



## **75<sup>th</sup> session of the Sixth Committee**

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

**(Agenda item 79)**

#### **Statement by Portugal – Mr. Sergio Carvalho (Legal Adviser)**

Mr. Chairman,

Portugal aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union on this agenda and wishes to add the following considerations in its national capacity.

We thank the Secretary-General for his report on the implementation of the Programme. Portugal's views on the Programme follow closely those expressed by the UN Secretary-General in this report.

The knowledge of International Law is a basic prerequisite for establishing "(...) *the conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained*" – conditions which the Peoples of the United Nations are determined to establish, as phrased in the Preamble of the UN Charter. Throughout its 55 years of existence, the Programme has been an active and widely recognised contributor for that purpose.

Despite this, it seems that the Programme is not yet sufficiently well-known to the general public. We thus encourage States to promote the Programme in their Universities and civil service, so that students and young scholars are aware of its existence and of application opportunities.



Mr. Chairman,

The Programme has been up to the ever-increasing demand for training on and access to resources on International Law, delivering a comprehensive and high-quality training on a broad range of core subjects which benefits many brilliant and enthusiastic legal minds around the globe, many of whom from developing countries.

This has been achieved by recurring projects in the Programme, such as the International Fellowship Programme and the Regional Courses in International Law for Africa, Asia and the Pacific, as well as Latin America and the Caribbean.

Mr. Chairman,

Portugal commends the outstanding work of the Office of Legal Affairs, including its Codification Division, on their activities for the dissemination of International Law and sound implementation of the Programme, ensuring the administrative and financial efficiency of its activities.

We also wish to thank the UN Regional Commissions for having provided the venues for the Regional Courses throughout the years.

Mr. Chairman,

Portugal must also praise the efforts of the Office of Legal Affairs for, at a relatively low cost, maintaining and expanding the United Nations Audiovisual Library of International Law. This is an important tool for the study and dissemination of International Law at the global scale which has progressively strived for digital inclusion.



As the COVID-19 pandemic has shown, reliable distance learning tools such as the Audiovisual Library have a positive impact in in the future of individuals, communities and nations, bridging inequality gaps.

The content available in the Audiovisual Library, from the Historic Archives to the Lecture Series, the Mini-Series and the Research Library, covers all the relevant areas of International Law and strives to be inclusive from a linguistic and geographic perspective.

My delegation renews its call for the Audiovisual Library to also expand its inclusivity by having contents in languages that, although not an official United Nations language, are representative of a relevant part of the world's population. This could include, but not be limited to, Portuguese, as one of the most spoken languages in the world and the single most widely spoken language in the Southern Hemisphere<sup>1</sup>.

Implementing this idea would have to rely on the active contribution of interested Member States, in coordination with the Office of Legal Affairs, and without any added costs to the UN.

Mr. Chairman,

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, but we also acknowledge that this funding alone cannot cover all the Programme's financial needs.

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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).



Therefore, Portugal argues that it is always useful to debate new and creative funding mechanisms, so that the Programme can fulfil 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,

In closing, 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.