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Programme of Assistance

Statement by Norway

Delivered by Mr. Andreas Motzfeldt Kravik
First Secretary, Norway

Mr Chair,

Thank you for giving Norway the floor.

Let me start by thanking Ms Virginia Morris for her very informative presentation and for her dedicated service to the Program of Assistance. We welcome the Report of the Secretary General, which covers both the implementation of the Programme during 2015 and the activities planned for 2016 and 2017.

We are especially encouraged to see the number of activities taking place in developing countries, thus empowering legal communities in places where legal resources are often lacking.

(Check against delivery)

Ensuring respect for international law lies at the heart of the United Nations. A peaceful and stable world order is predicated on an international community that respects the rule of international law in all its different forms and branches. Over the last decades, we have seen how international law has grown into a multifaceted and vast academic and practical discipline in continuous development. International law is the product of a multitude of factors and actors. State practice, inter-state agreements, international, regional and national jurisprudence, and scholarly literature from all corners of the world all play a crucial role in the formation of international law. As a result, international law is a refined, but also an extremely complex body of law.

The United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law recognizes the value of mastering the complexities of international law, and in this regard, the fundamental importance of making the most advanced and sophisticated international legal resources available to all.

The Programme of Assistance is instrumental in the strengthening of the rule of law, and in ensuring peaceful relations between States. We would in particular want to emphasize the benefit of the Programme of Assistance for lawyers from all countries, especially those in developing countries.

This Programme of Assistance comprises amongst others an Audio-visual Library, regional courses and fellowship programs, all of which have at their core a mission to promote international law through education and training, and thus contributing to the inception and empowerment of legal communities all over the world.

The Programme of Assistance has educated and inspired some of the most renowned scholars and practitioners of today's international legal community. Many of these are now reciprocating by lecturing and teaching on behalf of the Programme of Assistance. It is in our view not a coincidence that the Programme holds almost universal acclaim throughout the community of international lawyers.

The hard work of all of those who contribute to the Programme of Assistance is not in vain. Since its creation in 2008 the Audio-visual library has been accessed by some 1,3 million computers in all of the UN's 193 member states, and the number of applications for the regional courses and fellowships is staggering and confirms the demand for international law training and research materials in developing as well as in developed countries.

Norway has noted with concern the continued problem of insufficient funding for the Programme of Assistance. Regional courses have been cancelled and office staff have had to depart their positions. Voluntary contributions has proven to be an unsustainable funding method. Ensuring reliable funding of the Programme must therefore be a core priority for us all. Norway has noted with great satisfaction that additional resources have been proposed for the programme budget for the biennium 2016/2017 pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/117

It is the view of my delegation that funding the Programme of Assistance over the regular budget is the only realistic way to ensure reliable and adequate economic conditions. The Programme of Assistance has been a core activity of the United Nations for more than half a century. We must seize this opportunity and ensure the continuation of its global promotion of international justice.

Thank you.