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Technical cooperation and assistance

Note by the Secretariat

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I. Introduction

1. Pursuant to a decision taken at its twentieth session in 1987, technical cooperation and assistance activities aimed at promoting the use and adoption of its texts represent one of the priorities of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL).¹

2. In its resolution 67/89 of 14 January 2013, the General Assembly reaffirmed the importance, in particular for developing countries and economies in transition, of the technical cooperation and assistance work of the Commission and reiterated its appeal to bodies responsible for development assistance, as well as to Governments in their bilateral aid programmes, to support the technical cooperation and assistance programme of the Commission and to cooperate and coordinate their activities with those of the Commission.

3. The General Assembly welcomed the initiatives of the Commission towards expanding, through its Secretariat, its technical cooperation and assistance programme, and noted with interest the comprehensive approach to technical cooperation and assistance, based on the strategic framework for technical assistance suggested by the Secretariat to promote universal adoption of the texts of the Commission and to disseminate information on recently adopted texts.

4. The General Assembly also stressed the importance of promoting the use of texts emanating from the work of the Commission for the global unification and harmonization of international trade law, and to this end urged States that have not yet done so to consider signing, ratifying or acceding to those conventions, enacting model laws and encouraging the use of other relevant texts.

5. The status of adoption of UNCITRAL texts is regularly updated and available on the UNCITRAL website. It is also compiled annually in a note by the Secretariat entitled “Status of conventions and model laws” (for the Commission’s Fiftieth session, see [A/CN.9/909](#)). Information on the use and interpretation of UNCITRAL texts is reported annually in a note by the Secretariat entitled “Promotion of ways and means of ensuring a uniform interpretation and application of UNCITRAL legal texts” (see [A/CN.9/906](#)).

6. This note sets out the technical cooperation and assistance activities of the Secretariat subsequent to the date of the previous note submitted to the Commission at its forty-ninth session in 2016 ([A/CN.9/872](#) of 18 April 2016), including those carried out in the region covered by the UNCITRAL Regional Centre for Asia and the Pacific (RCAP) that relate to specific UNCITRAL instruments and subject areas. General activities undertaken in the Asia-Pacific region by the UNCITRAL Regional Centre for Asia and the Pacific are set out in a separate document (see [A/CN.9/910](#)).

7. A separate document on coordination activities ([A/CN.9/908](#)) provides information on current activities of international organizations related to the harmonization and unification of international trade law and on the role of UNCITRAL in coordinating those activities.

II. Technical cooperation and assistance activities

A. General approaches

8. Technical cooperation and assistance activities undertaken by the Secretariat aim at promoting the adoption and uniform interpretation of UNCITRAL legislative texts. Such activities include providing advice to States considering signature,

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 17 (A/42/17)*, para. 335.

ratification or accession to an UNCITRAL convention, adoption of an UNCITRAL model law or use of an UNCITRAL legislative guide.

9. Technical cooperation and assistance may involve: undertaking briefing missions and participating in seminars and conferences, organized at both regional and national levels; assisting countries in assessing their trade law reform needs, including by reviewing existing legislation; assisting with the drafting of national legislation to implement UNCITRAL texts; assisting multilateral and bilateral development agencies to use UNCITRAL texts in their law reform activities and projects; providing advice and assistance to international and other organizations, such as professional associations, organizations of attorneys, chambers of commerce and arbitration centres, on the use of UNCITRAL texts; and organizing training activities to facilitate the implementation and interpretation of legislation based on UNCITRAL texts by judges and legal practitioners.

10. Design and implementation of technical cooperation and assistance activities took place in line with the priorities identified for such activities, which include: stressing a regional and subregional approach in order not only to achieve economies of scale, but also to complement ongoing regional integration initiatives; promoting the universal adoption of those international trade law texts already enjoying wide acceptance, and making particular efforts to disseminate information on recently adopted texts, with a view, if such texts were treaties, to fostering their early adoption and entry into force (A/66/17, para. 255).

11. Some of the key activities undertaken by the Secretariat in the relevant time period are described below. It should be noted that due to lack of resources and time constraints, some of the activities were undertaken by experts on behalf of the Secretariat. Activities denoted with an asterisk were funded by the UNCITRAL Trust Fund for Symposia.

Fiftieth Anniversary of UNCITRAL

12. To celebrate the 50th Anniversary of UNCITRAL, the secretariat participated in the conference “Celebrando El Éxito de la CNUDMI”, organized by Universidad Carlos III de Madrid (Madrid, 21 July 2016) and two events in the RCAP region (see A/CN.9/910, paras. 5(b) and (c)).

Promotion of the universal adoption of fundamental trade law instruments

13. The Secretariat has continued to engage in promoting the adoption of fundamental trade law instruments, i.e., those treaties that are already enjoying wide adoption and the universal participation in which would seem particularly desirable.

14. The Secretariat has jointly organized, participated in, or contributed to the following events which dealt with a number of areas to which UNCITRAL’s work relates:

(a) Remote participation at the World Bank Workshop: “Filling the Gaps — Missing Legal Infrastructure in Developing Countries” (18-20 May 2016);

(b) The 6th St. Petersburg International Legal Forum, to increase awareness among Russian legal practitioners about developments in UNCITRAL of relevance to the legal framework of the Russian Federation, in particular cross-border insolvency (St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, 19-21 May 2016);*

(c) Two panel sessions: “Integration in Small States” and “International B2B Dispute Resolution” at a conference on “Integration and International Dispute Resolution in Small States”, jointly organized by The British Institute of International and Comparative Law, the Open University and the Centre for Small States (London, 19-20 May 2016);

(d) Fifth Meeting of Trade Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries, delivering a presentation on becoming party to the key international conventions to facilitate transit transport and trade (Geneva, Switzerland, 23-24 June 2016);

(e) Opening remarks at the One-Belt-One-Road Inclusive and Sustainable High Level Forum hosted by UNIDO (Vienna, 20 October 2016);

(f) Presentation at the business programme of the Russian Export and Investment Fair (REIF) to further promote knowledge of UNCITRAL and its texts in the Russian Federation (Moscow, 24-25 November 2016);*

(g) Global Conference on Sustainable Transport, to address the usefulness of UNCITRAL standards in law reform efforts in the region and in particular how those standards can be used to strengthen the essential links between transport and international trade (Ashgabat, 26-27 November 2016);*

(h) Round-table session, General Meeting on Research on Law and Justice to discuss major issues of today and future developments in matters of law and justice; organized in partnership with research, judiciary and administration, and authority in charge of Higher Education (Paris, 30-31 January 2017); and

(i) French Society for International Law; part of an “SFDI Day”, hosted by the Center for International Law in Nanterre (CEDIN) (Paris, 10 March 2017).

