



**Statement on behalf of the Group of G77 and China by Mr Mahlatse Mminele, Deputy Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations, in the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly under Agenda Item 82 'The**

**Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law'**

**23 October 2015**

**Mr Chairman**

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The Group would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report, which provides a detailed account of activities undertaken to implement the Programme of Assistance. The Group commends the Codification Division, whose tireless efforts continue to sustain the Programme despite the difficulties with funding. We also recognize the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea for its efforts regarding the Amerasinghe Fellowship on the Law of the Sea.

**Mr Chairman**

This year marks the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Programme of Assistance. This is therefore an opportune time to remind ourselves of the objective for which the Programme of Assistance was created. In this regard, the Programme has become more relevant as an effective tool of strengthening international peace and security and promoting friendly relations and cooperation among States. Notwithstanding the numerous challenges, we cannot stress enough that immense benefits are derived by state officials, of both developing and developed countries who work in the field of international law, especially members of the Group of 77 and China, from the regional courses in international law, the international fellowships, the audiovisual library and publications.

**Mr Chairman**

It is on this premise that the G77 and China in the last years became deeply concerned over the lack of regular budgetary funding for the Programme. The Group notes with concern that no Regional courses in International Law for Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean were held in 2014 and 2015 due to lack of funding. We are still concerned about the critical situation of the Audiovisual Library of International Law and about the lack of funding for the 2014 Amerasinghe fellowship. The situation today is no different, the regional

courses for Asia-Pacific and Latin-America and the Caribbean have not taken place, the Amerasinghe Fellowship was not granted in 2014 due to lack of resources and there is not enough funding for the 2016 award, and the Audiovisual Library depends on securing funds from the regular budget. This commendable Programme has clearly been affected by the fact that voluntary contributions were not succeeding in sustaining it.

### **Mr Chairman**

It is only last year that Member States, through General Assembly resolution 69/117, succeeded in taking the necessary decisions for the inclusion, at the session, of some activities of the Programme of Assistance in the regular budget of the organization. The General Assembly resolution 69/117 is a truly historic resolution directly requesting the Secretary-General to include in the Programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 the resources necessary for the three regional courses to be held each year and for the continuation of the Audiovisual Library. We are pleased to see the resources being included by the Secretary-General in the proposed Programme budget. We are now grateful to the Advisory Committee, under the Chairship of Ghana, for having come up with clear recommendations in order to implement the decisions taken last year.

What is expected at this session is that we, Member States, both at the Sixth and the Fifth Committees, take the necessary decisions to include the regional courses, with at least 20 fellowships a year and the Audiovisual Library in the Regular Budget of the organization; and recommend that the General Assembly requests the Secretary-General to submit under the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017, for the General Assembly's consideration, a proposal for the necessary funding for the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship on the Law of the Sea, should voluntary contributions be insufficient for granting at least one fellowship a year.

It is now for the Fifth Committee to continue the path initiated by the Advisory Committee and the 6th Committee to ensure that we cross the finish-line this year. This would be the best way to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Programme of Assistance and to provide a solid foundation to ensure that present and future generations of lawyers will continue to benefit from this Programme for years to come.

The G77 and China, consistent with its Ministerial Declaration, will support those recommendations both at the Sixth Committee and at the Fifth Committee.

## **Mr Chairman**

On 24 September 2015, the Foreign Ministers of G77 and China reiterated in the Group's Ministerial Declaration our commitment to financing all aspects of the Programme through the regular budget of the United Nations starting from the biennium 2016-2017, including for the regional courses of international law, the Audiovisual Library, teaching materials and publications, the Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship on the Law of the Sea and the treaty seminars. The G77 and China is therefore ready to take the necessary steps to operationalize the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, both at this Committee and at the Fifth Committee, and to consider any additional measures that might be necessary in the future.

## **Mr Chairman**

The United Nations was founded with the conviction that it is international law that rules the relations among States. For a world order based on the rule of law, we need to study, understand, teach and disseminate knowledge of international law. This is the main purpose of this Programme and it has trained generations of state lawyers. We hope that Member States, like the members of the G77 and China, remain committed to these objectives and to taking the necessary steps to ensure the continuation of the Programme of Assistance. The first step is here, at this Committee; the final one, at the Fifth Committee. In both instances, our resolve has to be unequivocal. The G77 and China urges all member states to join efforts in ensuring that the recommendations of the Advisory Committee are effectively implemented and that therefore regular budgetary funding is provided for the Programme of Assistance for the benefit of developing and developed countries alike. The G77 and China is ready to work with all Members both at the Sixth and at the Fifth Committees to make this happen.

## **Mr Chairman**

Allow me to recognize, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Secretariat, both the Codification Division – in particular Ms Virginia Morris and her team – and the Division for Oceans and the Law of the Sea, all Member States who have made contributions to the Programme, the lecturers who contribute to the regional courses and to the Audiovisual Library, and the delegation of Ghana for its clear leadership and its tireless efforts at the Advisory Committee. Finally, Mr Chairman, at this 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Programme of Assistance, I would

like to also recognize the contribution of this organization that this year turns 70 to the codification and progressive development of international law. Let us then renew our commitment to international law through the capacity-building enshrined in the Programme of Assistance.

**I thank you for your attention.**