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Technical cooperation and assistance

Note by the Secretariat

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I. Introduction

1. This note addresses the technical cooperation and assistance activities of the Secretariat from 2 May 2018 (the original date of note A/CN.9/958/Rev.1, submitted to the Commission at its fifty-first session (New York, 25 June–13 July 2018)) until 19 April 2019 (referred to in this note as the reporting period).
2. The scope of this note reflects the activities set out in the Guidance Note endorsed by the Commission at its forty-ninth session, in 2016.¹
3. While most of the activities were undertaken by Secretariat staff, it should be noted that a lack of Secretariat resources and schedule constraints required experts to conduct the activities set out in paragraph 45(b) on behalf of the Secretariat.

II. Technical cooperation and assistance activities

A. General approaches

4. Technical cooperation and assistance activities undertaken by the Secretariat aim at promoting awareness, adoption and uniform interpretation of UNCITRAL legislative texts.
5. Technical cooperation and assistance activities can involve briefing missions, conferences, symposiums, colloquiums, seminars, workshops, courses or lectures to disseminate information and promote awareness and understanding of one or more UNCITRAL texts or UNCITRAL as a body; provision of texts and standard information; writing articles and other promotional material; assessing trade law reform needs, including by reviewing existing legislation, developing gap analyses and other diagnostic tools; assistance to States in drafting and adopting legislation implementing an UNCITRAL text and building capacity to use, implement and interpret UNCITRAL texts.
6. Such activities include:
 - (a) **Raising awareness and promoting effective understanding, adoption and use** of UNCITRAL texts, so as to enable States and development agencies promoting the use of UNCITRAL texts to understand their objectives and key features, and to effectively adopt or use them;
 - (b) **Providing advice and assistance** to States considering signature, ratification or accession to an UNCITRAL convention, adoption of an UNCITRAL model law or use of an UNCITRAL legislative guide;
 - (c) **Building capacity** to support the effective use, implementation and uniform interpretation of UNCITRAL texts upon their adoption, including through training activities for judges and legal practitioners.
7. In the experience of the Secretariat, the demand for capacity-building activities is greater in those subject-areas in which there is a current higher-than-average rate of adoption of UNCITRAL texts (currently, texts in the fields of dispute settlement and electronic commerce).
8. In addition, the Secretariat **cooperates** with international and regional organizations, such as multilateral and regional development agencies, professional associations, organizations of practitioners, and chambers of commerce and

¹ “Guidance Note on Strengthening United Nations Support to States, Upon Their Request, to Implement Sound Commercial Law Reforms”. The Commission’s endorsement is found in *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-first Session, Supplement No. 17 (A/71/17)*, para. 262. The text is also available at https://uncitral.un.org/sites/uncitral.un.org/files/englishguidance_note.pdf.

arbitration centres. The objective of these activities is to enable and encourage the use of UNCITRAL texts by member States or joint law reform activities and projects.

9. Activities denoted with an asterisk were partially or fully funded by the UNCITRAL Trust Fund for symposia (see section IV for more details on the Fund).

B. Key technical cooperation and assistance activities undertaken by the Secretariat in the reporting period

1. Assistance in commercial law reform

10. As indicated in the above-referenced Guidance Note, the Secretariat engages with States, upon their request, on the use of UNCITRAL texts, including as part of programmes for commercial law reform. That term is used in the UNCITRAL context to refer to the body of law that applies to the private law rights and obligations of natural and legal persons engaged in commerce. UNCITRAL texts, from this perspective, can be broadly grouped into commercial transactions (International Sale of Goods (CISG) and Related Transactions, Procurement and Infrastructure Development and International Transport of Goods), the establishment of a business entity (creation of a legal person, as reflected in UNCITRAL work on an enabling legal environment for the operation of MSMEs), financing of business entities and their transactions (Security Interests), dispute settlement (International Commercial Arbitration and Conciliation and Online Dispute Resolution); the eventual exit of a business from the marketplace (Insolvency) and Electronic Commerce (eponymous UNCITRAL texts in this area are complemented by provisions on elements of the digital economy in a range of UNCITRAL texts). Programmes to develop a commercial law framework may focus on one or more of these areas, and States may wish also to involve other areas of law.

11. In this regard, the Secretariat has provided **advice and assistance as follows**:

(a) To the Ministry of Commerce and Investment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on commercial law reform (Riyadh, 7–10 January 2019);* on developing a theme reflecting the sustainable development goals, its Vision 2030 and financing of investment and on participating at the United Nations High Level Political Forum (HLPF), which meets once a year in New York to measure progress towards the achievement of the SDGs,² to raise awareness of the Kingdom's activities to enhance the ease of doing business and support the implementation of the SDGs;

(b) A lecture at Kutafin Moscow State Law University (Moscow, 2–3 October 2018);*

(c) A Workshop on MSMEs, organized by SELA (Santo Domingo, 15 February 2019)*;

(d) A briefing to the member States of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO) on recent instruments adopted by UNCITRAL as well as ongoing work (New Delhi, 20 March 2019); and

(e) Participation in a capacity-building workshop co-organized by the Columbia Center on Sustainable Development (CCSI) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), to representatives of States attending Working Group III (ISDS Reform) before the sessions in Vienna and in New York (27–28 October 2018 and 30 March 2019).

2. Regional and other initiatives

12. The Secretariat has continued to **cooperate** with relevant regional bodies to support the adoption, use, implementation and understanding of UNCITRAL texts. In

² For further information on the HLPF, see <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2019>.

that context, the following partnerships and joint initiatives continued in the reporting period:

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)

Relevance to Sustainable Development Goals 8, 9 and 16

13. The Secretariat continued its collaboration with the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and applied for the extension of its guest status at the Economic Committee (EC) initially granted in 2017. During the reporting period, the Secretariat participated remotely in meetings of the Friends of the Chair Group on Strengthening Economic and Legal Infrastructure (SELI) (Santiago, 8 March 2019) as well as the following workshops organized under the auspices of the APEC EC and SELI:

(a) Workshop on Strengthening Economic and Legal Infrastructure and Online Dispute Resolution (Bogor, Indonesia, 13 July 2018)*; and

(b) APEC Workshop for Developing a Collaborative Framework for ODR (Osaka, Japan, 8–9 November 2018)*.

