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**Statement of the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations  
Legal Counsel, Mr. Miguel de Serpa Soares, at the Sixth Committee meeting on the  
United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and  
Wider Appreciation of International Law  
(20 October 2023)**

Mr. Chair,

First allow me to congratulate you and the Members of the Bureau for your election to this important role.

Mr. Chair, distinguished delegates,

It is my pleasure to be with you here today for the debate of the Sixth Committee on the United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law.

Monsieur le Président, délégués distingués,

Je voudrais tout d'abord vous exprimer que je tiens beaucoup au Programme d'assistance et à ses activités. Alors que le Programme d'assistance était dans une phase difficile liée aux sérieuses difficultés de financement, j'ai apporté tout mon soutien à l'initiative visant à financer les activités du Programme à travers le budget ordinaire de l'Organisation.

Le Programme a également traversé des moments difficiles pendant la pandémie de COVID-19. Malheureusement, de nombreux programmes de formation n'a pu être tenu en présentiel vue les conditions sanitaires. Malgré cette situation, des centaines de dossiers de candidature ont été reçus pendant la pandémie faisant preuve de l'intérêt continu pour les programmes de formation. J'ai continuellement assuré la Commission mon engagement à mettre pleinement en œuvre toutes les activités du Programme d'assistance, car elles sont essentielles aux efforts de formation du Bureau des affaires juridiques.

Señor presidente, distinguidos delegados,

Me complace notar que las limitaciones impuestas por la pandemia de COVID-19 a las actividades del Programa han sido totalmente superadas: todos los programas de capacitación se han llevado a cabo de manera presencial en Addis Abeba, Bangkok, La Haya y Santiago; se siguen recopilando y publicando conferencias y documentos en el sitio web de la Biblioteca Audiovisual de Derecho Internacional; y se ha retomado la implementación de la Beca sobre el Derecho del Mar en Memoria de Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe.

Aprovecho esta oportunidad para agradecer a los Estados Miembros por su continuo apoyo al Programa de Asistencia. Si bien la inclusión de fondos en el presupuesto ordinario de la Organización ha permitido tener certeza en las operaciones cotidianas del Programa, las contribuciones voluntarias siguen desempeñando un papel importante en la expansión de sus actividades. Agradezco sinceramente a los siguientes Estados Miembros por sus

generosas contribuciones detalladas en el informe del Secretario General: Arabia Saudita, Austria, Chequia, China, Eslovaquia, Filipinas, Finlandia, Francia, Irlanda, Italia, Panamá, Polonia, Portugal y Singapur. Quisiera agradecer también a Irlanda y España por las contribuciones realizadas después del cierre del periodo del informe. Las mismas se detallarán en el informe del Secretario General en la septuagésimo novena sesión de la Asamblea General.

Mr. Chair, distinguished delegates,

I wish to recall that last year I presented my vision and plans for enhancing the training efforts of the Office of Legal Affairs. The proposal to concentrate the oversight of the activities related to the promotion and dissemination of international law under my direct supervision, was welcomed across various bodies, and ultimately approved in the 2023 Programme Budget of the organization. In that regard, I am pleased to announce that, effective 1 August, I have appointed Mr. Markus Pallek as Principal Legal Officer in charge of coordinating the capacity building across the various units of the Office of Legal Affairs. In this role, Mr. Pallek is supporting me in strategically improving the important support my Office provides to Member States and to better assist the several requests that we often receive. I have also appointed Mr. Pallek as the Secretary of the Advisory Committee on the Programme of Assistance, and he will address you shortly in that capacity. The Programme of Assistance is the centrepiece of the training and dissemination efforts of the Office of Legal Affairs, and Mr Pallek, as the Secretary, will be well placed to ensure that lessons-learned and synergies percolate across OLA's various training and capacity-

building efforts. In his broader role, and under my direct supervision, he will implement a strategic and integrated management of our training efforts, leveraging partnerships and replicating good practices across the Office of Legal Affairs.

I would be remiss if I did not express my sincere gratitude to the previous Secretary of the Advisory Committee on the Programme of Assistance, Ms. Jessica Elbaz, and to the Secretary of the Sixth Committee, Mr. Huw Llewelyn, who performed the functions of Secretary of the Advisory Committee in the interim.

Mr. Chair, distinguished delegates,

I thank you for your continuous support for the Programme of Assistance, and I wish you a successful session.

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