15. A number of related activities took place in the region covered by RCAP:

(a) UNCITRAL Thailand Symposium entitled “The Future of Legal Harmonization — New Horizons for International Commerce”, co-organized with the Ministry of Justice of Thailand and the Thailand Arbitration Centre, attended by 250 legal professionals from Thailand and from neighbouring States (Bangkok, 8 April 2016);

(b) Incheon Trade Law Forum (Incheon, Republic of Korea, 17-18 May 2016) (see A/CN.9/910, para. 4(a));

(c) 29th LAWASIA Conference, presentation on the past achievements of UNCITRAL in 50 years and the current work and role of the Regional Centre (Colombo, 15 August 2016);

(d) Lecture to 200 Chinese judges on the relevance of UNCITRAL texts and related role of judiciary in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative, Supreme People’s Court National Judges College (Beijing, 26 October 2016);

(e) Presentations on the United Nations Convention on the use of Electronic Communications in International Contracts (e-CC) and the UNCITRAL Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration, 2016 Attorney-General’s Conference, Fiji (Suva, 9-10 December 2016);

(f) 7th Meeting of the International Law Research Committee of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Korea, presentation on CISG and international commercial arbitration (Seoul, 23 January 2017); and

(g) 12th Annual Generations in Arbitration Conference, presentation on arbitration and CISG (Hong Kong, China, 25 March 2017).

Initiatives for a regional approach

16. The Secretariat continued its collaboration with the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). During the reporting period, the Secretariat participated in meetings of the Friends of the Chair Group on Strengthening Economic and Legal Infrastructure (SELI) (Lima, 21 August 2016 and Nha Trang, Viet Nam, 25 February 2017) and two workshops organized under the auspices of the APEC Economic Committee and SELI:

(a) Supply Chain Financing and Implementation of Secured Transactions in a Cross-border Context organized by US-APEC Technical Assistance to Advance Regional Integration (US-ATAARI) (Lima, Peru, 19-21 August 2016);* and

(b) The Use of International Instruments to Strengthen Contract Enforcement in Supply Chain Finance for Global Businesses (including MSMEs) (Nha Trang, Viet Nam, 24-25 February 2017).

17. The Secretariat also participated in meetings of the APEC Economic Committee on two occasions:

(a) The APEC Policy Discussion on Improving Participation and Transparency on Policy-Making and Implementation (Lima, 21 August 2016); and

(b) The APEC Policy Discussion on Public Procurement (Nha Trang, Viet Nam, 26 February 2017).

The Secretariat's participation in the APEC meetings mentioned above was made possible through support from US-ATTARI and the Department of Justice, Hong Kong, China.

18. The Secretariat also continued its participation in the APEC Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) project on enforcing contracts and getting credit, which aims at strengthening the legislative and institutional framework in APEC economies. In that context, UNCITRAL participated in the EoDB project for improving the getting credit environment in the Republic of Korea (Wellington and Auckland, New Zealand, 20-22 July 2016* and Singapore, 3-4 October 2016); the EoDB project for improving the enforcing contract environment in Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur, 29-30 September 2016);* and the wrap-up International Conference on EoDB (Seoul, 5-6 December 2016).* The Secretariat's participation in the EoDB project was made possible through voluntary contributions from the Government of the Republic of Korea.

19. It is expected that the Secretariat will continue to cooperate closely with the Republic of Korea, the United States of America, Hong Kong-China and Mexico in implementing the second APEC EoDB Action Plan (2016-2018). The Secretariat is seeking accreditation to the APEC Economic Committee, which will facilitate enhanced cooperation and coordination.

B. Specific activities

Dispute resolution

20. The Secretariat has been engaged in the promotion of UNCITRAL texts in the field of dispute resolution (for example, the UNCITRAL Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration, with amendments as adopted in 2006,² UNCITRAL Model Law on International Commercial Conciliation,³ and the United Nations Convention on Transparency in Treaty-based Investor State Arbitration⁴), including through a number of training activities and has supported the ongoing law reform process in various jurisdictions. The Secretariat has also developed soft law instruments and tools to provide information on the application and interpretation of those texts (reported in [A/CN.9/906](#)). Given the high rate of adoption of those texts, the demand for technical assistance in the field of dispute resolution remains particularly acute. The Secretariat has jointly organized, participated in, or contributed to the following events:

(a) The Arab States in International Arbitration: Current Issues (Tunis, 14-15 April 2016);

(b) IAI Paris Conference on "Treaty-making in investment arbitration" (London, 19 April 2016);

² *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 17 (A/40/17)*, annex I; *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-first Session, Supplement No. 17 (A/61/17)*, annex I (revised articles only).

³ General Assembly resolution 57/18, annex (model law only).

⁴ General Assembly resolution 69/116.

(c) OECD workshop on arbitration for Iraqi government officials (Beirut, 21 April 2016);

(d) ICCA Mauritius 2016 and the first consultative workshop on cooperation among African arbitration initiatives (Port Louis, 8-11 May 2016);*

(e) OECD workshop on Legal Framework for Investment in Jordan (Amman, 10-12 May 2016);*

(f) 41st meeting of Ministers, OHADA and a preparatory expert meeting (Brazzaville, 15-17 June 2016);*

(g) The 2016 ILA Conference “A Critical Assessment of International Commercial Law Harmonization Efforts” (Johannesburg, South Africa, 7-11 August 2016);

(h) Seminar: “*l’arbitrage et la sécurisation des investissements dans l’espace OHADA*” organized by *l’Institut de Droit Communautaire* (IDC-Afrique) (Paris, 1-2 September 2016);

(i) Joint IMI-VIAC-UNCITRAL Event on Mediation (Vienna, 21 September 2016);

(j) Conference on international arbitration in the Middle East, with the aim to follow-up on arbitration law reforms in Iraq and Kuwait (Kuwait City, 9-10 October 2016);*

