



PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

United Nations Member States

Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Tonga to the United Nations
250 East 51st Street (between First and Second Avenues)
New York, N.Y. 10022

Phone: +1 (917) 369 1025
Fax: +1 (917) 369 1024
Email: psids.sea@gmail.com

**Statement by Dr. T. Suka Mangisi, Charge' d' Affaires a.i. and Deputy Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Tonga to the United Nations on behalf of the Chair of the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) on Item 77: Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law at the Sixth Committee of the 69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly
New York, 17th October 2014**

Mr. Chairman

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the twelve Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) represented at the United Nations, namely the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and my own country, Tonga.

And given this is the first time our Group is taking the floor in your Committee, may I add our voices to those before me in previous days in congratulating you on your assumption of the Chair and to assure you of our Group's support in your Committee's work. Please allow us to likewise congratulate the members of your Bureau for their election to their various posts. We are confident with their support, you will guide the proceedings of your Committee to a fruitful and productive conclusion.

Mr. Chairman

At its 68th session, the General Assembly through its resolution 68/110 authorized the Secretary-General to continue to further develop activities specified in his report, as approved in the guidelines and recommendations contained in section III of his report on the Programme of Assistance. The General Assembly reiterated what had been specified in its Resolution 67/91, where the Secretary-General was requested to provide to the programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015 the resources necessary for the Programme of Assistance to ensure the continued effectiveness and further development of the Programme, in particular the organization of United Nations Regional Courses in International Law on a regular basis and the viability of the United Nations Audiovisual Library of International Law. Members would recall that this resolution also included a request to invite Member States, universities, foundations and any other national or international institutions or individuals to make voluntary contributions towards the financing of the Programme of Assistance or otherwise to assist in its implementation and possible expansion.

In addition, through its Resolution 68/110, the Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its 69th session on the implementation of the Programme of Assistance in 2014 and, following consultations with the Advisory Committee on the Programme of Assistance, to submit recommendations regarding the Programme in subsequent years. This was after concluding that voluntary contributions had not proven to be an adequate method for funding activities of the Programme of Assistance, in particular the United Nations Regional Courses in International Law, and the United Nations Audiovisual Library of International Law, and that, consequently, there was a need to provide more reliable funding for those activities, taking into account the conclusion of the Advisory Committee at its 48th session.

Mr. Chairman,

When discussing the issue of the rule of law at the international level, States have affirmed the importance of developing and maintaining cooperation within the international community through international law and the three pillars of the UN: international peace, socioeconomic development, and human rights. These issues are directly linked with the Sustainable Development Goals, the post-2015 Development Agenda and the search for multi-stakeholder and partnership approaches, all of which are of great importance to PSIDS. Efforts in this sphere include encouraging the progressive development of international law and its codification, support to the growing network of international treaties, international dispute resolution mechanisms, and training and education in international law. These efforts are based on the core values and principles of the United Nations, and contribute significantly to the collective international efforts to maintain international peace and security, promote human rights, and foster sustainable development.

All of these aims and purposes are deeply rooted in the objective for which the Programme was first created, which has become more relevant as a tool in the strengthening of international peace, security and cooperation between international actors. The international community has repeatedly recognised the vulnerability of the PSIDS. Our geographic remoteness, limited economies of scale, narrow resource base, susceptibility to the impacts of climate change, as well as sensitivity to severe disruption from natural disasters hinder our path towards sustainable development.

Notwithstanding these numerous challenges, our developing countries receive great benefits in working in international law, especially from the regional courses in international law, the international fellowships, the audiovisual library and publications. As was debated here last week, when discussing the strengthening of the rule of law, the Programme of Assistance is a core tool for training of international lawyers, particularly government officials, in international law.

Mr. Chairman,

It is under this basis that PSIDS wishes to express its concern in the continued insufficient funding and the lack of regular budgetary funding for the Programme of Assistance, and as a result the cancellation of the Regional Courses in International Law for Asia-Pacific in 2014 again. We note the Advisory Committee is also concerned in this regard, as stated in its report from its 49th session. It also concerns PSIDS that the provisions intended last year have not all been implemented. We recognize the efforts highlighted in the Advisory Committee report of its 49th session to strengthen, revitalize and expand the Programme of Assistance to continue to respond to the increasing demand for international law training and research materials in developing countries as well as developed countries. However, we also are aware that there are continuing financial difficulties that prevented the implementation of some of the activities in 2014.

Therefore, it is evident that the sustainability of the Programme is at risk due to the lack of success of the system of voluntary contributions. In that sense, PSIDS welcomes the recommendations of the Advisory Committee that have been made in this same direction in its 49th session. Consequently, PSIDS urges Member States to take necessary and timely measures to include the Programme of Assistance in the regular budget of their organizations. We further support the recommendation of the Advisory Committee at its 49th session inviting the General Assembly to revisit the matter of funding for the Programme of Assistance, in particular the Regional Courses and the United Nations Audiovisual Library of International Law for the year 2015.

Mr. Chairman,

PSIDS has already stated the importance of international law's progressive development and its core role in the appropriate conduct of relations among States. Thus, the dissemination of the knowledge, study and teaching of international law is of central importance for PSIDS and for the international community in its quest to achieve a world based on the rule of law. Accordingly, those actions, rooted in the Programme of Assistance, should be guided on the alleviation of the inherent economic, financial and social vulnerabilities to which our States are subjected.

Thank you.