

Check against Delivery
Statement of Virginia Morris
24 October 2012

Mr Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

The Sixth Committee's consideration of the Programme of Assistance has always been of great importance to government lawyers, teachers and students around the world, particularly those in developing countries, who depend on this programme for their international law training and research materials.

The Sixth Committee's consideration of this item this year is of particular importance because it will have a significant impact on the future of this programme.

As you know, the Codification Division began a comprehensive review of the activities under the Program in 2005 which marked the 40th anniversary of its creation in 1965.

The goal is to strengthen these activities to better respond to the increasing demand for international law training and research materials in developing countries as well as developed countries by the time the Programme celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2015.

I would like to express appreciation for the support and guidance that we have received from the Advisory Committee and the Sixth Committee over the past eight years which has made it possible for us to make significant progress in strengthening this program.

Next year we will propose the programme of activities for the Programme of Assistance for the next biennium and for the future taking into account the support of Member States, including financial support, for these activities.

I would like to briefly review the progress that we have made in enhancing the activities under the Programme of Assistance as well as the remaining challenges.

Turning first to publications,

There has always been a high degree of satisfaction with the content of our legal publications.

The efforts to improve these publications have focused on expanding the scope of our existing publications to better serve the needs of the international legal community and expanding our desktop publishing programme to address significant delays of up to 5 years in the issuance of these publications by DGACM.

This year we issued the two publications that we proposed last year, namely, the summary of jurisprudence of the Permanent Court of International Justice and the new volume of the Legislative Series devoted to State responsibility.

As you know, the Secretariat has been requested to issue a report next year containing additional jurisprudence relating to the State responsibility articles. The Codification Division plans to issue another volume of the Legislative Series including this jurisprudence.

The desktop publishing programme has now been extended to include most of our publications.

Most of our publications now include CD-ROMs to facilitate electronic research in developing countries which have limited access to reliable high-speed internet.

We have successfully completed our efforts to expand the scope and improve the timeliness of our publications without any additional resources.

We will continue our desktop publishing programme on a voluntary basis as long as we have all of the necessary resources to do so.

If not, it will take about five years for these publications to be issued by DGACM.

2. Websites:

Websites provide an important mechanism for supplementing traditional hard copies which are still of great value to lawyers in developing countries as well as developed countries.

As you now, the Codification Division has created and maintains over 20 websites relating to various legal committees and legal publications.

This year we created two new websites for the PCIJ publication and the Legislative Series.

These websites are created and updated as needed.

We have successfully completed our efforts to expand the dissemination of legal materials via the internet without any additional resources.

3. ILFP

The revitalization of the International Law Fellowship Programme has also been completed.

We have achieved significant savings by assuming responsibility for all administrative aspects of organizing and conducting the fellowship programme previously performed by UNITAR without any additional resources for the Codification Division.

This has made it possible to consider providing 20 fellowships rather than 11 from the regular budget.

The Codification Division will continue to perform all functions relating to the Fellowship Programme as long as it has the resources to do so

It is my pleasure to inform you that we are now accepting applications for the next International Law Fellowship Programme to be held in 2013.

I would kindly request Member States to transmit the information and application form which are currently available in the e-room and on paper smart to the relevant government offices and universities.

The deadline for applications is 31 January 2013.

4. RCIL Africa, Asia-Pacific and LAAC:

There have been three main problems in the past: host country agreements, inefficiencies resulting from holding the courses in different countries and insufficient funding.

We are attempting to revitalize these courses by finding places in each of these regions where these courses can be held on a regular basis.

This would avoid the delays inherent in the negotiation of a new host country agreement and the inefficiencies inherent in “reinventing the wheel” with each new regional course.

This would not preclude the possibility of holding a regional course in another country in the region from time to time.

Our efforts to strengthen the regional course for Africa have been completed.

We have held two successful regional courses in Ethiopia in 2011 (in English) and in 2012 in French.

Only 5 Member States made voluntary contributions to support this regional course in 2012, namely, Congo, Finland, Ghana, Israel and New Zealand. The AU also made a contribution of 30,000.

Information concerning voluntary contributions is provided in the e-room and on paper smart.