(k) Second Conference on International Commercial Arbitration organized by the Qatar Chamber for Commerce and Industry (QCCI) (Doha, 17-20 October 2016);*

(l) Multilateral Investment Tribunal Workshop at King’s College London (London, 21 October 2016);

(m) Panel on Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) Reform at the United Nations International Law Week, organized by the Indian Permanent Mission (New York, 24 October 2016);

(n) 42nd meeting of Ministers, OHADA (Brazzaville, 27-28 October 2016);

(o) Presentation on “UNCITRAL’s Contribution to the Development of International Arbitration” at the invitation of the Arbitration Court attached to the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Budapest, 17 November 2016);

(p) Sharm El Sheikh VI Conference: The Role of State Courts in International Arbitration (Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, 19-20 November 2016);

(q) ICC United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Annual Arbitration Conference with focus on transparency standards (London, 30 November 2016);

(r) Colloquium on investment arbitration in Latin America organized by the ICC Court of Arbitration (Paris, 8-9 December 2016);

(s) IDC-Afrique seminar “*Traités Bilatéraux d’Investissement, Code des Investissements et Arbitrage*” (Paris, 5-9 December 2016);

(t) Third International Conference for a Euro-Mediterranean Community of International Arbitration, jointly organized with OECD and the Institute for the Promotion of Arbitration and Mediation in the Mediterranean (ISPRAMED) (Milan, Italy, 18 January 2017);*

(u) Workshop on “The Modes of Dispute Settlement in Trade and Investment between the OIC Member States” organized by the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT), Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) General Secretariat and International Islamic Centre for Reconciliation and Arbitration (IICRA) (Casablanca, Morocco, 20-21 February 2017);*

(v) Vienna Arbitration Day 2017, jointly organized with the Austrian Arbitration Association, the International Arbitral Centre of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (VIAC), ICC Austria and the Young Austrian Arbitration Practitioners (YAAP) (Vienna, 24-25 February 2017);

(w) OECD Investment Conference, followed by a stakeholders meeting and an intergovernmental forum, “Freedom of Investment Round-table”, (Paris, 7-8 March 2017);

(x) Investment Moot Frankfurt, including a round-table “Age of Insecurity” (Frankfurt, Germany, 9-11 March 2017);

(y) Conference on International Investment Arbitration for the 25th anniversary of the International Commercial Arbitration Court (Kyiv, 17 March 2017);*

(z) Meeting on United Arab Emirates arbitration legislation reform (Paris, 28 March 2017);*

(aa) 2017 10th anniversary Vis Pre-Moot and Belgrade Arbitration Conference (Belgrade, 31 March-1 April 2017);

(bb) 2017 Joint UNCITRAL-LAC Conference: (Ljubljana, 3-5 April 2017); and

(cc) Arbitration in Africa conference: The Role of African Governments in the Development of Arbitration in Africa and the second consultative workshop on cooperation among African arbitration initiatives (Cairo, 3-5 April 2017).*

21. A number of activities on dispute resolution took place in the region covered by RCAP:

(a) Briefing for the Sri Lanka National Arbitration Centre (Colombo, 13 August 2016);

(b) Briefings for government representatives at the request of the Office of the Attorney General, Fiji (Suva, 30-31 August 2016);

(c) 2nd UNCITRAL South Pacific Seminar “Access to Justice for Better Trade in Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS)”, supported by the Department of Justice and Attorney General of Papua New Guinea, the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Korea, the Supreme People’s Court of China and the Asian Development Bank, (Port Moresby, 20-21 September 2016);

(d) China Arbitration Summit 2016, co-hosted by the Supreme People’s Court of China, the China Counsel for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) and the China International Economic and Trade Arbitration Commission (CIETAC) (Beijing, 28-31 September 2016);*

(e) Asia Pacific Regional Arbitration Group (APRAG) Conference “The UNCITRAL Arbitration Rules as a unifying set of arbitration rules for the AEC” hosted by BANI Arbitration Centre (Bali, Indonesia, 6-8 October 2016);*

(f) 5th ADR Asia Pacific Conference (Seoul, 12-13 October 2016) (see [A/CN.9/910](#), para. 4(b));

(g) Two International Dispute Resolution Masterclasses organized jointly with the International Dispute Resolution Academy (IDRA), CIArb East Asia Branch and the ICC-ICA (Shanghai, China, 26 September 2016) and with the China University of International Business and Economics (Beijing, 24 October 2016);

(h) 2nd Asia Pacific ISDS Transparency Observatory Annual Conference, hosted with KCAB and the Asia Pacific Law Institute of the Seoul National University and sponsored by Seoul International Dispute Resolution Center (SIDRC) (Seoul, 16 December 2016);

(i) Conference celebrating the revised arbitration law of Mongolia (Ulaanbaatar, 21 February 2017);

(j) “Training Programme on Chinese and International ADR Law and Practice” with the IDRA and the Macau Legal Affairs Bureau (Macau, China, 23 February-2 March 2017); and

(k) Inter-Pacific Bar Association (IPBA) 27th Annual Meeting and Conference 2017 (Auckland, New Zealand, 6-8 April 2017).

Institutional support

22. Institutional support was provided to a number of events, including:

(a) Somali International Arbitration Summit (SIAS) 2016 (Nairobi, 11 April 2016);

(b) International Bar Association (IBA)-the International Arbitral Centre of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (VIAC) Mediation and Negotiation Competition (Vienna, 28 June 2016);

(c) ICC-ICA training and conference themed “Arbitration in Myanmar” (Yangon, Myanmar, 18-20 August 2016);

(d) CIArb Inaugural Asia Pacific Diploma in International Commercial Arbitration Course (Singapore, 20-28 August 2016);

(e) World Mediation Organization-Thailand Arbitration Centre (WMO-THAC) Mediation Symposium (Bangkok, 23-25 August 2016);

(f) International Conference on “Challenges in Domestic and International Arbitration”, organized by the Indian Institution of Technical Arbitrators (Chennai, India, 23-24 September 2016);

(g) Opening event for the Mumbai Centre for International Arbitration (Mumbai, India, 7-8 October 2016); and

(h) 4th International Arbitration Conference, organized by ACICA, CIArb and the Law Council of Australia (Sydney, Australia, 22 November 2016).

