

PORTUGAL

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Item 81

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

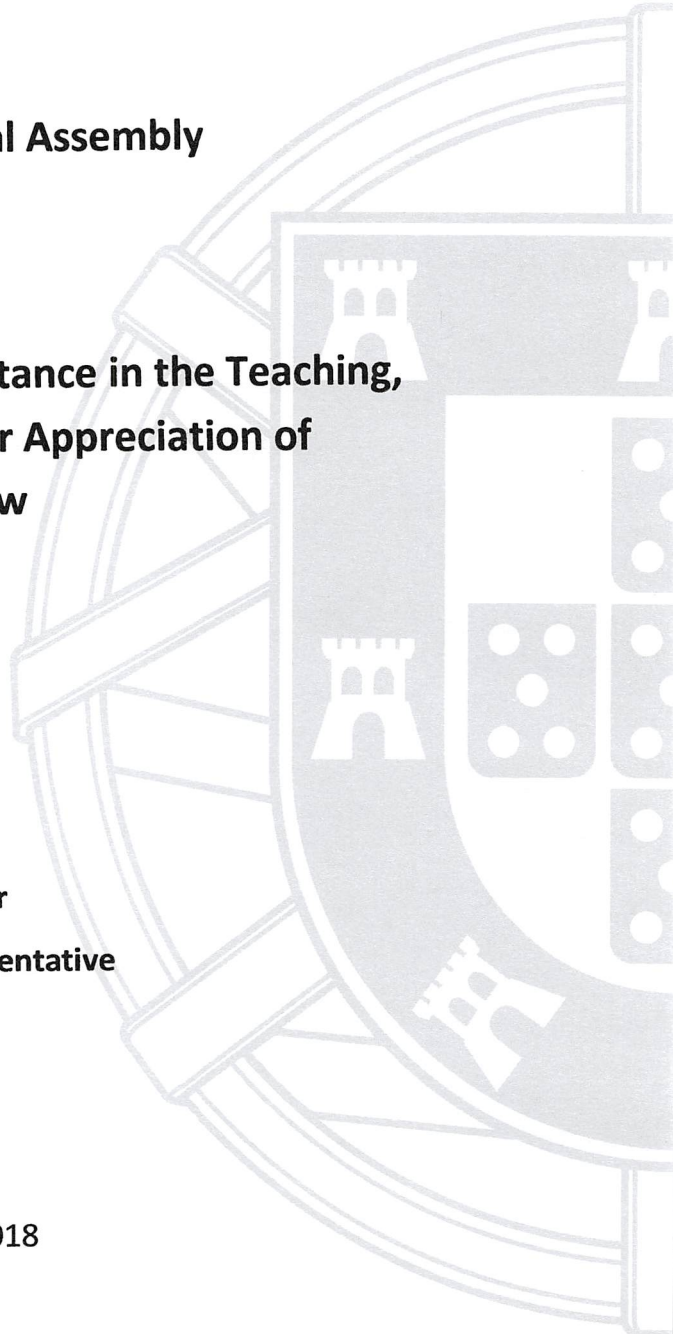
**Statement by
Nuno Mathias
Minister Counsellor
Deputy Permanent Representative**

New York, October 2018

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Mr. Chairman,

Portugal would like to thank the UN Secretary-General for his report on the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law. Portugal's views on the Programme follow closely those expressed by the UN Secretary-General in the report.

Over its fifty-three years of existence, the Programme has played a key role in the teaching, study, dissemination and wider appreciation of International Law and it is seen today, and rightly so, as a well-established means of strengthening international peace and security and promoting friendly relations and co-operation among States. We are pleased to see that the Programme's role is as crucial today as it was back in 1965.

Mr. Chairman,

Today, in a globalized era, both the awareness and the in-depth study and thorough research of new topics and subjects are pressing needs. Therefore, the ever-increasing demand for training and access to sources of International Law can only be read as a good sign, a sign that scholars, students and practitioners are well aware of the importance of having a sound theoretical and technical background for their work.

For this reason, we wish to commend The Hague Fellowship Programme for providing comprehensive high quality training by leading scholars and practitioners, on a broad range of core subjects of International Law. We note with appreciation that this initiative benefits many brilliant and enthusiastic legal minds around the globe, particularly those originating from developing countries.

Mr. Chairman,

As regards the dissemination of International Law, we would like to commend the good work of the Office of Legal Affairs, responsible for conducting research, collecting legal materials, facilitating electronic research, and organizing the Regional Courses in International Law. These Regional Courses are fundamental to take international law to the largest number of people, given the limited number of fellowships available to the Hague Programme.

We also commend the Office of Legal Affairs' successful efforts to make the courses efficient from an administrative and financial perspective and we also want to thank the UN Regional Commissions for providing the venues for this year's courses.

Even though, there is the perception that both the courses and the Programme in itself are not sufficiently well known, notably, by students and young scholars. Thus, we would like to recall States of the importance of promoting the Programme in our Universities and civil service.

Mr.Chairman,

The United Nations Audiovisual Library of International Law, an initiative of the Office of Legal Affairs, is an important tool for the study and dissemination of International Law. We praise this initiative for providing online quality training at a global scale at relatively low cost, in response to the ever-increasing demand for International Law training for practitioners and other legal professionals worldwide. The Library covers all the relevant areas of International Law and we would like to thank all the people involved in preparing and editing all the materials available.

The 2017 report identified a relevant shortcoming – that the materials – lectures, texts and archives – were not reaching the users in developing countries, mostly due to technical reasons mostly related with internet access. Through 2018, the Codification Division has made a remarkable effort to ensure that the materials reach their primary intended destination, users in developing countries, by converting the video materials into

podcasts that are easier to access and download. Even if there is still significant technological work to be developed, this effort is to be praised and deeply thanked for.

Portugal also welcomes that the project to resume the desktop publishing initiatives has remained active and we once again applaud the progresses it has achieved.

Mr. Chairman,

We believe there is still work to be done within the framework of the Programme for Assistance. Bearing this in mind, we would like to recall how essential it is to make efforts to reach the beneficiaries of the Programme in all aspects deemed necessary, including with regard to language.

We trust that all like-minded partners, in particular the United Nations, will continuously pursue its best endeavors to implement a successful half-century Programme and ensure the deliverance to its beneficiaries and making an important contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Funding will always be a challenge to the Programme, as it also is to so many other UN initiatives. We welcome its inclusion in the UN's regular budget, but we also acknowledge that the budget cannot cover all of the Programme's financial needs. Therefore, we think that it might be useful to debate new and creative funding mechanisms so that the Programme can fulfill its mission in a financially sustainable way. The establishment of partnerships with NGO's, Universities, Research Institutes or even law firms might be helpful to get additional support.

Mr. Chairman,

As a current member of the Advisory Committee, Portugal reiterates its pledge regarding the Programme and reaffirms the commitment to continue working for the promotion and dissemination of International Law, towards a more just, free and peaceful world.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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