



General Assembly

Seventy-third session

Official Records

Distr.: General
22 January 2019

Original: English

Sixth Committee

Summary record of the 19th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 19 October 2018, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Luna (Vice-Chair) (Brazil)

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In the absence of Mr. Biang (Gabon), Mr. Luna (Brazil), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 81: United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law
(continued) (A/73/415)

1. **Ms. Onanga** (Gabon) said that all efforts to strengthen the rule of law must be made in keeping with the need to promote and disseminate international law through training. In that connection, her delegation commended the efforts of the Codification Division and The Hague Academy of International Law to build capacities in developing countries through training and education activities, including fellowship programmes, that benefitted a large number of diplomats, university students and legal practitioners every year.

2. There was high demand for places in the United Nations regional courses in international law, and her delegation was pleased that 29 applicants had been able to attend the regional course in international law for Africa held in 2018. Gabon commended the efforts of the Codification Division to develop the Audiovisual Library of International Law over the years and particularly welcomed the podcast project, thanks to which audio files of lectures could now be streamed or downloaded.

3. It was important for the General Assembly to allocate the requisite resources to ensure that the activities of the Programme of Assistance were strengthened and maintained over the long term, given the Programme's importance in the promotion of international law and capacity-building in developing countries.

4. **Ms. Brammer** (South Africa) said that the Programme of Assistance made an invaluable contribution to the development and dissemination of international law and, consequently, to the strengthening of the rule of law and international peace and security.

5. Her delegation was pleased that the candidates selected to participate in the International Law Fellowship Programme in 2018 represented a broad geographical spread and that a gender balance had been achieved among participants in the Programme and the regional courses in international law.

6. The Audiovisual Library was a particularly valuable tool for developing countries, as it provided access to information and training that would normally be far beyond the reach of its users. Her delegation

welcomed the efforts that were being made to overcome the challenges posed by unreliable Internet access in some locations, such as the conversion of video files to audio files. Nevertheless, the provision of hard copies of texts remained essential for persons without adequate access to the Internet. Her delegation commended the efforts undertaken to record 50 new lectures for the Lecture Series and to hold off-site recording sessions in order to promote broader geographical and linguistic representation in the lectures. In light of the commendable work that was being carried out through the Programme of Assistance, her delegation considered that the Programme should be allocated adequate funding from the regular budget of the United Nations.

7. **Ms. Shi Wuhong** (China) said that, since its inception, the Programme of Assistance had provided important support for the teaching, study and application of international law and played a crucial role in capacity-building, in particular in developing countries. In that connection, her delegation was pleased to note that the International Law Fellowship Programme had provided comprehensive training for professionals from more than 20 developing countries and countries with emerging economies in 2018. It also appreciated the organization of regional courses for Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean in the past year, as well as the gender balance that had been achieved among participants in those courses. Her delegation welcomed the enrichment of the Audiovisual Library and hoped that the *International Law Handbook*, which had been published in English and French, would soon be available in the rest of the official languages of the United Nations as well.

8. China attached great importance to the teaching and study of international law and had always actively supported the Programme of Assistance, including through the provision of financial support for many years. In 2018, her Government had contributed \$20,000 for the regional courses for Africa and Asia-Pacific. China had also contributed directly to capacity-building in international law in Asian and African countries through cooperative projects. In 2018, the fourth Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization training programme had provided training for more than 40 legal officials from Asia and Africa.

9. China stood ready to cooperate with other parties to continue to support the Programme of Assistance, contribute to the teaching, study and dissemination of international law and enhance capacity-building in developing countries.

10. **Ms. Melikbekyan** (Russian Federation) said that as a result of the funding provided to the Programme of

Assistance from the regular budget, the Programme had become more stable. The Codification Division had been able to continue to hold the regional courses in international law, to run the International Law Fellowship Programme and to operate the Audiovisual Library – activities that would have otherwise been suspended owing to a shortfall in voluntary contributions. The Codification Division staff should be recognized for their efforts to preserve and develop the Programme, which was important for the promotion of the rule of law at the international level.

11. **Ms. Pierce** (United States of America) said that knowledge of international law was key to furthering the rule of law at all levels. The Programme of Assistance continued to make an indispensable contribution to the education of students and practitioners of international law and merited ongoing strong support. As a member of the Advisory Committee on the United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law, the United States had been pleased by the Programme's notable progress in improving the accessibility and reach of the Audiovisual Library and enhancing the diversity of the lecturers participating in the Lecture Series. Her delegation hoped that the podcast project would further increase the accessibility of the Audiovisual Library in developing countries. It also welcomed the publication of the *International Law Handbook* in French.