Review of enacting legislation and assistance with legislative drafting

23. The Secretariat has reviewed or provided comments on legislation on arbitration and/or mediation of a number of jurisdictions, including Albania; Fiji; Finland; the Lao People’s Democratic Republic; Macao, China; Malaysia; Papua New Guinea; Qatar; the Republic of Korea; Singapore; Timor-Leste; Turkmenistan and Viet Nam. The Secretariat has also reviewed or provided comments on rules of arbitral institutions upon their request. A briefing note on possible accession to the New York Convention was provided to the Minister for Finance and Sustainable Development of Nauru (3 March 2017).

Lectures

24. Lectures on dispute resolution were provided to: Japanese Association of International Business Law (Tokyo, 18 March 2017); East China University of Political Science (Shanghai, China, 22 March 2017), Shanghai International Economic and Trade Arbitration Commission (SHIAC) and Shanghai University of Political Science and Law (Shanghai, China, 23 March 2017).

Electronic commerce

25. The Secretariat has continued promoting the adoption, use and uniform interpretation of UNCITRAL texts on electronic commerce (United Nations Convention on the use of Electronic Communications in International Contracts

(e-CC),⁵ UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Signatures⁶ and UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Commerce⁷), including in cooperation with other organizations and emphasizing a regional approach. In that framework, the Secretariat has interacted with legislators and policymakers, including by providing comments on draft legislation. Activities included:

(a) Remote participation in the European Forum on Electronic Signature (EFPE) (9 June 2016);

(b) Conference on “Future of Identity” (Tallinn, 1-3 September 2016);

(c) Remote participation in a roundtable on the draft model law on electronic transferable records organized by the Centre for Commercial Law Studies at Queen Mary, University of London (15 February 2017); and

(d) Co-organizing and participating in the United Nations/CEFACT Mini-Conference on “Ensuring Legally Significant Trusted Transboundary Electronic Interaction” (Geneva, Switzerland, 29 March 2017).

26. A number of activities on electronic commerce took place in the region covered by RCAP:

(a) Opening address at the International Legislative Seminar on E-Commerce organized by the Financial and Economic Committee of the National People’s Congress of the People’s Republic of China (Shanghai, China, 15-16 June 2016);

(b) Meeting with representatives of the Alibaba Group on e-CC and UNCITRAL’s possible future work on cloud computing and identity management (Hangzhou, China, 17 June 2016);

(c) International Symposium on the Future of Informedia law: Human-oriented Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Culture (Seoul, 25 June 2016);

(d) Two briefings on the ratification of e-CC for the Korean Internet and Security Agency (KISA) (Seoul, 9 August and 8 September 2016);

(e) Briefings on e-CC and the UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Commerce (1996) to government representatives of the Office of the Attorney General, Fiji (Suva, 30-31 August 2016);

(f) Presentation on e-CC, International Malaysian Law Conference, organized by the Malaysian Bar Council in particular (Kuala Lumpur, 21-23 September 2016);

(g) China-Europe Academic Conference 2016 “E-Commerce Law Forum”, hosted by the China-EU School of Law, China University of Political Science and Law (Beijing, 20 October 2016);

(h) Presentation on “Drafting Contracts under the e-CC”, 2016 UNCITRAL Viet Nam Workshop, co-hosted with the Faculty of Law of the Foreign Trade University (Hanoi, 24 November 2016); and

(i) Seminar on ratification of e-CC, co-hosted by RCAP, the Korea Association for Informedia Law, the Ministry of Science, ICT and Future Planning and the Korea Internet and Security Agency (KISA) (Seoul, 25 November 2016).

27. The Secretariat has continued its cooperation with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) on the preparation, implementation and promotion of the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (“FA-PT”), which was adopted in Bangkok on 19 May 2016. The FA-PT promotes “legal

⁵ General Assembly resolution 60/21, annex.

⁶ General Assembly resolution 56/80, annex (model law only).

⁷ General Assembly resolution 51/162, annex (model law only).

interoperability”, i.e. cross-border legal recognition of electronic transactions and signatures, on the basis of UNCITRAL texts and their underlying fundamental principles (non-discrimination of the use of electronic communications; functional equivalence and technological neutrality). Relevant activities included:

(a) Joint Capacity Building Workshop on Advancement of Cross-Border Paperless Trade and Trade Facilitation jointly hosted by UNESCAP and the Asia Pacific Council for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (AFACT), supported by RCAP (Tokyo, 9 November 2016);

(b) A meeting of the Extended UNNExT Advisory Group on Cross-Border Paperless Trade Facilitation (Bangkok, 22-24 November) and a briefing session on the FA-PT (Bangkok, 25 November 2016);

(c) International Seminar on Trade Facilitation in North-East Asia hosted by UNESCAP East and North-East Asia Office and the Greater Tumen Initiative (Incheon, Republic of Korea, 13 December 2016);

(d) Workshop on Cross-border Paperless Trade Facilitation and Single Window Systems in Southern and Central Asia (Bangkok, 14-15 February) and an Expert Group Meeting on the Promotion and Implementation of the FA-PT in Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok, 16-17 February); and

(e) 4th Meeting of the Legal and Technical Working Group on Cross-border Paperless Trade facilitation and the 3rd Meeting of the Interim Intergovernmental Steering Group on Cross-Border Paperless Trade Facilitation for adoption of FA-PT implementing documents organized by ESCAP (Bangkok, 21-24 March 2017).

Review of enacting legislation and assistance with legislative drafting

28. The Secretariat reviewed: the Electronic Transactions Law and assisted in the preparation of the Electronic Transferable Records Law of Bahrain; reviewed Fiji’s Electronic Transactions Promulgation 2008; and assisted with drafting legislative texts on electronic signature and e-payments in Madagascar (Antananarivo, 7-10 November 2016). A briefing note was provided to the Ministry of Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism of Malaysia on possible accession to the e-CC (2 December 2016).

Lectures

29. A lecture on current UNCITRAL Working Group IV legislative projects was provided to the “UNCITRAL-Beijing Normal University Joint Certificate Programme on International E-Commerce Law: Theory and Practice” (Beijing, 14 June 2016).