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Relevance to Sustainable Development Goals 8, 9 and 16

14. The Secretariat continued its cooperation as a partner in a project implemented by GIZ by appointment of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) within the Open Regional Fund – Legal Reform. This project, entitled “International Dispute Resolution Instruments”, comprises two main support pillars. The first seeks to ensure that South-Eastern Europe as a region becomes more involved in the international discussion regarding dispute resolution and participates in the work of UNCITRAL, notably in the work of its Working Groups II and III. The second seeks to promote the use of the UNCITRAL transparency standards (the UNCITRAL Rules on Transparency in Treaty-based Investor-State Arbitration and the United Nations Convention on Transparency in Treaty-based Investor-State Arbitration). In this regard, the Secretariat engaged in awareness-raising of those standards by participating in regional promotional activities (Tirana, Skopje and Sarajevo, 2–6 July 2018 and Tirana 26–27 November 2018).

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)

Relevance to Sustainable Development Goals 1, 4, 8, 9, 10, 12 and 16

15. The Secretariat has continued its **cooperation** with EBRD, under the “EBRD-UNCITRAL Initiative on enhancing Public Procurement Regulation in the CIS countries and Mongolia”, established in 2011 to **promote the adoption** of the UNCITRAL Model Law on Public Procurement.³ The Initiative involves **advice and assistance** in drafting primary and secondary legislation, and **capacity-building** through support in the practical implementation of that legislation in country-specific projects. Activities undertaken by the Secretariat under the Initiative in the reporting period are set out in paragraphs 37, 39 and 40 below. In addition, the Secretariat took part in an annual co-ordination meeting for multilateral development agencies and the European Commission on ongoing multi-agency contributions to the Initiative (London, 10–11 January 2019).

³ See A/CN.9/753, para 38 (c). Further information about the Initiative is available at <https://www.ppi-ebd-uncitral.com/index.php/en/ebd-uncitral-initiative/action-plan>. The geographical reach of the Initiative has since been extended to include countries in the South Eastern Mediterranean area.

Masters' programmes in International Trade Law and Public Procurement

Relevance to Sustainable Development Goals 1, 4, 8, 9, 10, 12 and 16

16. These programmes, which are organized in partnership with the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (ITC-ILCO) and the University of Turin, aim to **raise awareness** of and to **build capacity** in the use of UNCITRAL texts and to encourage participation from individuals from developing and transition countries.

17. The Secretariat participates in the programmes through lecturing at and providing materials for (a) the IX Edition Master on International Trade Law, attended by individuals from developing and developed countries, and (b) the 13th Master in Public Procurement Management for Sustainable Development Programme respectively, which is attended by government officials and representatives of development banks primarily from developing countries and countries in transition (for details of the lectures provided, see para. 17 below).

Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa (OHADA)

Relevance to Sustainable Development Goals 8 and 16

18. The Secretariat continued its cooperation and coordination activities with OHADA aiming at raising awareness of OHADA member States' representatives and law professionals in the OHADA member States on UNCITRAL current work and instruments available for adoption in different areas of interest for African countries. Such coordination activities were undertaken in close collaboration with various institutions active in the French-speaking countries, such as the Civil Law Initiative (Fondation pour le Droit Continental), the Paris Bar Association and the International Organization of the Francophonie (OIF). In addition, the Secretariat is following the identification of new issues of international trade law at the OHADA level, and special attention in that respect is being given to electronic commerce considering the potential involvement of OHADA in regulating this sector. Activities also included capacity-building activities with a view to increase uniform interpretation of UNCITRAL texts at a regional level.

19. **Raising awareness and promoting effective understanding** of UNCITRAL texts, including the New York Convention, and on current work on mediation, investor-State dispute settlement (ISDS) and electronic commerce, for government officials from OHADA member States,⁴ through making presentations and providing materials at:

(a) The Ministers Meeting of OHADA States and at the Colloquium on the New York Convention organized by the Regional School for Training of OHADA (ERSUMA) for lawyers and judges from Gabon (46ème Réunion du Conseil des Ministres de l'OHADA and Conférence débats Libreville: "Les 60 ans de la convention de New York sur la reconnaissance et l'exécution des sentences arbitrales étrangères" (Libreville, 8–14 June 2018))*; and

(b) The Campus International du Barreau de Paris, a conference training jointly organized with the Cour Commune de Justice et d'Arbitrage de l'OHADA (CCJA-OHADA) and the Paris Bar Association, "Regards croisés sur la médiation et l'arbitrage", attended by lawyers of Côte d'Ivoire and Paris (Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 20–21 September 2018)*.

20. **Raising awareness and promoting effective understanding** of the New York Convention and UNCITRAL's texts on transparency in ISDS, in a publication in the OHADA Training School (ERSUMA) law review, on "The New York Convention in the modern ages", Bulletin de Pratique Professionnelle de l'ERSUMA (BEPP),

⁴ Most of which are in Western Africa. For a full list of those States, see <https://www.ohada.org/index.php/en/>.

No. 12, August 2018; “UNCITRAL efforts to promote transparency in investment arbitration”; BEPP No. 12, 2018).

21. **Raising awareness and promoting effective understanding and building capacity** of legal practitioners and law students of OHADA member States on UNCITRAL’s methods of work and instruments, through lecturing at the Civil Law Initiative Summer University and speaking at a round table on French-speaking networks of law and justice institutions (Université d’été du Droit continental, Paris, 5 July 2018*; Journées des réseaux de la Francophonie, table-ronde droit et justice, Paris, 29–30 May 2018)*.

C. Subject-specific technical cooperation and assistance activities

1. Dispute settlement

Relevance to Sustainable Development Goals 8, 9, 16 and 17

22. The Secretariat has been engaged in the promotion of UNCITRAL texts in the field of dispute resolution, including through a number of training activities and has supported the ongoing law reform process in various jurisdictions. The Secretariat has also developed soft law instruments and tools to provide information on the application and interpretation of those texts (reported in CLOUT paper A/CN.9/976). During the reporting period, the Secretariat has jointly organized, participated in, or contributed to a number of events including the following which focused on the New York Convention and the new instruments on international mediation:

(a) Taking advantage of the 60th anniversary of the New York Convention, the Secretariat organized events to further **encourage adoption and harmonious interpretation** of the New York Convention with a number of organizations including the International Court of Arbitration of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), International Council for Commercial Arbitration (ICCA), International Bar Association (IBA), and the New York State Bar Association (NYSBA). **These awareness-raising and capacity-building activities** included among others, participation in the following events: Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of UNCITRAL and the 60th Anniversary of the New York Convention with the International Dispute Resolution Institute (IDRI), Arbitration and ADR in Africa, Federal Ministry of Justice and the Regional Centre for International Commercial Arbitration, Lagos (Abuja, 14–15 June 2018);

