



## **Statement of Portugal**

**at the 74<sup>th</sup> Session of Sixth Committee of the General Assembly**

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**Deputy Permanent Representative**

**Agenda Item 78**

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

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Mr. Chairman,

Portugal would like to thank the 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.

The Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations underlines that its Peoples "*(...) determined (...) to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained*". The knowledge of International Law is a basic prerequisite for establishing those conditions. And over its nearly fifty-four years of existence, the Programme has been an active contributor for that purpose.

It is widely recognized today that the Programme is 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 nowadays as it was back at its establishment by the General Assembly in 1965.

Mr. Chairman,

In the globalized world of today, there is a pressing need for in-depth knowledge on new topics and subjects. Hence, the ever-increasing demand for training on and access to resources on International Law can only be read as a good sign. A sign that scholars, students and practitioners believe in the positive impact that having a sound theoretical and technical background can have in enhancing the quality of the work they produce.

For this reason, Portugal must commend The Hague Fellowship Programme for providing a comprehensive and high-quality training on a broad range of core subjects of International Law to qualified scholars and practitioners. We note with appreciation that this initiative benefits many brilliant and enthusiastic legal minds around the globe, many of whom from developing countries.

Mr. Chairman,

Portugal would like to commend the outstanding work of the Office of Legal Affairs, including its the Codification Division, on their activities concerning the dissemination of International Law. The Office of Legal Affairs is responsible for conducting research, collecting legal materials, facilitating electronic research, and organizing the Regional Courses in International Law for Africa, Asia and the Pacific, as well as Latin America and the Caribbean. Since their beginning in 2016, these Regional Courses have been fundamental channels for International Law to reach the largest number of people.

We also wish to acknowledge the Office of Legal Affairs' successful efforts to ensure the administrative and financial efficiency of these activities, as well as to thank the UN Regional Commissions for providing the venues for this year's courses.

However, and although there has been a progress in this regard, we fear that the courses and the Programme itself are not yet sufficiently well-known – notably, by students and young scholars. Thus, we would like to encourage States to promote the Programme to their Universities and civil service.

Mr.Chairman,

The United Nations Audiovisual Library of International Law, also an initiative of the Office of Legal Affairs, is another important tool for the study and dissemination of International Law. We praise this initiative for providing online quality training at a global scale and at relatively low cost, in response to the ever-increasing demand for training and information in International Law for practitioners and other legal professionals worldwide.

We also welcome the efforts done towards digital inclusion, such as converting video materials into podcasts, which are easier to access and to download.

The available content in the Audiovisual Library, from the Historic Archives to the Lecture Series and the Research Library, covers all the relevant areas of International Law and strives to be inclusive from a linguistic and geographic perspective. We suggest that the Audiovisual Library could also expand its inclusivity by including contents in languages that, although not an official United Nations language, are representative of a relevant part of the world's population. I would like to recall in this regard that, for instance and according to documentation of the Executive Board of UNESCO, Portuguese is one of the most spoken languages in the world and the single most widely spoken language in the Southern Hemisphere<sup>1</sup>.

Mr. Chairman,

In our view, although much has been done, there is room to further develop the Programme for Assistance. It is paramount to maintain the efforts to reach the beneficiaries of the Programme in every necessary aspect, including with regards to language.

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<sup>1</sup> Executive Board of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), "World Portuguese Language Day", Introduction, Paragraph 1 (Document 207 EX/43).

As happens with so many other UN initiatives, the Programme will always struggle with funding. We welcome the fact that the Programme has been included in the Member State-financed regular budget of the United Nations. In this regard, we take good note of the amount proposed by the Secretary-General to be allocated in the regular budget for 2020, and we hope that his request may meet the agreement of Member States.

Therefore, Portugal argues that it is always useful to debate new and creative funding mechanisms, so that the Programme can fulfill its mission in a financially sustainable way. As in previous years, we would like to point out that establishing partnerships with NGOs, Universities, Research Institutes or even law firms might provide additional support.

Mr. Chairman,

As a member of the Advisory Committee, Portugal reiterates its pledge regarding the Programme and reaffirms its commitment to continue working in the promotion and dissemination of International Law as means to build a fair, free and peaceful international society, as envisioned in the Charter of the United Nations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.