Insolvency

30. The Secretariat has promoted the use and adoption of insolvency texts (UNCITRAL Model Law on Cross-Border Insolvency⁸ and the UNCITRAL Legislative Guide on Insolvency Law⁹) by disseminating information about those texts to Government officials, legislators, judges, academics and practitioners and thus promoting their implementation and consulting with legislators and policymakers from various jurisdictions to review enacting legislation and assist with legislative drafting. Activities relating to the dissemination of information included:

(a) An INSOL Europe/R3 conference to provide an update on Working Group V (Insolvency Law) work on insolvency of multinational enterprise groups and to discuss the feasibility of negotiating an international insolvency convention (London, 22 April 2016); and

⁸ General Assembly resolution 52/158, annex.

⁹ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.V.10.

(b) 7th Africa Roundtable on Insolvency Law Reform 2016, with a focus on insolvency of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSM) (Accra, 6-7 October 2016).*

31. A number of activities took place in the region covered by RCAP:

(a) An international conference on Cross-Border Insolvency co-hosted by UNCITRAL-RCAP and the Legal Execution Department of the Ministry of Justice, Thailand in the context of the ASEAN Government Legal Officers Programme (AGLOP) (Bangkok, 23-24 June 2017);

(b) The 3rd Regional Insolvency Conference, jointly organized by the Law Society of Singapore and the Insolvency Practitioners Association of Singapore (IPAS) (Singapore, 15-16 September, 2016);

(c) Forum on Asian Insolvency Reform (FAIR), to promote adoption of the Model Law on Cross-Border Insolvency and use of the Legislative Guide on Insolvency Law in the region (Hanoi, 21-22 November 2016);

(d) The inaugural Ian Fletcher International Insolvency Moot to award the UNCITRAL prize for the best mooter in the final round (Sydney, Australia, 17 March 2017);

(e) The 12th UNCITRAL/INSOL/World Bank Multinational Judicial Colloquium on insolvency (Sydney, Australia, 18-19 March 2017); and

(f) INSOL 2017, the Tenth World Congress of INSOL International (Sydney, Australia, 20-22 March 2017), presenting on current work of Working Group V (Insolvency Law).

Review of enacting legislation and assistance with legislative drafting

32. The Secretariat reviewed enactments of the Model Law on Cross-Border Insolvency by Singapore and the Dominican Republic.

Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises

33. The Secretariat has encouraged participation and dialogue in respect of its work on micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs — Working Group I) through its participation in an academic conference on simplified business registration and discussion of Working Group I hosted by Tilburg University; delivered a presentation and interacted with students, faculty and other presenters at a workshop for International Business Law students (Tilburg, Netherlands, 24-25 November 2016).

Online dispute resolution

34. In the region covered by RCAP, a presentation on the Technical Notes on Online Dispute Resolution (2016) was given at the International Malaysian Law Conference, organized by the Malaysian Bar Council (Kuala Lumpur, 21-23 September 2016).

Procurement and infrastructure development

35. The Secretariat has continued cooperation with other international organizations active in public procurement reform to support the use of the UNCITRAL Model Law on Public Procurement (2011) (the “Procurement Model Law”),¹⁰ its accompanying Guide to Enactment (2012),¹¹ and the UNCITRAL texts on Privately-Financed Infrastructure Projects.¹²

¹⁰ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 17 (A/66/17)*, annex I.

¹¹ Available at www.uncitral.org/uncitral/en/uncitral_texts/procurement_infrastructure.html.

¹² The UNCITRAL Legislative Guide (with Legislative Recommendations) and its Model

36. The aims of such cooperation are to ensure that reforming Governments and organizations are informed of the terms of and the policy considerations underlying those texts, including as regards regional requirements and circumstances, so as to promote a thorough understanding and appropriate use of these UNCITRAL texts.¹³ The Secretariat is following a regional approach to this cooperation, engaging with the multilateral development banks and regional organizations, addressing the role of public procurement in sustainable development, trade facilitation, good governance and the avoidance of corruption and achieving value for money in government expenditure.

37. The main activities and international events in the year to April 2017, in which the Secretariat has participated as speaker/presenter include the following:

(a) Procurement Week 2016, addressing “Modernization, Flexibility and Simplification of the EU Procurement Directive: A perspective from outside the EU Framework” (Bangor, United Kingdom, 9-10 June 2016), and Procurement Week 2017, addressing “Rewriting the Public Procurement Playbook” (London, 23 March 2017);

(b) Conference of Internal Investigators, International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA) (Laxenburg, Austria, 3 October 2016);

(c) OECD Leading Procurement Practitioners’ meeting, including on updating OECD-DAC (World Bank) Methodology for the Assessment of Procurement Systems (Paris, 6-7 October 2016);

(d) Public Procurement in “OSCE Anti-Corruption Expert Meeting: Lessons from South East Europe” (Vienna, 24 October 2016);

(e) Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights’ “United Nations Forum on Business and Human Rights 2016” (Geneva, Switzerland, 16 November 2016);

(f) The second International Conference on Public Procurement Law Africa, hosted by the African Public Procurement Regulation Research Unit, Stellenbosch University (Cape Town, South Africa, 24-25 November, 2016);*

(g) Event hosted by the George Washington University Law School Government Procurement Law Programme on “Perspective on International Cooperation in Procurement — next steps” (Washington, D.C., 9 December 2016);

(h) Series of workshops on Professionalization in Public Procurement organized by the European Commission held in different EU member States as part of the Single Market Forum 2016-2017 (20 July 2016 (remote participation); Warsaw, 12 December 2016; Amsterdam, 21 February 2017; and Zagreb, 28 April 2017);

(i) German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)/Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH event on e-procurement systems in GIZ partner countries as well as in Germany (Bonn, Germany, 23 March 2017);*

(j) WTO workshop on public procurement for Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asian and the Caucasus Countries with the aim to encourage use of the Procurement Model Law in these countries (Vienna, 1 November 2016); and

(k) The African Development Bank and World Bank “Africa High Level Procurement Forum”, addressing “How can Public Procurement make PPP succeed in Africa?” (Johannesburg, South Africa, 3-5 April 2017).*

Legislative Provisions on Privately-Financed Infrastructure Projects, available at www.uncitral.org/uncitral/uncitral_texts/procurement_infrastructure.html.