12. With regard to the efficiency of the Programme of Assistance, her delegation welcomed the efforts that had been made to provide as many fellowships as possible, within existing resources, in order to accommodate the largest possible number of students. It was grateful to the States and organizations that had made in-kind and financial contributions to those courses and noted the cost savings that had been achieved by hosting the regional courses at United Nations regional commissions.

13. Her delegation appreciated the creative ways in which the Codification Division had managed to maintain important programmes despite limited resources and encouraged it to continue its commendable efforts to secure voluntary contributions for the Programme. There was no question that the Programme's activities were valuable and worthy of support.

14. **Mr. García Moritán** (Argentina) said that, as a member of the Advisory Committee, Argentina placed great importance on the dissemination of international law and, consequently, on the International Law Fellowship Programme and the regional courses in international law. The objectives of the Programme of Assistance should be to build capacities in developing

countries, make documents available in the official languages of the United Nations and provide effective means of accessing those documents, in particular for persons in developing countries.

15. His delegation welcomed the progress that had been made over the past year with regard to the regional courses, the Audiovisual Library and the continuation of the desktop publishing activities that had been resumed in 2017. It was also pleased that funding from the regular budget had made it possible to implement all the activities planned for 2018. His delegation considered that the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship should be funded from the regular budget and regretted that the current balance of the fund might not be sufficient to award a standard fellowship for 2019.

16. **Mr. Gorostegui** (Chile) said that the Programme of Assistance was one of the most powerful tools that the United Nations system had at its disposal for the promotion of international law, something which Chile fully supported, since better understanding of and respect for the rules and principles governing the international community were essential for the establishment of solid international relations at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels.

17. His delegation particularly welcomed the increase in the regional, linguistic and gender diversity of the lectures in the Audiovisual Library, which now included lectures by Spanish-speaking women from the Latin America and Caribbean region; the enhanced accessibility of the Audiovisual Library, which was partly due to the completion of the podcast project; and the organization of three regional courses. Chile had had the honour to collaborate in the organization of the regional course for Latin America and the Caribbean, held at the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in Santiago in 2018, and it hoped that the course would be held there again in future years, given the advantages associated with holding the courses at United Nations regional commissions.

18. **Ms. Rivera Sánchez** (El Salvador) said that international law was constantly changing to meet the requirements of a continuously evolving international society, now encompassing new topics such as the protection of the environment, the regulation of labour migration, and the combating of drug trafficking and terrorism. The study, dissemination and wider appreciation of international law were essential to enable States to fulfil their obligations in such areas, and also promoted economic and social development and international peace and security. The Programme of

Assistance had made a significant contribution over the years in that regard.

19. Her delegation was pleased with the success of the regional course in international law for Latin America and the Caribbean, which had been attended by 25 students from 21 States, including a representative from her country. El Salvador highly appreciated the International Law Fellowship Programme, which provided an invaluable opportunity for strengthening the capacities of developing countries and created a ripple effect as knowledge was passed on within national professional and academic sectors. It was essential to continue to make legal publications available and to operate the Audiovisual Library, which was an essential resource for disseminating international law, in particular in countries where specialized programmes were not available. The further strengthening of the various components of the Programme of Assistance, which together had contributed to the training of professionals from different regions and legal systems, should remain a priority.

20. **Mr. Fintakpa Lamega** (Togo) said that his delegation was pleased that the International Law Fellowship Programme and three regional courses had been conducted in 2018. Togo had been represented in the International Law Fellowship Programme and the regional course in international law for Africa. His delegation appreciated the choice of topics covered and the abundance of legal texts provided to participants and noted that the resources included in the programme budget would provide for the Fellowship Programme and the three regional courses to be conducted in 2019. His delegation encouraged the Codification Division to consider the possibility of increasing the number of fellowships funded from the regular budget for both the Fellowship Programme and the regional courses, in light of the ever-increasing demand. Togo had benefitted from the Programme of Assistance and, as a result, strongly supported its activities, which made an important contribution to building the capacities of the practitioners, instructors, international organization officials and government legal advisers who participated in them.

21. His delegation welcomed the guidance that had been provided by the Advisory Committee since the adoption of General Assembly resolution [70/116](#) in 2015 but wished to stress the need to ensure adequate funding for the continued operation and development of the Programme of Assistance beyond 2019 through the provision of sufficient resources under the next programme budget.

22. **Ms. Sande** (Uruguay) said that the dissemination and teaching of international law in all States was crucial, since international law provided the foundation for relations among States and a framework for cooperation, agreement and maintenance of peace and security. Knowledge of international law also helped in the promotion of the rule of law at the national and international levels.