(b) Celebration of the 60th anniversary of the New York Convention during the China Arbitration Week, co-hosted by the China International Economic and Trade Arbitration Commission (CIETAC) and the Supreme People’s Court of China (Beijing, 14–18 September 2018)*;

(c) Conference jointly organized with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the New York Convention (Kiev, 4 October 2018);

(d) Annual event of the Vilnius Court of Commercial Arbitration on the 60th anniversary of the New York Convention (Vilnius, 19 October 2018);

(e) International Conference Celebrating the 60th anniversary of the New York Convention organized by the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT), CIETAC, Ministry of Commerce of the People’s Republic of China and University of International Business and Economics (Beijing, 2–4 November 2018)*;

(f) Arbitration Conference co-organized by the Hungarian Trade Arbitration Court and the Ministry of Justice (Budapest, 13–14 November 2018); and

(g) Sharm El Sheikh VII Conference on the 60th anniversary of the New York Convention organized jointly with the Cairo Regional Center For International Commercial Arbitration (CRCICA) (Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, 9–10 December 2018).

23. **Raising awareness and promoting effective understanding of, and capacity-building in,** the instruments dealing with international settlement agreements resulting from mediation through speaking and providing materials at the following events:

(a) Campus International du Barreau de Paris; promotion of UNCITRAL texts on mediation and arbitration (Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 19–22 September 2018)*;

(b) Training in Mediation organized by the Commercial Law Development Programme (CLDP) (Riyadh, 16–19 October 2018)*;

(c) A conference on New Frontiers of ADR: From Commercial and Investment Matters to Regulatory Violations organized by the IBA Mediation Committee and the IBA North American Regional Forum, co-organized by McGill and Montreal Universities and ICC (Montreal, Canada, 6–7 November 2018);

(d) The Fifth International Conference for a Euro-Mediterranean Community of International Arbitration jointly with the Ministry of Justice of Spain, Organization for Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Madrid Court of Arbitration (Madrid, 19–20 November 2018);

(e) A regional seminar on international arbitration and mediation organized jointly with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus (Minsk, 3–5 December 2018)*;

(f) A seminar organized by the Bahrain Centre on Dispute Resolution (Manama, 9 January 2019)*;

(g) A briefing on the Singapore Convention on Mediation at the margins of the second regional intersessional meeting on ISDS reform (Santo Domingo, 14 February 2019)*;

(h) A training workshop on international mediation organized at the request of the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MCI) of the Dominican Republic (Santo Domingo, 15 February 2019)*;

(i) A conference on international mediation and arbitration organized by the Institut Supérieur de Gestion et de Planification (ISGP), le Centre de recherches juridiques de l'Université de Franche-Comté (CRJFC), le Centre de droit des affaires et du commerce international de l'Université de Montréal and le Centre de recherche sur le droit des investissements et des marchés internationaux (Algiers, 12–13 March 2019)*;

(j) Symposium on the Singapore Convention: Compliance with Cross-Border Mediated Settlement Agreements with the Cardozo Journal of Conflict Resolution and the Touro College Jacob D. Fuchsberg Law Center (New York, 18 March 2019)*;

(k) The Second South Pacific International Arbitration Conference organized by ADB in conjunction with the Papua New Guinea Government, UNCITRAL and other development partners (Port Moresby, 25–26 March 2019)*; and

(l) The International Dispute Resolution Conference 2019 — New Era of Global Collaboration (Hong Kong, China, 17 April 2019)*.

2. **Electronic commerce**

Relevance to Sustainable Development Goals 8, 9 and 16

24. As regards UNCITRAL texts on electronic commerce (United Nations Convention on the Use of Electronic Communications in International Contracts (ECC), UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Commerce, UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Signatures and UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records (MLETR)), the Secretariat has engaged in the activities below.

25. **Cooperation with UNCTAD** through the provision of comments by the Secretariat on the UNCTAD Rapid eTrade Readiness Assessments of Least Developed Countries for Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Madagascar,

Senegal, Solomon Islands, Togo, Uganda, Vanuatu and Zambia, in the framework of the eTradedforall initiative, coordinated by UNCTAD.

26. **Cooperation with UNESCAP** in the design and implementation of a project entitled “Leapfrogging Skills Development in E-Commerce in South-East Asia in the Framework of the 2030 Development Agenda”, together with ASEAN and UN/ESCAP and in the framework of the UNCTAD TrainForTrade Programme. The project aims at strengthening the capacity of policymakers and practitioners from selected countries in South-East Asia with a focus on identity management and electronic signatures. This project also has relevance for SDGs 1, 5 and 17.

27. **Cooperation** with UN/ESCAP and other organizations concerned with the legal framework for paperless trade facilitation has continued. As part of this cooperation, the Secretariat promoted UNCITRAL texts as a tool for implementing provisions on electronic commerce and paperless trade of regional and bilateral trade agreements. Relevant activities include speaking and providing materials for the following:

(a) Meeting of the Extended UNNExT Advisory Group on Cross-border Paperless Trade Facilitation (Bangkok, 30 October–1 November 2018), the Sixth Meeting of the Legal and Technical Working Groups on Cross-border Paperless Trade Facilitation (Bangkok, 11 March 2019), the Fifth Meeting of the Interim Intergovernmental Steering Group on Cross-Border Paperless Trade Facilitation (Bangkok, 12–13 March 2019), and the Forum on Trade Digitalization for Sustainable Regional Integration (Bangkok, 14–15 March 2019). The purpose of those meetings was to prepare and review tools for the implementation of the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific, namely the “legal gap checklist”, with a view to facilitating the establishment of mutual recognition mechanisms for trade-related data and documents in electronic form;

(b) An Asian Development Bank-ESCAP Workshop on “Promoting E-Commerce in Asia and the Pacific: A Holistic Approach” (Bangkok, 26–27 August 2018);

(c) Workshop on Digital Trade Transformation organized by ASEAN, APEC and the Asia-Pacific Financial Forum (Bangkok, 25 January 2019, remote participation). The workshop aimed to identify priorities for an APEC action plan on legal reforms to digitalize trade and supply chain finance and to help the Thai government in designing reforms in this area;

(d) Workshop on electronic signatures to promote UNCITRAL texts held on the occasion of the sixth in-person meeting of the Grupo de Agenda Digital of the member countries of the Alianza del Pacífico (Mexico City, 22–24 May 2018)*. The goal of this forum is to work towards the digital integration of Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru through mutual legal recognition and technical interoperability; and

(e) Workshop entitled “Paperless Trade and Single Window Development”, co-organized with the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) and the World Customs Organization, and aimed at delivering capacity-building on policy, technical and legal aspects of paperless trade to public and private sector representatives from Belarus (Minsk, 17–19 March 2019).

