

Check against delivery

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**GENERAL ASSEMBLY
68th SESSION (2013)
SIXTH COMMITTEE**

**STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY OF THE ADVISORY
COMMITTEE, MS. VIRGINIA MORRIS**

Distinguished Delegates,

The report of the Secretary-General contains detailed information about the activities conducted by the Codification Division under the Programme of Assistance in 2013 as well as the proposed activities and their administrative and financial implications for the next biennium, 2014-2015.

This afternoon my remarks will focus on the proposals for the next biennium which are intended to serve as the blueprint for a stronger, more effective Programme of Assistance to better meet the needs of all Member States and to make an even greater contribution to the efforts of the United Nations to strengthen the rule of law in the 21st century.

During the past half century, there have been many hurdles that prevented the Codification Division from achieving the goals of the Programme of Assistance, including the absence of host countries for the United Nations Regional Courses in International Law and the absence of a mechanism for delivering high quality international law training and authoritative research materials on a global scale.

Over the past ten years, the Codification Division, with the strong support of the Advisory Committee and the Sixth Committee, has overcome all of the challenges that have prevented the successful implementation of its activities under the Programme of Assistance – except for one – an adequate and reliable method of funding.

This is the crucial issue that is before you today.

I would like to briefly highlight the steps that have been taken by the Codification Division to strengthen and expand the specific activities mandated by the General Assembly under the Programme of Assistance pursuant to Article 13, paragraph 1, of the Charter of the United Nations.

The main challenges with respect to the International Law Fellowship Programme have been the limited number of fellowships funded by the regular budget and the limited

number of participants due to space constraints in the seminar-size classroom used for this interactive training course.

The Codification Division decided to perform all administrative functions for this training course to save the regular budget funds that were being used to pay UNITAR to perform these functions.

This cost-saving measure, which has imposed a tremendous burden on the Codification Division, has made it possible to use regular budget funds to pay for 20 fellowships in 2013 as compared to only 12 fellowships just a few years ago.

After receiving almost 1,000 applications for this training course in 2013, the Codification Division explored the possibility of obtaining a slightly larger room to increase the number of participants from 20 to 30 without prejudice to the interactive nature of this seminar-style training course. The Carnegie Foundation has generously agreed to do so -- free of charge -- beginning in 2014.

The Codification Division also decided to explore the possibility of permanent venues for the Regional Courses to avoid the uncertainties and inefficiencies of the past.

The United Nations concluded the host country agreement with Uruguay just a few weeks ago. This means that the Codification Division could conduct a Regional Course for Latin American and the Caribbean -- for the first time in almost a decade -- in 2014. The last sentence of paragraph 38 should therefore be deleted as a technical correction.

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ethiopia, Thailand and Uruguay have agreed to host the United Nations Regional Courses in International Law for their respective regions.

This means that, in 2014, our traditional training courses would accommodate 120 government lawyers and teachers from developing countries around the world -- as compared to -- 20 participants just a few years ago.

This significant increase in the number of participants in our traditional training courses still does not even come close to meeting the rapidly increasing need for international law training around the world.

The Audiovisual Library of International Law gives the United Nations the unprecedented capacity to provide high quality international law training and research materials to an unlimited number of lawyers in countries around the world free of charge via the internet -- for a relatively modest fixed cost of less than one dollar per user per year.

In just a few years, the AVL has become a major force in promoting a better knowledge of international law and of the work of the United Nations in promoting the codification and progressive development of international law under Article 13 of the Charter.

It is my pleasure to inform you that, as of this morning, the AVL has now been accessed by 1,007,043 different computers and mobile devices in all 193 Member States. This includes over 25,000 new users since the AVL lectures were made available on mobile devices last week.

The legal publications of the Codification Division are another important part of the Programme of Assistance.

In 2003, there were significant delays of up to five years in the issuance of our legal publications which seriously undermined the value of these publications to the international legal community.

The Codification Division decided to begin preparing its legal publications using desktop publishing software to address a significant backlog in its legal publications, which imposed a heavy burden on the Codification Division and simply cannot be sustained.

Hard copy publications are essential for certain types of legal research and are particularly important for lawyers in developing countries who have limited access to computers; reliable and affordable high speed internet and, in some instances, electricity 24/7.

This situation has become even more serious since the United Nations decided to discontinue sending hard copy publications to libraries and academic institutions in developing countries in 2012 due to financial constraints.

The Codification Division decided to create and maintain a series of websites to promote the dissemination of international legal materials while recognizing the unique value of hard copy publications.

This decision has again imposed a heavy burden on the limited resources of the Codification Division.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

The results of the efforts of the Codification Division over the past decade are before you this afternoon.

The proposed activities for the next biennium offer the most comprehensive programme for international law training in the history of the Programme of Assistance and indeed in the history of the United Nations.

The activities specified in part three of the report would provide high quality international law training by leading scholars and practitioners from different countries and legal systems on virtually every subject of international law as well as extensive legal publications and training materials for over one million people next year – as compared to -- 20 people per year just a decade ago.

The report also suggests a possible combination of methods for funding these activities:

First, by providing the minimum resources required to ensure the continuation of these activities through the regular budget, taking into account operative paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 67/91;

Second, by calling upon developing countries to share a greater burden in covering the cost of the traditional training courses that benefit their lawyers, including asking the African Union, Thailand and Uruguay to pay for about 25% of the cost of these courses and asking other developing countries to cover the cost of their self-funded participants; and

Third, by calling upon developed countries to continue to provide significant funding by means of voluntary contributions to ensure the further development of the AVL which is used primarily by lawyers in developed countries.

As I informed the Advisory Committee last week, the three persons who work on the AVL are funded by voluntary contributions. Due to the significant decline in voluntary contributions this year, they will lose their jobs very soon. This would mean the end of the AVL.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.