23. Having hosted the regional course in international law for Latin America and the Caribbean in 2016, Uruguay could attest to the high quality of the courses and the contribution that they made to the dissemination and codification of international law. The courses should continue to run and perhaps be further improved. In that connection, it might be useful to develop stronger links between the courses and experts, academics, international law associations and local universities. It would also be beneficial to increase attendance by offering a greater number of fellowships and making more places available for local applicants. Only 21 of the 260 applicants for the 2018 International Law Fellowship Programme had been accepted. Similarly, 102 candidates had applied for the 2018 regional course for Latin America and the Caribbean but only 25 had participated in it, including 5 self-funded candidates. Even self-funded applicants were not guaranteed acceptance, since places were very limited. Increasing the number of available places would improve the quality of the courses, by enabling a greater exchange of views, and the further dissemination of international law.

24. Her delegation also supported the continued operation and enhancement of the Audiovisual Library, which was a very valuable resource, as it enabled high-quality instruction in international law to be delivered to a wide audience at a low cost.

25. **Mr. Gertze** (Namibia) said that his country's Constitution provided that the State must endeavour to foster respect for international law and treaty obligations in its international relations. The wider appreciation and application of international law facilitated the maintenance of international peace and security, a prerequisite for social and economic development, by enabling States to stand on an equal footing in their relations with one another and peacefully address their challenges. In that light, the benefit of the Programme of Assistance, in particular to developing countries, could not be overemphasized. As a member of the African Union, Namibia noted with satisfaction that 191 of the over 260 applications for the International Law Fellowship Programme held in 2018 had been received from African States. That was a clear indication of the value that Africa attached to the

Programme of Assistance, which, moreover, had been established as the result of an initiative spearheaded by Ghana.

26. National, regional and continental efforts to establish and strengthen international law programmes were also important for the achievement of the objectives of the Programme of Assistance. The annual African Union Forum on International Law, for example, had accelerated the dissemination and wider appreciation of international law in Africa.

27. A number of government officials and other professionals from Namibia had benefitted from participating in the regional courses in international law for Africa and other initiatives under the Programme of Assistance over the years. The knowledge they had gained had contributed to the application by Namibia of the general rules of public international law and binding international agreements. Many of his country's legal practitioners and law students also continued to rely on materials that were easily accessible through the Audiovisual Library. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the substantial increase in the quantity and diversity of the lectures available on the Library's website. The Codification Division should consider making the *SADC Law Journal*, available through the Audiovisual Library. The *Journal* helped to raise awareness of the law within the Southern African Development Community,

28. **Mr. Tōnē** (Tonga) said that his delegation welcomed the ongoing efforts undertaken under the Programme of Assistance. The Programme played an important role in building and enhancing understanding of international law in small island developing States. Its various initiatives had contributed significantly to building the capacity of legal advisers in Tonga.

29. His delegation encouraged the Advisory Committee to schedule its future meetings in such a way as to ensure the timely distribution of the annual report of the Secretary-General.

30. Tonga commended the Office of Legal Affairs for its tireless efforts to support the Programme of Assistance, despite its limited resources. His delegation was pleased with the budget allocation to the Programme for the biennium 2018–2019. It welcomed the support provided by Thailand, New Zealand and United Nations agencies and regional offices for the regional course in international law for Asia-Pacific that had been held in December 2017, and also appreciated the generosity of States that had made voluntary contributions to ensure the continuation and strengthening of the Programme of Assistance. Tonga

encouraged States to continue to support the Programme, including through financial contributions.

31. Although the Programme of Assistance had been established as a means of strengthening international peace and security and promoting friendly relations and cooperation among States, it was primarily a vehicle for promoting the understanding of international law, in particular with regard to the rule of law at the international and national levels.

32. As a small island developing State, Tonga had limited human, technical and financial capacity. Its inability to employ legal practitioners at the Office of the Attorney-General and other ministries on a permanent basis meant that adequate and sustained assistance provided through the Programme of Assistance was crucial to building the country's capacity to address international legal issues and actively engage in international forums. First-hand experience of international negotiations was also extremely effective in building the capacity of legal advisers specializing in international law and its associated processes. In that connection, his delegation was grateful to Italy for enabling three women civil servants to undertake year-long fellowships at the Permanent Mission of Tonga to the United Nations.

33. **Mr. Botto** (Monaco) said that the Programme of Assistance contributed to international peace and security and promoted understanding, friendly relations and cooperation between States. It was critical to improve access to legal resources for developing countries, where high-speed Internet connections were limited at a time when new technologies, including information and communications technologies, were becoming an increasingly important part of daily life. The Monaco Red Cross had supported an initiative of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to develop an e-learning platform with modules on international humanitarian law, practical information and language training. Content published by the International Committee of the Red Cross could thus be accessed through the website of the Monaco Red Cross.