¹³ See documents [A/CN.9/575](#), paras. 52 and 67, [A/CN.9/615](#), para. 14, and [A/66/17](#), paras. 186-189.

Review of enacting legislation and assistance with legislative drafting

38. The Secretariat has provided advice to the Governments of Armenia,¹⁴ Cambodia,¹⁵ Dominica,¹⁶ Guyana,¹⁷ Kyrgyzstan,¹⁸ Mongolia,¹⁹ Surinam,²⁰ Tajikistan²¹ and Uzbekistan,²² and to local governmental bodies in Argentina, on reform of their public procurement legal and regulatory framework, including on proposed legislation. Within the framework of the EBRD-UNCITRAL Public Procurement Initiative,²³ the Secretariat assisted Egypt with modernization of its procurement system. In addition to a desk review of draft legislation and remote consultations with local experts, the Secretariat participated in workshops on reforms of the local procurement review system, e-procurement and identification of training needs (Cairo, 6-7 April 2016)* and on framework agreements (Cairo, 7 September 2016).*

Lectures

39. The Secretariat participated as a lecturer in:

(a) 10th and 11th editions of the ITC-ILO Master in Public Procurement for Sustainable Development (Turin, Italy, 31 May 2016 and 14-15 February 2017);

(b) Executive LLM in Public Procurement Law and Policy at the University of Nottingham (January 2017);

(c) Module in a Public Procurement Distance Learning Diploma at King's College, London (December 2016 and March 2017); and

(d) Anti-corruption training at IACA for compliance officers from Siemens; the Audit Board of the Republic of Indonesia; representatives of the EAEU member States; the Thailand National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC); and the Central Vigilance Commission of India (Laxenburg, Austria).

Sale of goods

40. The Secretariat has continued to promote broader adoption, use and uniform interpretation of the United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods (Vienna, 1980) ("CISG"),²⁴ and of the Convention on the Limitation Period in the International Sale of Goods (New York, 1974), as amended (Vienna, 1980),²⁵ including by organizing or participating in dedicated events:

(a) "Towards a Global Framework for International Commercial Transactions: Implementing the Hague Principles on Choice of Law in International Commercial Contracts" (Lucerne, Switzerland, 8-9 September 2016);

(b) The Seventh Annual Vis Middle East Pre-Moot and Regional Middle East Arbitration Forum (Kuwait City, 9-12 February 2017);

(c) Co-organizing an event on CISG and the Limitation Convention with a view to providing information about the forthcoming withdrawal of declarations on the scope of application of CISG and Limitation Convention by the Czech Republic (Prague, 24 March 2017);* and

¹⁴ Under the EBRD-UNCITRAL Public Procurement Initiative, <https://www.ppi-ebd-uncitral.com>.

¹⁵ In cooperation with UNEP.

¹⁶ In cooperation with the Inter-American Development Bank.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ See footnote 14.

¹⁹ In cooperation with UNEP and under the EBRD-UNCITRAL Public Procurement Initiative, see footnote 14.

²⁰ In cooperation with UNEP.

²¹ See footnote 14.

²² In cooperation with the World Bank.

²³ See footnote 14.

²⁴ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1489, No. 25567.

²⁵ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1511, No. 26121.

(d) 8th Peter Schlechtriem CISG Conference “Cutting Edge Non-Conformity under the CISG” (Vienna, 7 April 2017).

41. A number of activities on the CISG took place in the region covered by RCAP:

(a) Briefings on CISG for the Government of Sri Lanka (Colombo, 13 August 2016); government representatives of the Office of the Attorney General of Fiji (Suva, 30-31 August 2016); the National Law Development Agency of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights of Indonesia (24 November 2016); and government representatives at the request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand (Bangkok, 25 November 2016);

(b) Workshop on CISG at the request of the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (Vientiane, 21 November 2016);

(c) 2016 UNCITRAL Viet Nam Workshop with the Faculty of Law of the Foreign Trade University, supporting implementation of CISG in Viet Nam following accession, as well as regional introduction of the Joint Proposal on Cooperation in the area of International Commercial Contract Law (with a focus on sales), proposed by the Secretariats of UNCITRAL, the Hague Conference on Private international Law (HccH) and UNIDROIT (Hanoi, 24 November 2016); and

(d) Assistance with the translation of CISG into Laotian, “Lao PDR-US International and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Integration” (USAID LUNA II) Project.

Lectures

42. Lectures were provided on Uniform Sales Law in a course organized by the University of Vienna Law School (Vienna, Autumn 2016); and on CISG for a delegation of 20 Vietnamese judges attending a training programme organized by the Judicial Research and Training Institute, Supreme Court of the Republic of Korea (Goyang, Republic of Korea, 14 November 2016).

Security interests

43. The approach taken by the Secretariat in providing technical assistance related to UNCITRAL texts on security interests: the United Nations Convention on the Assignment of Receivables in International Trade (2001),²⁶ the UNCITRAL Legislative Guide on Secured Transactions (2007),²⁷ its Supplement on Security Rights in Intellectual Property (2010), the UNCITRAL Guide on the Implementation of a Security Rights Registry (2013)²⁸ and the UNCITRAL Model Law on Secured Transactions (2016)²⁹ is twofold — disseminating information about those texts to Government officials, legislators, judges, academics and practitioners and thus promoting their implementation and consulting with legislators and policymakers from various jurisdictions to review enacting legislation and assist with legislative drafting.

44. The Secretariat is continuing its work with the World Bank with regard to revising the World Bank Insolvency and Creditor Rights Standard to include the key recommendations of the UNCITRAL Legislative Guide on Secured Transactions and reference to the other texts of UNCITRAL on security interests. The work with the World Bank includes, in addition, the comparison of key provisions of the Model Law on Secured Transactions with key provisions of Islamic finance law as part of an initiative carried out by the World Bank Global Islamic Finance Development Center.

²⁶ General Assembly resolution 56/81, annex.

²⁷ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.09.V.12.

²⁸ General Assembly resolution 68/108.

²⁹ General Assembly resolution 71/136; *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-first Session, Supplement No. 17 (A/71/17)*, chap. III, sect. A.

