enable the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization to strengthen its cooperation with the United Nations system and enhance its contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

92. **Mr. Rasidi** (Malaysia) said that the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization aimed to strengthen cooperation in the forest sector. It was implementing a large number of capacity-building programmes, subregional projects and country-driven projects to promote sustainable forest management practices and achieve its vision of a greener Asia. In that connection, Malaysia was currently participating in a subregional project concerning the domestication of endangered, endemic and threatened plant species in disturbed terrestrial ecosystems in Malaysia and Thailand.

93. The Asian Forest Cooperation Organization valued close cooperation with other institutions, organizations and bodies, in particular those within the United Nations system. Its activities covered matters of interest to the General Assembly, and granting it observer status would enable global policy discussions to be translated into tangible actions at the regional level. His delegation therefore urged the Committee to adopt the draft resolution.

94. **Mr. Nyan Lin Aung** (Myanmar) said that, as a founding member of the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization and a sponsor of the draft resolution, Myanmar fully supported the request for observer status. The Asian Forest Cooperation Organization had already developed several capacity-building programmes, subregional projects and individual country-driven projects in pursuit of its objective of contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 15 in the region. It had engaged actively with the relevant United Nations agencies and international partners on efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda and other environmental commitments. Its objectives and activities thus covered matters of interest to the General Assembly.

95. **Ms. Tan** (Singapore) said that she hoped that the Committee would look favourably upon the request for observer status for the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization in the General Assembly, as well as the request for observer status for the Global Dryland Alliance in the General Assembly, to be considered at the Committee's next meeting.

*The meeting rose at 6 p.m.*