34. International law should be accessible to practitioners and students in their own language. In particular, publications, seminars and courses should be made available in French, which was the fifth most widely spoken language in the world. Only through multilingualism could the true diversity of legal systems and the richness of legal thought and international jurisprudence come into view. The Institute for the Economic Law of the Sea (INDEMER), for example, had been established in Monaco in 1985 with the aim of

bringing together international law of the sea experts and publishing relevant works, including doctorate theses. Every year the Institute published the *Annuaire du droit de la mer*, which contained an overview of recent developments in maritime law and an in-depth analysis of related issues.

35. Since 2003, his Government had been making a voluntary contribution each year to the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship on the Law of the Sea and had been represented on the selection panel for the award of the Fellowship.

36. **Mr. Horna** (Peru) said that his Government recognized the importance of continuing to strengthen the various components of the Programme of Assistance and therefore welcomed a number of training activities had been organized in 2018, including the International Law Fellowship Programme, held in The Hague, and the regional course in international law for Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Santiago. His Government also supported the work of the Audiovisual Library and welcomed the broader geographical, linguistic and gender representation of its lectures. In that connection, it was gratifying that a team from the Office of Legal Affairs had visited Peru to record lectures by Peruvian lecturers. Similarly, in the interests of efficiency, the Programme of Assistance should take into account the activities undertaken by associations of legal scholars to disseminate international law in many regions of the world. The Office of Legal Affairs and the Codification Division were also to be commended on the work done to prepare legal materials for publication.

37. **Mr. Islam** (Bangladesh) said that the Programme of Assistance played a catalytic role in enhancing the capacity of developing countries to achieve the relevant goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He urged the Secretariat to give preference to participants from the least developed countries and to ensure that the seminars and lectures offered through the International Law Fellowship Programme exposed participants to emerging issues in international law. The participants' feedback and suggestions should be included in the reports of the Secretary-General on the Programme.

38. His Government looked forward to the regional course in international law for Asia-Pacific, to be held in 2019 in Bangkok, and thanked the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific for providing in-kind support for the course. The growing participation by women, who accounted for more than 50 per cent of the participants in the International Law Fellowship Programme and the regional courses in 2018, was a very good sign and was to be encouraged.

He was concerned, however, by the consistently low number of applications to the Programme from Asia-Pacific. The Codification Division should identify the possible reasons for such low levels of participation and address them.

39. It was advisable for United Nations country teams to be enlisted to disseminate information about the Audiovisual Library to target audiences in developing countries. The Codification Division was to be commended on its continuation of desktop publishing activities in 2018 and for its commitment to continue to explore ways of sustaining those activities in 2019 and beyond. The necessary funding for that useful initiative should be allocated from the regular budget for 2018–2019. He also encouraged Member States to make generous voluntary contributions to the Programme of Assistance, including to the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship on the Law of the Sea.

40. **Mr. Khng** (Singapore) said that his Government strongly identified with the Programme's goals and purposes and was honoured to serve on its Advisory Committee. The Codification Division had made immense contributions to the promotion of international law through the International Law Fellowship Programme and its regional courses in international law. The Division should maintain the high standards of those programmes and ensure that the invited lecturers represented the different geographic regions and the principal legal systems of the world.

41. The Audiovisual Library was an invaluable resource. Singapore supported the expansion of the Library's Lecture Series with the addition of lectures by outstanding young international law scholars, including from the Asia-Pacific region. The Codification Division was to be commended on the completion of its project to make all lectures in the Lecture Series available as podcasts, which enabled users in regions where high-speed Internet was not available to access that content more easily. An effort should be made to keep up-to-date any weblinks to content that could be accessed free of charge through the Library's website, which would help users who did not have access to fee-based legal databases. It would also be useful for a search engine to be added to the website of the Audiovisual Library.

42. For its part, his Government was offering courses in international law for participants from developing countries through the Singapore Cooperation Programme, including a course on the law of the sea, offered in 2018, and another on international dispute resolution, to be offered in 2019.

43. **Mr. Abdullahi** (Nigeria) said that the teaching, study, dissemination and wider appreciation of international law contributed to a greater understanding of complex global issues. His Government therefore supported the additional funding included in the regular budget for the biennium 2018–2019 for the Programme of Assistance.