45. Activities focussing on disseminating information included the following:

(a) 33rd International Financial Law Conference: a conference co-presented by the IBA Banking Law Committee and IBA Securities Law Committee, supported by the IBA European Regional Forum (Athens, 18-20 May 2016);

(b) Remote presentation at the University of Toronto Global Professional LL.M. Class (26 June 2016);

(c) Annual Congress of INSOL Europe to present the general work of UNCITRAL and the work of Working Group VI (Security Interests) (Cascais, Portugal, 23-24 September 2016);

(d) Annual Conference of the Asociación Americana de Derecho Internacional Privado (ASADIP) and Conference of the Centro de Estudios de Derecho, Economía y Política (CEDEP) to promote our work on security interests (Asunción and Buenos Aires, 7-11 November 2016);*

(e) Conference on reforming secured transactions in Brazil, co-organized by the National Confederation of Financial Institutions (CNF) and the University of São Paulo to discuss the benefits of the UNCITRAL Model Law on Secured Transactions (Brasilia, 26 January 2017);*

(f) Panellist at the 2017 Conference on International Coordination of Secured Transactions Law Reforms, hosted by International Insolvency Institute and the National Law Centre for Inter-American Free Trade (Philadelphia, United States, 9-10 February 2017);

(g) United Kingdom Society of Legal Scholars 2017 Seminar, “The Future for Commercial Law: Ways Forward for Harmonization”, organized by the University of Durham (Durham, United Kingdom, 27-28 February 2017); and

(h) MENA Secured Transaction Reform Workshop organized by the Asia and Middle East Economic Growth Best Practices (AMEG) programme funded by USAID to speak at the session on “A Comprehensive Approach to Secured Transaction Reform” (Nicosia, 13-14 March 2017).*

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46. The Secretariat has provided assistance to Pakistan with respect to the Secured Transactions Law at the request of the State Bank of Pakistan (20 May 2016); Paraguay with respect to the draft secured transactions law (7 and 8 November 2016); Bahrain with respect to the draft secured transactions law (Manama, 20-23 November 2016); and the Russian Federation with respect to their draft registry regulations (Moscow, 28-30 November 2016). The Secretariat also engages in informal consultation with legislators and policymakers from various jurisdictions, in some instances as a follow-up to the aforementioned activities.

Lectures

47. The Secretariat provided lectures on secured financing based on the UNCITRAL texts on security interests in a course organized by the Civil Law Institute of the University of Vienna Law School (Vienna, Autumn 2016 and Spring 2017).

III. Dissemination of information

48. A number of publications and documents prepared by UNCITRAL serve as key resources for its technical cooperation and assistance activities, particularly with respect to dissemination of information on its work and texts.

A. Website

49. The UNCITRAL website, available in the six official languages of the United Nations, provides access to full-text UNCITRAL documentation and other materials relating to the work of UNCITRAL, such as publications, treaty status information, press releases, events and news. In line with the organizational policy for document distribution, official documents are provided, when available, via linking to the United Nations Official Document System (ODS).

50. In 2016, the website received nearly 800,000 unique visitors, an increase from 2015 (690,000 unique visitors). Of all sessions, roughly 63 per cent were directed to pages in English and 37 per cent to pages in Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish. In this respect, it should be noted that, while the UNCITRAL website is among the most important electronic sources of information on international trade law in all languages, it may represent one of few available sources on this topic in some of the official languages.

51. The content of the website is updated and expanded on an ongoing basis in the framework of the activities of the UNCITRAL Law Library and therefore at no additional cost to the Secretariat. The General Assembly has welcomed “the continuous efforts of the Commission to maintain and improve its website, including by developing new social media features, in accordance with the applicable guidelines.”³⁰ In this regard, in September 2015, a general UNCITRAL LinkedIn account was established that now has nearly 1,900 followers, an increase from 900 in the last year. This account supplements the Tumblr microblog (“What’s new at UNCITRAL?”) established in 2014. Both features are accessible from the UNCITRAL website.

B. Library

52. Since its establishment in 1979, the UNCITRAL Law Library has been serving research needs of Secretariat staff and participants in intergovernmental meetings convened by UNCITRAL. It has also provided research assistance to staff of Permanent Missions, global staff of the United Nations, staff of other Vienna-based international organizations, external researchers and law students. In 2016, library staff responded to approximately 490 reference requests, originating from over 45 countries. Library visitors other than meeting participants, staff and interns included researchers from over 22 countries.

53. The collection of the UNCITRAL Law Library focuses primarily on international trade law and currently holds over 12,000 monographs, 100 active journal titles, legal and general reference material, including non-UNCITRAL United Nations documents, documents of other international organizations and electronic resources (restricted to in-house use only). Particular attention is given to expanding the holdings in all of the six United Nations official languages. While use of electronic resources has increased, resources on trade law from many countries are still only found in print, and circulation of print items has remained steady.

54. The UNCITRAL Law Library maintains an online public access catalogue (OPAC) jointly with the other United Nations libraries in Vienna. OPAC is available via the library page of the UNCITRAL website.³¹

55. The UNCITRAL Law Library staff prepares for the Commission an annual “Bibliography of recent writings related to the work of UNCITRAL”. The bibliography includes references to books, articles and dissertations in a variety of languages, classified according to subject (for the fiftieth Commission session, see [A/CN.9/907](#)). Individual records of the bibliography are entered into OPAC, and the full-text collection of all cited materials is maintained in the Library collection.

³⁰ General Assembly resolution 70/115.

³¹ Available from www.uncitral.org/uncitral/publications/library.html.

Monthly updates from the date of the latest annual bibliography are available in the bibliography section of the UNCITRAL website.

56. The Library produces a consolidated bibliography of writings related to the work of UNCITRAL on the UNCITRAL website.³² The consolidated bibliography aims to compile all entries of the bibliographical reports submitted to the Commission since 1968. It currently contains over 9,500 entries, reproduced in the English and the original language versions, verified and standardized to the extent possible.

C. Publications

57. In addition to official documents, UNCITRAL traditionally maintains two series of publications, namely the texts of all instruments developed by the Commission and the UNCITRAL Yearbook. Publications are regularly provided in support of technical cooperation and assistance activities undertaken by the Secretariat, as well as by other organizations where the work of UNCITRAL is discussed, and in the context of national law reform efforts.

