

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY TRISHALA PERSAUD, MINISTER COUNSELLOR OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA, IN THE SIXTH COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY UNDER AGENDA ITEM 79, "UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME OF ASSISTANCE IN THE TEACHING, STUDY, DISSEMINATION AND WIDER APPRECIATION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW (New York, 6 November 2020)

Mr. Chair

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China under Agenda Item 79: "United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law".

The Group of 77 and China commends you on your chairmanship of this Committee and assures you of our full support.

I would also like to express the Group's appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report, published as document A/75/389, which details activities undertaken to implement the Programme of Assistance during 2020, the plans for 2021 and related administrative and financial implications.

We also commend the Codification Division of the Office of Legal Affairs for their continued efforts to implement the Programme of Assistance as well as recognize the contribution of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS).

Mr. Chair

The Group of 77 and China reaffirms its support for the Programme of Assistance which serves as an effective means of strengthening international peace and security and promoting friendly relations and cooperation among States through the dissemination of international law. Fifty-five years after its establishment, the Programme continues to be relevant in furthering the objectives of the United Nations by training generations of specialists, particularly those from the developing countries, in the field of international law.

The Group of 77 and China appreciates that the necessary resources were budgeted for the administration of the Programme in 2019-2020 and reiterates its call for the continued funding of the Programme in years to come. Such funding remains essential for conducting the International Law Fellowship Programme and the United Nations Regional Courses in International Law; issuing publications; developing and maintaining the United Nations Audiovisual Library of International Law; and for the award of the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship on the Law of the Sea. These capacity-building activities help to improve the participation of developing countries in the multilateral arena.

We also express our sincere appreciation to all Member States that have made financial and in-kind contributions to ensure the continued success of the Programme of Assistance.

Mr. Chair

During the reporting period, two programmes were successfully held:

- the Regional Course in International Law for Asia-Pacific which was held in Bangkok from 18 November to 13 December 2019; and
- the Regional Course in International Law for Africa which was held in Addis Ababa from 3 to 28 February 2020.

Unfortunately, and notwithstanding that the necessary resources were secured in the programme budget and preparations were underway, the Regional Course in International Law for Latin America and the Caribbean scheduled for April-May 2020 in Santiago and the International Law Fellowship Programme in The Hague from June to August 2020, could not be held as a result of COVID-19. Similarly, the 2020 Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship on the Law of the Sea, though awarded, had to be postponed.

In this regard, the Group welcomes the efforts of the Codification Division and DOALOS to provide virtual training during this challenging period, including a remote self-paced learning curriculum as an interim means of capacity-building on an exceptional basis. Moreover, in the case of the Regional Course in International Law for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Group notes that the successful applicants were informed that they would be afforded priority consideration when the course could be held. The Group, however, agrees with the Secretary General's report that the in-depth exchanges and long-lasting bonds created with in-person training cannot be replaced. Therefore, the Group wishes to emphasize that in-person training should be resumed as soon as the COVID-19 situation safely allows it.

Mr. Chair

The importance and utility of the Audiovisual Library of International Law cannot be overstated. It continues to provide virtual high-quality training to an unlimited number of individuals around the world free of charge through the internet. The Group of 77 and China also supports the off-site recording sessions undertaken by the Codification Division in various locations in order to promote a broader geographical and linguistic representation of the recorded lectures and to record lecturers who are unable to travel to New York. We note that 40 lectures were recorded during the reporting period. We also commend the Codification Division for its efforts to facilitate access to the lectures for users with limited high-speed Internet on computers and mobile devices through the Library podcast.

We applaud the efforts of the Office of Legal Affairs to promote knowledge of international law in an inclusive manner and encourage its continued outreach to Member States to inform them of how to access and use available resources.

In this decade of action, the Group reiterates the importance of the Programme of Assistance in achieving SDG 16, more particularly, Target 16.3 which calls for the promotion of the rule of law at the national and international levels. The training activities under the Programme will ensure greater dissemination of international law and, ultimately, strengthen the rule of law.

I thank you.