28. **Raising awareness and promoting effective understanding, adoption and use** of the recently-adopted MLETR to support dematerialization of transport and finance documents and paperless trade. Stakeholders expressed keen interest in the use of the model law to enable legally paperless trade facilitation mechanisms that are based on the data pipeline concept and implemented with distributed ledgers technology. Relevant activities include speaking and providing materials at the following events:

(a) “A Legal Roadmap for Digital Trade”, organized by the Digitalisation Working Group of the Banking Commission of the International Chamber of Commerce (London, 11 September 2018)*;

(b) “United Nations Electronic Commerce Legislation and China E-commerce Legislation Forum”, against the backdrop of the recent reform of Chinese electronic commerce law, on UNCITRAL e-commerce texts as well as the MLETR (Guangzhou, China, 11–12 December 2018);

(c) Computational Law and Blockchain Festival event, hosted by Legal Hackers Ljubljana, on the MLETR as a blockchain and fintech enabler (Ljubljana, 14 February 2019)*; and

(d) “JAIBL Academic Symposium on Blockchain and the Law” (Tokyo, 16 March 2019).

29. **Advising and assisting** in the enactment of UNCITRAL texts on electronic commerce:

(a) Supporting Bahrain in the review of its Electronic Transactions Law and in drafting the Electronic Transferable Records Law. As a result, Bahrain became the first country to enact the MLETR; and

(b) Supporting Afghanistan in the review of its draft Electronic Transactions and Electronic Signatures Law, which was prepared with input from the Secretariat. In particular, a presentation was given at the “Workshop for Afghan stakeholders on draft laws on e-transactions, e-signatures as well as cybersecurity of Afghanistan” (Tallinn, 15–17 November 2018), which was organized by the Commercial Law Development Programme of the United States of America Department of Commerce.

30. **Building capacity** through speaking and providing materials at the following events:

(a) The Baku E-Trade Forum 2018 (Baku, 24–25 September 2018)*, attended by public and private sector officials from Eastern Europe. During this event, Azerbaijan deposited its instrument of accession to the ECC; and

(b) “Introduction to E-Commerce Law and UNCITRAL texts on Electronic Procurement”, at the Master in Public Procurement for Sustainable Development (for information on the programme, see para. 19 above) (Turin, Italy, 22 May 2018).

3. Insolvency

Relevance to Sustainable Development Goals 8, 10 and 17

31. **Raising awareness and promoting effective understanding** of UNCITRAL texts in the area of insolvency law among governmental officials, judges, insolvency and legal practitioners through speaking and providing materials at the following events:

(a) For CIS countries, at the IX and X St. Petersburg International Legal Forums and at the Second and Third International Insolvency Forums (St. Petersburg, 16–19 May 2018 and 15–17 May 2019*, respectively);

(b) For Saudi Arabia, through speaking and providing materials at the First Conference on Resolving Insolvencies (Riyadh, 29–30 April 2019)*; and

(c) For the African region, at the Africa Round Table 2018 “Multinational Insolvencies in an African Context” (Maputo, 23–27 October 2018)*.

32. Promoting enactment and uniform interpretation of the Model Law on Cross-Border Insolvency and **awareness and understanding** of the UNCITRAL Legislative Guide on Insolvency Law among States, by speaking and providing materials to government officials, judges and legal practitioners as follows:

(a) At a workshop during the International Academy of Comparative Law (IACL) World Congress (Fukuoka, Japan, 24 July 2018)*; and

(b) For the Middle East and North Africa region, in preparation for, during and following a regional insolvency conference on “The role of courts in an effective insolvency system” (Casablanca, Morocco, 26–28 September 2018).*

33. **Advising** Bahrain, Kuwait, Morocco and Saudi Arabia on compliance of their enacted or draft insolvency laws with that Model Law and the UNCITRAL Legislative Guide on Insolvency Law.

34. **Raising awareness and promoting effective understanding** of UNCITRAL texts and UNCITRAL ongoing work in the area of insolvency law among insolvency regulators of States members of the International Association of Insolvency Regulators (IAIR), by speaking at the annual conference of IAIR (Mauritius, 15–18 October 2018)*.

35. **Building capacity** in judges and other government officials in charge of handling cross-border insolvency cases, on UNCITRAL cross-border insolvency texts, through lecturing and providing materials during the 13th Multinational Judicial Colloquium on Insolvency (Singapore, 1–2 April 2019).*

4. MSMEs

Relevance to Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 5, 8 and 9

36. Pending publication of the UNCITRAL Legislative Guide on Key Principles of a Business Registry, adopted by the Commission in 2018, the Secretariat **raised awareness** on the Guide through a video and an article on the Newsletter of the United Nations Inter-agency Cluster on Trade and Productive Capacity. The video, realized in collaboration with the United Nations Information Service (UNIS) in Vienna and featuring the participation of delegates to Working Group I, was published on the UNCITRAL social media and the UNIS YouTube channel.

5. Activities in procurement and infrastructure development

Public Procurement

Relevance to Sustainable Development Goals 1, 8, 9, 10, 12, 16 and 17

37. **Raising awareness and promoting effective understanding of, and capacity-building in**, the use of the UNCITRAL Model Law on Public Procurement and its accompanying Guide to Enactment through speaking and providing materials at the following events:

(a) Workshop on Public Procurement Good Practice-Sharing, on the design of systems for good governance in public procurement through the effective use of data. Also participating were government officials and representatives of international and regional organizations (Brussels, 7 June 2018); and

(b) The 15th Procurement, Integrity, Management and Openness (PRIMO) Forum, designed to share knowledge, and foster peer-to-peer capacity-building in participating countries, hosted by the National Project Management Agency of Uzbekistan, co-sponsored by ADB, EBRD, Islamic Development Bank, World Bank and in cooperation with the European Investment Bank, OECD and SIGMA (Support for Improvement in Governance and Management, a joint OECD and European Union Initiative). The event included an “UNCITRAL Global Best Practice Seminar” co-organized with EBRD under the EBRD-UNCITRAL Initiative (on which, see para. 18 above) (Tashkent, 10–13 April 2019)*.