58. The following works were published in 2016: Second Conference for a Euro-Mediterranean Community of International Arbitration,³³ UNCITRAL Notes on Organizing Arbitral Proceedings, UNCITRAL Secretariat Guide on the Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards (New York, 1958), UNCITRAL Digest of Case Law on the United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods: 2016 ed., UNCITRAL Model Law on Secured Transactions and the 2013 UNCITRAL *Yearbook*.³⁴

59. In light of budget and environmental concerns, the Secretariat has continued its efforts to use electronic media as a primary method to disseminate UNCITRAL texts. Thus, print runs for all publications have been reduced and the 2013 UNCITRAL *Yearbook* was published exclusively in electronic format (CD-ROM and e-book).

D. Press releases

60. Press releases are being regularly issued when treaty actions relating to UNCITRAL texts take place or information is received on the adoption of an UNCITRAL model law or other relevant text. Press releases are also issued with respect to information of particular importance and direct relevance to UNCITRAL. Those press releases are provided to interested parties by e-mail and are posted on the UNCITRAL website, as well as on the website of the United Nations Information Service (UNIS) in Vienna or of the Department of Public Information, News and Media Division in New York, if applicable.

61. To improve the accuracy and timeliness of information received with respect to the adoption of UNCITRAL model laws, since such adoption does not require a formal action with the United Nations Secretariat, and to facilitate the dissemination of related information, the Commission may wish to request Member States to advise the Secretariat when enacting legislation implementing an UNCITRAL model law.

E. General enquiries

62. The Secretariat currently addresses approximately 2,000 general enquiries per year concerning, inter alia, technical aspects and availability of UNCITRAL texts,

³² Available from www.uncitral.org/uncitral/publications/bibliography_consolidated.html.

³³ Available from www.uncitral.org/uncitral/publications/publications.html.

³⁴ Available from www.uncitral.org/uncitral/publications/yearbook.html.

working papers, Commission documents and related matters. Increasingly, these enquiries are answered by reference to the UNCITRAL website.

F. Information lectures in Vienna

63. Upon request, the Secretariat provides information lectures in-house on the work of UNCITRAL to visiting university students and academics, members of the bar, Government officials including judges. Since the last report, more than 20 lectures have been provided to visitors from, inter alia, Austria, China, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, Turkey and Ukraine.

IV. Resources and funding

64. The costs of most technical cooperation and assistance activities are not covered by the regular budget. The ability of the Secretariat to implement the technical cooperation and assistance component of the UNCITRAL work programme is therefore contingent upon the availability of extrabudgetary funding.

65. The Secretariat has explored a variety of ways to increase resources for technical assistance activities, including through in-kind contributions. In particular, a number of missions have been funded, in full or in part, by the organizers. Additional potential sources of funding could be available if trade law reform activities could be mainstreamed more regularly in broader international development assistance programmes. In this respect, the Commission may wish to provide guidance on possible future steps.

A. UNCITRAL Trust Fund for symposia

66. The UNCITRAL Trust Fund for symposia supports technical cooperation and assistance activities for the members of the legal community in developing countries, funding the participation of UNCITRAL staff or other experts at seminars where UNCITRAL texts are presented for examination and possible adoption and fact-finding missions for law reform assessments in order to review existing domestic legislation and assess country needs for law reform in the commercial field.

67. During the period under review, the Government of the Republic of Korea provided a contribution of US\$ 20,681.67 for the participation of the UNCITRAL Secretariat in the APEC EoDB project (see para. 17 above). No further contributions were received for Trust Fund activities.

68. At its 49th Session (New York, 27 June-15 July 2016), the Commission appealed to all States, international organizations and other interested entities to consider making contributions to the Trust Fund for UNCITRAL symposia, if possible, in the form of multi-year contributions, or as specific-purpose contributions, so as to facilitate planning and enable the Secretariat to meet the increasing requests from developing countries and countries with economies in transition for training and technical legislative assistance ([A/71/17](#), paras. 249-251). Potential donors have also been approached on an individual basis.

69. The Commission may wish to note that, in spite of efforts by the Secretariat to solicit new donations, funds available in the Trust Fund are sufficient only for a very small number of future technical cooperation and assistance activities. Efforts to organize the requested activities at the lowest cost and with co-funding and cost sharing whenever possible are ongoing. However, once current funds are exhausted, requests for technical cooperation and assistance involving the expenditure of funds for travel or to meet other costs will have to be declined unless new donations to the Trust Fund are received or alternative sources of funds can be found.

70. The Commission may once again wish to appeal to all States, relevant United Nations Agencies and bodies, international organizations and other interested entities to make contributions to the Trust Fund, if possible in the form of multi-year contributions, so as to facilitate planning and to enable the Secretariat to meet the demand for technical cooperation and assistance activities and to develop a more sustainable technical assistance programme. The Commission may also wish to request Member States to assist the Secretariat in identifying sources of funding within their Governments.

B. UNCITRAL Trust Fund to grant travel assistance to developing countries that are members of UNCITRAL

71. The Commission may wish to recall that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/32 of 9 December 1993, the Secretary-General was requested to establish a Trust Fund to grant travel assistance to developing countries that are members of UNCITRAL. The Trust Fund so established is open to voluntary financial contributions from States, intergovernmental organizations, regional economic integration organizations, national institutions and non-governmental organizations, as well as to natural and juridical persons.

72. In the period under review, no new contributions were received.

73. During the same reporting period, the available Trust Fund resources were used to facilitate participation at the 49th session of UNCITRAL in New York (27 June-15 July) for delegates from El Salvador, Honduras and Sri Lanka, and for participation in the 29th session of Working Group VI in New York (8-12 February), the 53rd session of Working Group IV in New York (9-13 May) and the 65th session of Working Group II in Vienna (12-23 September) for delegates from Armenia, Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone. In order to allow for broader assistance despite the limited resources of the fund, cost coverage in each case has been provided either for the air ticket or for the Daily Subsistence Allowance only.

74. In order to ensure participation of all Member States in the sessions of UNCITRAL and its Working Groups, the Commission may wish to reiterate its appeal to relevant bodies in the United Nations system, organizations, institutions and individuals to make voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund established to provide travel assistance to developing countries that are members of the Commission.

75. It is recalled that in its resolution 51/161 of 16 December 1996, the General Assembly decided to include the Trust Funds for UNCITRAL symposia and travel assistance in the list of funds and programmes that are dealt with at the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities.