



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF GROUP OF GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E. VIRACHAI PLASAI, AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THAILAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS, IN THE SIXTH COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY UNDER AGENDA ITEM 77 "UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME OF ASSISTANCE IN THE TEACHING, STUDY, DISSEMINATION AND WIDER APPRECIATION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW" (New York, 14 October 2016)

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The Group would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report, A/71/432, which provides a detailed account of activities undertaken to implement the Programme of Assistance. The Group commends the laudable efforts of the Secretary-General, through the Codification Division of the Office of Legal Affairs, in carrying out the mandated activities under the Programme of Assistance.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group reiterates its support to the Programme of Assistance which is increasingly relevant as an effective tool to strengthen international peace and security and promote friendly relations and close cooperation among States. The Programme and its components are, among others, the cornerstones of the efforts of the United Nations to promote international law. The jurists, academics, diplomats and other public officials from developing countries have greatly benefited from the regional courses of international law, fellowships, publications and the Audiovisual Library of International Law.

In this regard, we are grateful that the necessary resources are secured in the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 for the International Law Fellowship Programme and the three United Nations Regional Courses in International Law namely for Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America as well as the Audiovisual Library of International Law. Earlier this year, the regional course for Latin America and the Caribbean, held, for the first time in over a decade, in Montevideo, Uruguay from 4-29 April 2016 and the regional course for Africa, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 1-26 February 2016 were organized with great success. In a few weeks, Thailand is honoured to host once again the regional course for Asia-Pacific in Bangkok, from 7 November to 2 December 2016. We are also inclined to concur with the view expressed in the report of Secretary-General that having permanent venues for the Regional courses in international law would provide enhanced efficiency and greater certainty. Ethiopia and Thailand have had the opportunities to host several regional courses in international law which have all been conducted successfully.

Mr. Chairman,

The UN Audiovisual Library of International Law is another essential tool that enables international lawyers all over the world to access low cost and high-quality legal training through the Internet. We believe that it is important to continue promoting the access and the utilization of the UN Audiovisual Library by scholars and academics in developing countries. We are also pleased to learn that the Codification Division of the Office of Legal Affairs is finalizing the preparation of the publication of the handbooks on international law in English and French for distribution and dissemination next year.

Mr. Chairman,

The Programme of Assistance plays a vital role in promoting the rule of law at the national and international levels. The promotion of the rule of law is one of the targets of Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development on peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development. The various activities under the Programme of Assistance provide the opportunity for individuals to acquire greater knowledge of international law. These capacity-building activities will contribute to the improvement of the participation of developing countries in different multilateral frameworks and instruments and ultimately help strengthen the rule of law. The Group of 77 and China remain committed to that objective as reflected in the Ministerial Declaration adopted at the 40th Annual Meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 on 23 September 2016, particularly the commitment to include the International Law Fellowship Programme, the seminars and regional training on treaty law and practice and the legal publications and training materials, as well as the necessary funding for the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship, in the regular budget of the United Nations for the biennium 2018-2019 (para. 135). The funding from the regular budget will better ensure the continuation of related activities in the coming years.

Last but not least, we would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the Office of Legal Affairs as Secretariat for its tireless efforts to promote knowledge in international law in an inclusive manner. We would also like to extend appreciation to all Member States which have contributed to the continued success of the Programme. While budgetary funding has been obtained, voluntary contributions, including in-kind contributions, remain vital.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.