44. The Office of Legal Affairs and the Codification Division were to be commended for their tireless efforts to implement the Programme of Assistance, which benefitted students and practitioners of international law worldwide. The regional courses in international law, such as the one held in Addis Ababa in 2018, and the Audiovisual Library contributed to a wider understanding of international law. The United Nations should promote the use of the Library and the Codification Division should explore ways to continue the desktop publishing activities that had been resumed in 2017.

45. **Mr. Atlassi** (Morocco) said that the Programme of Assistance was crucial for the dissemination of international law and that all the parties that contributed to its implementation, including the Codification Division, The Hague Academy of International Law, the host countries of the regional courses and the African Institute of International Law, should be commended. Funds for the maintenance and development of the Programme should be allocated from the regular budget for the biennium 2020–2021. More funding should be made available through fellowships and States should increase their voluntary contributions to the Programme.

46. Using the resources allocated in the programme budget, the Codification Division had been able to hold all three regional courses for two consecutive years and to publish *The Work of the International Law Commission* (9th edition), the *United Nations Juridical Yearbook* (2013) and the *International Law Handbook* in English and French. The Programme needed to continue to meet the growing demand for its training courses, while ensuring that it was open to practitioners from different regions and legal systems. In addition, an effort should be made to make the publications available in the other official languages as well, to ensure the wider dissemination of the legal wisdom they contained.

47. Lastly, he proposed that annual questionnaires be used to assess whether the training provided under the Programme met the stated needs of the countries receiving the training and to develop customized training offerings for each region.

48. **Ms. Asgedom** (Ethiopia) said that the Programme of Assistance was helping to disseminate knowledge of international law around the world and to ensure the rule

of law at the national and international levels, in particular through its regional courses on international law, the Audiovisual Library and the fellowship programmes. In view of the importance currently being placed on the wider dissemination of international law, the Programme had the potential to foster multilateralism.

49. Her Government was grateful to all the relevant stakeholders for their support to the regional courses in international law for Africa, which had been held regularly in Addis Ababa since 2011. It called on all Member States to provide support to ensure the continuity of the regional courses.

50. **Ms. Ighil** (Algeria) said that the Codification Division was to be commended for ensuring the efficient operation of the Programme of Assistance. Since its establishment, the Programme had fostered a deeper understanding of international law, thereby strengthening international peace and security, promoting friendly relations and cooperation among States and supporting the rule of law at the national and international levels.

51. The Programme's role in the dissemination of international law, including through capacity-building and information-sharing at all levels, helped to ensure compliance with international law and to shape its progressive development and codification. Practitioners, especially those in developing countries, benefited from greatly expanded international law training opportunities provided through the regional courses and the Fellowship Programme, which gave them the opportunity to focus on issues of international law of common interest to their region. Her Government supported the establishment of permanent venues for those courses. Funding for them and for the Audiovisual Library should continue to be set aside from the regular budget.

52. The Codification Division was to be commended for the progress made in the preparation of the *International Law Handbook*. She expressed the hope that resources could be set aside to make the *Handbook* available in languages other than English and French. In the interests of multilingualism, more materials should be published in the other languages as well, including Arabic.

53. **Ms. Pino Rivero** (Cuba) said that the Programme of Assistance greatly contributed to the promotion of the rule of law at the national and international levels and fostered a deeper understanding of the substantive norms of international law, which was necessary for improving compliance with such norms. The Programme also contributed to building international peace and security and promoting friendly relations and cooperation among States. It had helped in promoting

knowledge of international law and engaging States in the development of multilateral legal instruments. Practitioners, academics, diplomats and other public officials in developing countries had greatly benefited from the regional courses, the fellowship programmes, publications and the Audiovisual Library.

54. Alternative resources should nonetheless be made available to countries where access to the Internet was unreliable. Moreover, people from many small and developing countries could not take part in the courses and fellowships offered through the Programme unless full funding was provided. Such was the case of her own country, as a result of the economic, trade and financial embargo imposed against it by the United States of America for over 50 years. It was therefore important for funding for the activities under the Programme to be allocated from the regular budget.

55. **Mr. Dos Santos Pereira** (Timor-Leste) said that the Programme of Assistance was a cornerstone of the effort by the United Nations to promote international law and thereby advance international peace and security, promote friendly relations and cooperation among States. It was also important for advancing the rule of law at the national and international levels, which was essential for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

56. The regional course in international law for Asia-Pacific was a significant addition to the international law training opportunities available to people in developing countries like his own. Participants in that course benefited in particular from training conducted by highly qualified scholars and practitioners on core topics of international law and the opportunity to focus on issues of common interest to the region. His delegation was grateful to the Codification Division for its dedication to implementing the Programme of Assistance. As access to the Internet was limited in small island developing States and least developed countries, the Programme's materials should continue to be disseminated in hard copy.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.