38. **Advising and assisting** the Government of the Dominican Republic on reform of public procurement law using the UNCITRAL Model Law on Public Procurement.

39. **Building capacity** in government officials and representatives of development banks primarily from developing countries and countries in transition, through providing materials for and lecturing at:

(a) 13th Master in Public Procurement Management for Sustainable Development Programme (Turin, Italy, 31 January–1 February 2019) (for details of the Programme, see para. 17 above);

(b) “Public Procurement: International Perspective” in tailor-made training for Government officials from India at the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA) (Laxenburg, Austria, 28 February 2019); and

(c) Workshop for a Master’s Programme in Public Procurement Management, organized under the auspices of the EBRD-UNCITRAL Initiative, at University Tor Vergata (Rome, 3–4 April 2019) (on the Initiative itself, see para. 18 above).

40. And through the following activities under the EBRD-UNCITRAL Initiative (on which, see para. 18 above):

(a) Training technical project consultants on the use of framework agreements in public procurement and e-procurement under the UNCITRAL Model Law on Public Procurement, in preparation for forthcoming **advice and assistance, and capacity-building**, in Ukraine and Moldova (desk-based and London, 10–11 January 2019); and

(b) Delivering a **capacity-building** workshop for government officials and practitioners in public procurement, on the development of legal texts in UNCITRAL and other international bodies, and on the use of the Model Law on Public Procurement in transition and developing country contexts (Nottingham, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, 12–13 January 2019).

Public-private partnerships (PPPs)

Relevance to Sustainable Development Goals 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 15, 16 and 17

41. **Raising awareness and promoting effective understanding** of the UNCITRAL Legislative Guide on Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), which is before the Commission for its consideration and eventual adoption at its 52nd session, through speaking and providing materials at the following events:

(a) International Conference on “Implementing People First PPPs for the SDGs: international best practices and recommendations for Ukraine and neighbouring countries” co-organized by United Nations Economic Commission for Europe; Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine; Kyiv City State Administration; and Ukrainian Public-Private Partnership Development Support Center, attended by legal practitioners in both private and public sectors (Kiev, 4–5 June 2018)*;

(b) Conference on “PPPs: Harnessing opportunities and overcoming challenges”, organized by Department of Justice of Hong Kong SAR, attended by government officials, private practitioners and financial advisers in PPP transactions (Hong Kong, China, 15–16 January 2019)*; and

(c) Conference on “Development of the Vietnamese Legal Framework for Public Private Partnerships” organized by the European Chamber of Commerce in Viet Nam, attended by government officials, private practitioners and financial advisers in PPP transactions (Hanoi, 18 January 2019)*.

42. **Raising awareness and promoting effective understanding** of the revised UNCITRAL Legislative Guide on PPPs during a conference organized by the European Chamber of Commerce and the Ministry of Planning and Investment. **Advising** the Vietnamese Government (Ministry of Planning and Investment and Ministry of Justice) on various aspects of the draft Vietnamese PPP law based on the recommendations contained in the UNCITRAL Legislative Guide on PPPs (Hanoi, 17–21 January 2019)*.

43. **Raising awareness and promoting effective understanding** of the revised UNCITRAL Legislative Guide on PPPs and capacity-building on the use of the Legislative Guide and the revised Model Legislative Provisions on PPPs, for Government officials of procurement agencies and private practitioners through the participation in the PRIMO Forum (see para. 18 above) (Tashkent, 10–13 April 2019)*.

44. **Raising awareness and promoting effective understanding** of the revised UNCITRAL Legislative Guide on PPPs in cooperation with the World Bank Group through a peer review of the draft surveys on Benchmarking PPP Procurement and Traditional Public Investment, 2020 Edition, assessing the regulatory framework in 135 and 50 countries respectively. Results of the surveys will be published as “Benchmarking Infrastructure”, and will include references to the revised UNCITRAL Legislative Guide on PPPs.

6. Sale of goods

Relevance to Sustainable Development Goals 8, 12 and 16

45. The Secretariat has continued to **promote broader adoption, use and uniform interpretation** of the CISG, and of the Convention on the Limitation Period in the International Sale of Goods, as amended, and to **build capacity** in the use of these texts. In this context, the following activities were carried out:

(a) Co-organizing and delivering a series of lectures to academics, lawyers and public and private sector representatives at a conference entitled “UN Sales Law for Liechtenstein business” (Vaduz, Liechtenstein, 12–14 June 2018); and

(b) Delivering a series of lectures to academics, lawyers and public and private sector representatives at a series of workshops co-organized with the Ministry of Industry and Commerce and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic-United States International and ASEAN Integration Project (Vientiane, 18–19 March 2019).

46. Both the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Liechtenstein have adopted legislation on the accession to the CISG.

7. Security interests

Relevance to Sustainable Development Goals 8, 9 and 17

47. UNCITRAL has produced a number of complementary texts in the area of secured transactions: the United Nations Convention on the Assignment of Receivables in International Trade (2001),^[1] the UNCITRAL Legislative Guide on Secured Transactions (2007),^[2] its Supplement on Security Rights in Intellectual Property (2010), the UNCITRAL Guide on the Implementation of a Security Rights Registry (2013)^[3] and the UNCITRAL Model Law on Secured Transactions (2016)^[4] as well as its Guide to Enactment.

48. The Secretariat is continuing to support legislative reforms based on these UNCITRAL texts and **has advised** the governments of Bahrain (desk-based), China (Tianjin, China, 6 December 2018)* and Thailand (Bangkok, 17 August 2018)* in considering the adoption of the UNCITRAL Model Law on Secured Transactions by taking part in relevant conferences and providing material. In that context, the Secretariat continues its cooperation with the World Bank/IFC.

49. As part of its continued participation in the Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) Project, the Secretariat also **conducted a comparative study** of the secured transactions law framework in England and the Russian Federation as a basis for possible reforms in the Republic of Korea (2018 International Conference on EoDB, Seoul, 30 November 2018)*. The Secretariat’s participation in the EoDB project was made possible through voluntary contributions from the Government of the Republic of Korea.

^[1] General Assembly resolution 56/81, annex.

^[2] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.09.V.12.

^[3] General Assembly resolution 68/108.

^[4] General Assembly resolution 71/136; *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-first Session, Supplement No. 17 (A/71/17)*, chap. III, sect. A.

50. The Secretariat continued its coordination with a number of international and regional organizations to **promote awareness and understanding** of UNCITRAL texts on secured transactions by participating in:

(a) The International Conference on Creditors' /Debtors' Rights and Remedies to present the key principles of the UNCITRAL Model Law on Secured Transactions to representatives of ASEAN+3 States (Bangkok, 16 August 2018)*;

(b) The Incheon Trade Law Forum (Incheon, Republic of Korea, 12 September 2018)*; and

(c) The Joint Conference on International Coordination of Secured Transaction Reforms (Madrid, 16–17 October 2018), where international and regional organizations gathered to advance global reforms in this area.

III. Dissemination of information

51. A number of publications and documents prepared by UNCITRAL serve as key resources for its technical cooperation and assistance activities, particularly with respect to dissemination of information on its work and texts.

A. Website

52. The UNCITRAL website was modernized at the end of 2018 to be accessible and in compliance with United Nations guidelines. The domain name has changed to uncitral.un.org. It remains available in the six official languages of the United Nations, provides access to full-text UNCITRAL documentation and other materials relating to the work of UNCITRAL, such as publications, treaty status information, press releases, events and news. In line with the organizational policy for document distribution, official documents are provided, when available, via linking to the United Nations Official Document System (ODS).

53. In conjunction with the Office of Information and Communications Technology, UNCITRAL is developing a statistic gathering tool for uncitral.un.org. Although data for 2018 have not yet been made available, the legacy website received nearly 900,000 unique visitors in 2018, which indicates an overall increase in traffic. Of these sessions, roughly 60 per cent were directed to pages in English and 40 per cent to pages in Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish. In this respect, it should be noted that, while the UNCITRAL website is among the most important electronic sources of information on international trade law in all languages, it may represent one of a few available sources on this topic in some of the official languages.

54. The content of the website is updated and expanded on an ongoing basis in the framework of the activities of the UNCITRAL Law Library and therefore at no additional cost to the Secretariat. The General Assembly has welcomed “the continuous efforts of the Commission to maintain and improve its website, including by developing new social media features, in accordance with the applicable guidelines.”⁵ In this regard, in September 2015, a general UNCITRAL LinkedIn account was established that now has 6,100 followers, an increase from 3,600 in the previous year. This account has replaced the Tumblr microblog (“What’s new at UNCITRAL?”) established in 2014. In 2018, UNCITRAL created a Facebook account that has more than 1,000 followers. Both features are accessible from the UNCITRAL website.

⁵ General Assembly resolution 70/115.

B. Library

55. Since its establishment in 1979, the UNCITRAL Law Library has been serving the research needs of Secretariat staff and participants in intergovernmental meetings convened by UNCITRAL. It has also provided research assistance to staff of Permanent Missions, global staff of the United Nations, staff of other Vienna-based international organizations, external researchers and law students. In 2018, library staff responded to approximately 460 reference requests, originating from over 40 countries. Library visitors other than meeting participants, staff and interns included researchers from over 30 countries.

56. The collection of the UNCITRAL Law Library focuses primarily on international trade law and currently holds over 12,000 monographs, 150 active journal titles, legal and general reference material, including non-UNCITRAL United Nations documents, documents of other international organizations and electronic resources (restricted to in-house use only). Particular attention is given to expanding the holdings in all of the six United Nations official languages. While use of electronic resources has increased, resources on trade law from many countries are still only found in print, and circulation of print items has remained steady.

57. The UNCITRAL Law Library maintains an online public access catalogue (OPAC) jointly with the other United Nations libraries in Vienna. OPAC is available via the library page of the UNCITRAL website.⁶

58. The UNCITRAL Law Library staff prepare for the Commission an annual “Bibliography of recent writings related to the work of UNCITRAL” (A/CN.9/977). The bibliography includes references to books, articles and dissertations in a variety of languages, classified according to subject.⁷ Individual records of the bibliography are entered into OPAC, and the full-text collection of all cited materials is maintained in the Library collection. Monthly updates from the date of the latest annual bibliography are available in the bibliography section of the UNCITRAL website.

59. The Library also produces a consolidated bibliography of writings related to the work of UNCITRAL on the UNCITRAL website.⁸ The consolidated bibliography aims to compile all entries of the bibliographical reports submitted to the Commission since 1968. It currently contains over 10,440 entries, reproduced in English and in the original language versions, verified and standardized to the extent possible.

60. To facilitate a comprehensive approach to the creation of the bibliographies and to remain informed of activities of non-governmental organizations active in the field of international trade law, numerous non-governmental organizations invited to the Commission’s annual session have donated copies of their journals, reports and other publications to the UNCITRAL Law Library for review. In 2018, the addition of issues of the following journals were added to the UNCITRAL Law Library collection: Eurofenix (INSOL Europe), ICC Dispute Resolution Bulletin (ICC), Dickinson Law Review (Pennsylvania State University), Diritto Marittimo Quaderni (Associazione Studi Legali Associati), as well as new donations from the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, the European Commission, the International Centre for Alternative Dispute Resolution (India), Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, OECD, UNECE, UNCTAD, and WTO. In addition, a great number of book donations were received from Beck, Cambridge University Press, Hart Publishing, Kluwer, Oxford University Press, Taylor and Francis, Thomson Reuters.

C. Publications

61. In addition to official documents, UNCITRAL traditionally maintains two series of publications, namely the texts of all instruments developed by the Commission and

⁶ Available from <https://uncitral.un.org/en/library>.

⁷ For the fifty-second Commission session, see [A/CN.9/977](https://uncitral.un.org/en/library).

⁸ Available from <https://uncitral.un.org/en/library>.

the UNCITRAL *Yearbook*. Publications are regularly provided in support of technical cooperation and assistance activities undertaken by the Secretariat, as well as by other organizations where the work of UNCITRAL is discussed, and in the context of national law reform efforts.

62. The following publication appeared in 2018: Third Conference for a Euro-Mediterranean Community of International Arbitration, Milan, Italy, 18 January 2017.⁹ The 2014 UNCITRAL *Yearbook* was submitted for publication in 2017 and the 2015 *Yearbook* will be submitted in April 2019.

63. In light of budget and environmental concerns, the Secretariat has continued its efforts to use electronic media as a primary method to disseminate UNCITRAL texts. Thus, print runs for all publications have been reduced and the 2013 UNCITRAL *Yearbook* was published exclusively in electronic format (CD-ROM and e-book).

