

Statement to the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly
on the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship

by

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Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs, it is my honour to provide you once again with an update on the implementation of the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe (HSA) Memorial Fellowship on the Law of the Sea.

With your indulgence, I will also briefly touch upon other capacity-building activities of the Division in recognition that building the capacity of developing States, particularly least developed countries, small island developing States, and landlocked developing States, is a core mandate of the Secretary-General in oceans and the law of the sea.

Over the last ten years, demand for capacity building and technical cooperation in ocean affairs and the law of the sea has grown substantially, as evidenced by a 300% increase in applications for the Division's fellowships and similar increases in demand for national and regional training workshops and technical assistance.

The HSA Memorial Fellowship was established in 1981 to assist government officials and other professionals from developing States in acquiring additional knowledge on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, thus promoting its wider application. The Fellowship is also an opportunity for enhanced experience in specialized maritime affairs and related disciplines, and indeed, applications for the HSA Memorial Fellowship have significantly increased in recent years.

On numerous occasions, most recently in its resolution 78/69 of 11 December 2023, the Assembly recognized and expressed its appreciation for the important contribution the HSA Memorial Fellowship made to the capacity-building of developing countries and the promotion of the law of the sea.

Distinguidos delegados,

En 2024, la Sra. Maria Mercedes Arevalo Aranaga de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela recibió la Beca Conmemorativa Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe sobre el Derecho del Mar. Después de concluir una práctica de tres meses en la División a principios de este año, la Sra. Arevalo Aranaga actualmente está completando la parte académica de la beca que está programada para completar en diciembre.

When she concludes her fellowship, 35 fellows from 31 developing countries will have completed the HSA Memorial Fellowship. Of these, 17 are women, and 18 are men. These professionals are now making important contributions in their respective countries and regions. We have seen many of them return to New York, taking active roles on behalf of their States or other national and regional organizations in important fora and processes related to ocean affairs and the law of the sea.

Distingués délégués,

D'autres activités de renforcement des capacités entreprises par la Division, en particulier les ateliers régionaux de formation, ont augmenté au cours de l'année écoulée : en décembre 2023, un atelier de renforcement des capacités sur le droit de la mer, la gouvernance des océans et l'interface science-politique pour la région couverte par L'Association des nations de l'Asie du Sud-Est s'est tenu en Indonésie ;

en avril 2024, un atelier sur le droit de la mer et la gouvernance des océans pour l'Organisation des États d'Afrique, des Caraïbes et du Pacifique s'est tenu en Belgique, en juillet un atelier sur la gouvernance des océans et l'Accord BBNJ pour la région du Pacifique s'est tenu à Fidji ; en septembre, un atelier sur le droit de la mer et la gouvernance des océans pour les pays francophones de la région occidentale de l'océan Indien s'est tenu à Madagascar, et un atelier similaire pour la région sud-américaine est prévu pour décembre au Brésil. Ceci s'ajoute à plusieurs ateliers régionaux axés sur l'Accord BBNJ qui se sont tenus cette année, notamment pour l'Asie du Nord-Est et du Sud-Est en septembre à Bangkok, pour les petits États insulaires en développement des Caraïbes tenu en octobre à Belize, une autre pour les États d'Amérique latine qui s'est tenu au Chili également en octobre, et enfin pour les États de la côte atlantique et méditerranéenne d'Afrique prévu pour décembre au Maroc.

Distinguished Delegates,

It is now more important than ever for developing countries to build and maintain their capacity to actively participate in ocean-related processes and effectively implement international law of the sea, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, its three implementing Agreements, and other related international instruments. Developing capacity is also crucial for implementing the Sustainable Development

Goals, particularly Goal 14 and the commitments made by States under relevant instruments such as the Paris Agreement and, most recently, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Thus, given the significance of capacity-building in ocean affairs and the law of the sea, awards such as under the Memorial Hamilton Amerasinghe Fellowship must be implemented continuously and consistently. This implies that the necessary funding is made available. As at 31 July, the Certified net assets of the Trust Fund minus programme support costs were approximately 90,000 US Dollars. The estimated costs of one fellowship can be as high as 75,000 US Dollars, depending on the location of the academic portion of the fellowship. In this regard, I am reminded that, due to insufficient funds, no awards were made from 2007 to 2009, in 2014, and 2016. In addition, owing to insufficient funds in 2017, only a partial award was made.

Let me recall that the General Assembly, in its resolution 78/69 on oceans and the law of the sea, once again urged States and other relevant stakeholders to make voluntary financial contributions in support of the Fellowship. These contributions are urgently needed so that a regular award may be granted every year.

The Division takes this opportunity to thank the States that have made the current and previous 34 fellowships possible and strongly encourages voluntary contributions to support future

fellows. The Division remains available to address any questions in this regard.

Thank you for your attention.