We have just extended the host country agreement with Ethiopia to provide for the next regional course in April 2013 if we receive the necessary funding. We would like to express our sincere appreciation to Ethiopia for its support for this regional course.

It is my pleasure to inform you that the African Union has included 50,000 for this regional course in its regular budget for 2013.

We still need to raise 150,000 plus programme support costs to cover the remaining costs of this regional course.

I appeal to all Member States to provide the necessary voluntary contributions for this regional course.

We have already begun the dissemination process for the regional course.

I would kindly request the Member States from the African Group to send the information and application form which are available in the e-room and on paper smart to the relevant government offices and universities in your countries and also to your embassies in Addis Ababa.

The deadline for applications is November 30th.

We will conduct a regional course for Asia-Pacific in Thailand in November. 32 participants were selected from the following countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Nepal, Oman, Philippines, Qatar, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Thailand, Tonga, Tuvalu and Viet Nam.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to Thailand which is providing significant support for this regional course. We still need about 100,000 to cover the remaining costs of this regional course. So far only 2 Member States – New Zealand and Qatar -- have made voluntary contributions of about 11,000 to pay for this regional course. Saudi Arabia has also made a pledge of 5,000.

I appeal to other Member States to provide voluntary contributions for this regional course.

We will not conduct a regional course for Asia-Pacific in 2013 due to the lack of financial support by Member States. This is despite the fact that we have already received requests for such training from a number of lawyers in the region.

We have not been able to conduct a regional course for Latin America and the Caribbean for several years. We are hoping to be able to conduct such a course in Costa Rica in 2014.

As a necessary cost-saving measure, the Codification Division has assumed responsibility for all administrative aspects of organizing and conducting the regional courses previously performed by UNITAR without any additional resources for the Codification Division.

The extent of support by Member States for these regional courses, including financial support, will be the decisive factor in whether the regional courses are part of the programme of activities for the Programme of Assistance for the next biennium and for the future.

5. The United Nations Audiovisual Library of International Law or AVL

In just a few years, the AVL has become a major resource for international law training and research in countries around the world.

The AVL has been accessed by almost half a million users in 192 Member States.

The AVL gives the United Nations the unprecedented capacity to provide high quality international law training on virtually every subject of international law to an unlimited number of users around the world for a cost of about \$400,000 per year or less than \$1 per user.

The extraordinary educational value of the AVL comes from over 300 leading international law scholars and practitioners, from different regions and legal systems, who have joined the AVL Faculty. They donate a significant amount of time recording lectures for the LS, writing introductory notes for the HA, and contributing their scholarly writings to the RL. They cover all related expenses.

There is only one problem – insufficient funding.

In the past, we have had 2 lawyers and 2 audiovisual experts working on the Lecture Series and the Historic Archives.

Due to the decrease in voluntary contributions last year, we had no choice but to reduce the staff by 50%.

We now have 1 lawyer and 1 audiovisual expert working on the Lecture Series.

We do not have the funding to hire the necessary staff to further develop the Historic Archives or to preserve and digitize the audiovisual heritage of the United Nations in the field of international law.

With respect to the Historic Archives, we are not only running out of money we are running out of time. In many instances, it is already too late to preserve these audiovisual materials due to the passage of time.

We plan to discontinue our work on the Historic Archives at the end of the year.

We also plan to discontinue our work on the Research Library of the AVL at the end of the year.

We plan to continue the Lecture Series of the AVL if we receive the necessary voluntary contributions.

This year 6 Member States have provided voluntary contributions for the AVL, namely Finland, Germany, Israel, New Zealand, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Mexico and Switzerland have also indicated that they will contribute to the AVL this year.

New Zealand is the only Member State that has provided voluntary contributions to support both of the regional courses and the AVL this year.

I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to all Member States to support the AVL.

The success of the Programme of Assistance in recent years has been largely due to the immense effort and dedication of my colleagues in the Codification Division as well as the generous financial support provided by a relatively small number of Member States.

We simply cannot meet the demand for international law training in the 21st century unless we have the support of all Member States, including financial support.

The time has come for Member States to seriously consider the future of the Programme of Assistance and your commitment to promoting a better knowledge of international law in the 21st century.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.