D. Press releases

64. Press releases are being regularly issued when treaty actions relating to UNCITRAL texts take place or information is received on the adoption of an UNCITRAL model law or other relevant text. Press releases are also issued with respect to information of particular importance and direct relevance to UNCITRAL. Those press releases are provided to interested parties by email and are posted on the UNCITRAL website, as well as on the website of the United Nations Information Service (UNIS) in Vienna or of the Department of Public Information, News and Media Division in New York, if applicable.

65. To improve the accuracy and timeliness of information received with respect to the adoption of UNCITRAL model laws, since such adoption does not require a formal action with the United Nations Secretariat, and to facilitate the dissemination of related information, the Commission may wish to request Member States to advise the Secretariat when enacting legislation implementing an UNCITRAL model law.

E. General enquiries

66. The Secretariat currently addresses approximately 2,000 general enquiries per year concerning, inter alia, technical aspects and availability of UNCITRAL texts, working papers, Commission documents and related matters. Increasingly, these enquiries are answered by reference to the UNCITRAL website.

F. Information lectures in Vienna

67. Upon request, the Secretariat provides information lectures in-house on the work of UNCITRAL to visiting university students and academics, members of the bar and Government officials, including judges. Since the last report, the Secretariat offered 10 lectures to a total of 232 visitors from Australia, Austria, Finland, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United States.

G. International commercial law moot competitions

1. Willem C. Vis International Commercial Arbitration Moot

68. The oral arguments of the twenty-sixth Willem C. Vis International Commercial Arbitration Moot had taken place in Vienna from 13 to 18 April 2019, and the best team in oral arguments had been Penn State Law (United States). As in previous years, the Moot had been co-sponsored by the Commission. Legal issues addressed by the

⁹ Available from <https://uncitral.un.org/en/library/publications>.

teams in the Twenty-sixth Moot were based, as always, on the United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods.

69. A total of 372 teams from 84 countries participated in the 2019 Vis Moot, comprising more than 2,200 students, 1,000 arbitrators and 900 coaches. The promotion of cultural and gender diversity is important in increasing the credibility and acceptance of international arbitration. As the Association for the Organisation and Promotion of the Willem C. Vis International Commercial Arbitration Moot signed the “Equal Representation in Arbitration pledge” a significant increase of female arbitrators was reached and it was notable both that the Final Panel was a 2:1 female majority and that 58 per cent of the competing students were female, constituting a deep pool of talented women for counsel and future arbitrators. The oral arguments phase of the twenty-seventh Willem C. Vis International Commercial Arbitration Moot were to be held in Vienna from 3 to 9 April 2020.

70. The Vis East Moot Foundation had organized the Sixteenth Willem C. Vis (East) International Commercial Arbitration Moot, which had been co-sponsored by the Commission. The final phase took place in Hong Kong, China, from 31 March to 7 April 2019. A total of 137 teams from 31 jurisdictions participated in the Sixteenth (East) Moot and the best team in oral arguments was the University of Amsterdam (Netherlands). The Seventeenth (East) Moot was to be held in Hong Kong, China, from 22–29 March 2020.

2. Additional moots

Madrid Commercial Arbitration Moot 2019

71. Carlos III University of Madrid had organized the Eleventh International Commercial Arbitration Competition in Madrid from 1 to 5 April 2019, which had been co-sponsored by the Commission. Legal issues addressed by the teams related to an international sale of goods, where the United Nations Sales Convention, the New York Convention, the UNCITRAL Arbitration Rules and the UNCITRAL Model Law were applicable. A total of 29 teams from 12 jurisdictions participated in the Madrid Moot 2019 which was held in Spanish. The best team in oral arguments was Universidad San Carlos de Guatemala. The Twelfth Madrid Moot would be held from 20 to 24th April 2020.

Frankfurt Investment Moot Court

72. The Twelfth Frankfurt Investment Moot Case took place from 4 to 8 March 2019. 77 teams from 23 countries participated in the competition, and the Moscow State Institute of International Relations had been declared the best team in oral arguments. The Thirteenth Moot will take place in 2020.

Ian Fletcher International Insolvency Law Moot

73. The third Ian Fletcher International Insolvency Law Moot was held in Singapore, from 29 to 31 March 2019, with the winning team being the National Law Institute University, Bhopal, India. The Moot provides an opportunity to students to learn about international insolvency law and the use of the UNCITRAL Model Law on Cross-Border Insolvency. It is supported by the UNCITRAL secretariat and offers the best individual oralist the opportunity to visit UNCITRAL in New York or Vienna during a session of Working Group V (Insolvency Law) to observe the work of an intergovernmental body in session and of United Nations staff members providing secretariat services during the session. The interest in the Moot is growing as evidenced by the increased number of applicants, which necessitated increasing the number of participating teams in the oral rounds, from 8 in 2017 and 2018 to 12 teams in 2019 (from Australia, Canada, China, France, India, the Netherlands, Serbia, Singapore and the United States). The fourth Ian Fletcher International Insolvency Law Moot will take place in 2020 in the United Kingdom.

IV. Resources and funding

74. The costs of most technical cooperation and assistance activities are not covered by the regular budget. The ability of the Secretariat to implement the technical cooperation and assistance component of the UNCITRAL work programme is therefore contingent upon the availability of extrabudgetary funding.

75. The Secretariat has explored a variety of ways to increase resources for technical assistance activities, including through in-kind contributions. In particular, a number of missions have been funded, in full or in part, by the co-organizers or the organizers.

76. Additional potential sources of funding could be available if trade law reform activities could be mainstreamed more regularly in broader international development assistance programmes. In this respect, the Commission may wish to recall that the Guidance Note endorsed by the Commission at its forty-ninth session, in 2016, which the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to circulate as broadly as possible to its intended users,¹⁰ is aimed at integrating the United Nations work in the field of international commercial law in the broader agenda of the United Nations through all United Nations departments, offices, funds, agencies and programmes as well as other donors that deal with: (a) mobilizing finance for sustainable development; (b) reducing or removing legal obstacles to the flow of international trade and achieving international and/or regional economic integration; (c) private sector development; (d) justice sector reforms; (e) increasing the resilience of economies to economic crisis; (f) good governance, including public procurement reforms and e-governance; (g) empowerment of the poor; (h) preventing and combating economic crimes through education (e.g. commercial fraud, forgery and falsification); (i) addressing the root causes of conflicts triggered by economic factors; (j) addressing post-conflict economic recovery problems; (k) addressing specific problems with access to international trade by landlocked countries; and (l) domestic implementation of international obligations in the field of international commercial law and related areas.¹¹

A. UNCITRAL Trust Fund for symposia

77. The UNCITRAL Trust Fund for symposia supports technical cooperation and assistance activities for the members of the legal community in developing countries, funding the participation of UNCITRAL staff or other experts at seminars where UNCITRAL texts are presented for examination and possible fact-finding missions for law reform assessments in order to review existing domestic legislation and assess country needs for law reform in the commercial field.

