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United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law

**Statement by Julia O'Brien
First Secretary (Legal)
Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations**

(Check against delivery)

Mr Chair

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of Australia on the UN Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law.

Australia commends the Office of Legal Affairs and Codification Division for its efforts in implementing the Programme of Assistance as well as the other United Nations agencies which support the greater appreciation of international law. We particularly acknowledge and thank the UN Legal Counsel for his outreach efforts on behalf of the Programme this year.

Operating for over four decades, the Programme of Assistance has proven to be effective in fulfilling need to teach, study and disseminate knowledge of international law as a means of strengthening international peace and security and of promoting friendly relations and cooperation among States.

In particular, Australia supports the comprehensive range of activities in the Programme of Assistance which encourage greater participation in the development of international law and contribute to better knowledge of international law. From the Audiovisual Library of International Law – a unique, multimedia educational tool, to the Regional Courses in International Law – providing high-quality interactive training targeted to officials from developing countries.

This year, Australia was pleased to make an unprecedented US\$150,000 contribution to the UN's 2014 Regional Course in International Law for Africa. Over 30 participants from the African region participated in the Course held in Addis Ababa, with the participants sharing experiences and exchanging ideas to facilitate greater understanding and cooperation on legal matters in the region.

In light of today's global events, it is clear that a world order based on the rule of law is key to strengthening international peace and security and promoting friendly relations and cooperation among States. These are the precise objectives the Programme of Assistance strives to achieve, and its operation continues to be important.

Australia is concerned that the Programme of Assistance has been hindered by a lack of funding. As the Secretariat has described, the Programme is

under financial stress and this stress may lead to some of the Programme's activities being shut down. We are particularly concerned about the potential impact on the regional training courses, noting that the training courses for both the Asia-Pacific and Latin American regions were cancelled in 2014 due to lack of funds.

We can help avoid these consequences. The Programme of Assistance relies primarily on voluntary contributions by States. While the current funding model may need to be reviewed, Australia urges States to increase their voluntary contributions to the Programme of Assistance. By joining efforts, we can ensure the Programme of Assistance continues to provide fellowships and courses targeted at participants from developing countries and the Audiovisual Library remains available to all institutions and individuals around the globe.

Australia continues to support the Programme of Assistance. We take note of the advance copy of the report and recommendations of the Advisory Committee on the Programme of Assistance, and we look forward to further discussions of the most appropriate way forward.

Thank you.