78. For 2018, the released budget amounted to US\$ 74,683 and the total expenditure was US\$ 63,960. During the period, the Government of the Republic of Korea made a contribution of US\$ 22,315 for the participation of the UNCITRAL Secretariat in the APEC EoDB project (see para. 49).

79. At its 51st Session (New York, 25 June–13 July 2018), the Commission appealed to all States, international organizations and other interested entities to consider making contributions to the Trust Fund for UNCITRAL symposia, if possible, in the form of multi-year contributions, or as specific-purpose contributions, so as to facilitate planning and enable the Secretariat to meet the increasing requests from developing countries and countries with economies in transition for training and technical legislative assistance (A/73/17, paras. 188–189). Potential donors have also been approached on an individual basis.

80. The Commission may wish to note that, in spite of efforts by the Secretariat to solicit new donations, funds available in the Trust Fund are sufficient only for a very

¹⁰ General Assembly resolution 71/135, para. 8 (e).

¹¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-first Session, Supplement No. 17 (A/71/17)*, annex II, paras. 2–5.

small number of future technical cooperation and assistance activities. Efforts to organize the requested activities at the lowest cost and with co-funding and cost sharing whenever possible are ongoing. However, once current funds are exhausted, requests for technical cooperation and assistance involving the expenditure of funds for travel or to meet other costs will have to be declined unless new donations to the Trust Fund are received or alternative sources of funds can be found.

81. The Commission may once again wish to appeal to all States, relevant United Nations Agencies and bodies, international organizations and other interested entities to make contributions to the Trust Fund, if possible in the form of multi-year contributions, so as to facilitate planning and to enable the Secretariat to meet the demand for technical cooperation and assistance activities and to develop a more sustainable technical assistance programme. The Commission may also wish to request Member States to assist the Secretariat in identifying sources of funding within their Governments.

B. UNCITRAL Trust Fund to grant travel assistance to developing countries that are members of UNCITRAL

82. The Commission may wish to recall that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution [48/32](#) of 9 December 1993, the Secretary-General was requested to establish a Trust Fund to grant travel assistance to developing countries that are members of UNCITRAL. The Trust Fund so established is open to voluntary financial contributions from States, intergovernmental organizations, regional economic integration organizations, national institutions and non-governmental organizations, as well as to natural and juridical persons.

83. In the period under review, a contribution of US\$ 1,144 was received from the Government of Austria. During the same reporting period, the available Trust Fund resources were used to facilitate participation at the 51st session of UNCITRAL in New York (25 June–13 July 2018) for one delegate from Honduras. Owing to the limited resources, only partial assistance could be provided.

84. Resources have been made available by the European Union and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) to provide financial support for the participation of developing countries at UNCITRAL Working Group III “Investor-State Dispute Settlement reform” which have been used to facilitate participation at the 36th session of Working Group III in Vienna (29 October–2 November 2018) for delegates from Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Myanmar, Senegal and Togo, as the agreement between the United Nations and the European Union also covers the funding of travel to States that are not currently members of UNCITRAL.

85. Resources have been made available by the European Union and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) to provide financial support for building support for constructive engagement in the fulfilment of the mandate of UNCITRAL Working Group III “Investor-State Dispute Settlement reform” which have been used to facilitate participation at the Second Inter-sessional Regional meeting on ISDS reform in Santo Domingo (13-14 February 2019) and to raise awareness on Working Group III discussions.

86. In order to ensure participation of all Member States in the sessions of UNCITRAL and its working groups, the Commission may wish to reiterate its appeal to relevant bodies in the United Nations system, organizations, institutions and individuals to make voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund established to provide travel assistance to developing countries that are members of the Commission.

87. It is recalled that in its resolution [51/161](#) of 16 December 1996, the General Assembly decided to include the Trust Funds for UNCITRAL symposia and travel assistance in the list of funds and programmes that are dealt with at the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities.

C. Internship programme

88. The internship programme is designed to give law students the opportunity to become familiar with the work of UNCITRAL and to increase their knowledge of specific areas in the field of international trade law. Internships are unpaid; interns are expected to cover their travel, accommodation and other expenses. Interns are assigned a variety of tasks such as legal research, collection and systematization of information and materials in particular for status pages of UNCITRAL texts on the UNCITRAL website, assistance to the secretariat with preparing comparative studies and background papers, abstracts for CLOUT and materials for technical cooperation and assistance activities. The experience of the UNCITRAL secretariat with the internship programme has been very positive, and interns have highlighted the usefulness of their experience in feedback provided to the secretariat.

89. The secretariat, in selecting interns, keeps in mind the needs of UNCITRAL and its secretariat at any given period of time, in particular the need to maintain the UNCITRAL website in the six official languages of the United Nations. The Secretariat aims to balance gender and geographical representation, paying particular attention to the needs of developing countries.

90. Interns are selected by the UNCITRAL secretariat directly from among candidates who applied to a job opening posted at the United Nations career portal (careers.un.org). This attracts numerous eligible and qualified candidates, including from underrepresented countries, regions and language groups.

91. From the last Commission session in June 2018 till the next Commission session, 22 new interns will have undertaken an internship with the UNCITRAL secretariat in Vienna. A total of 14 interns will have carried out an internship in the UNCITRAL Regional Centre for Asia and the Pacific (RCAP) during the same period.

92. Most interns were from developing countries. However, the majority of applicants come from the regional group “Western Europe and others”. In particular, the secretariat faces difficulties attracting candidates from African and Latin American States, as well as candidates with fluent Arabic language skills.

93. It is therefore suggested that States and observer organizations bring the possibility of applying for an internship at UNCITRAL to the attention of interested persons who meet these specific requirements. Since the internships are unpaid, States and observer organizations may also consider granting scholarships for the purpose of attracting those most qualified for an internship at UNCITRAL.
