



United Nations General Assembly | Sixth Committee Strengthening and promoting the international treaty framework

5 October 2018

(check against delivery)

Mr. Chairman,

It is indeed an honor for me to deliver this statement on behalf of Argentina, Austria, Italy and Singapore, as well as of my own country, Brazil, under the agenda item "Strengthening and promoting the international treaty framework".

Our delegations requested that this item be included in the agenda of the current session of the General Assembly in order to create a dedicated platform for a long overdue review of the regulations to give effect to Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations.

Adopted by the General Assembly in 1946 and amended only three times - in 1949, 1950 and 1978 -, the regulations have been rendered out-of-date due to the evolution of practice and technology. A review of these regulations would ensure that they are "useful and relevant" to Member States, as stressed by this General Assembly last year, and this would in turn promote the implementation of the obligation in Article 102 of the Charter.

Statistics demonstrate the relevance of this issue. On average, the Treaty Section registers 1,300 treaties per year, as well as almost double that amount of treaty actions. This results in a total of over 70,000 registered treaties since 1945, as well as more than 125,000 registered treaty actions. Statistics also show that the obligation to register treaties has not yet been met with universal compliance - and appears to be geographically imbalanced. As a result, it is clear that there is a significant number of treaties that have not been registered.

Mr. Chairman,

At its 70th session, under a different agenda item, the General Assembly invited the Secretary-General to present elements to inform a review of the regulations. Accordingly, the Secretary-General presented elements in his 2016 report on "Strengthening and coordinating United Nations rule of law activities". During the 71st session, the Sixth Committee did not have time to consider in detail the recommendations made by the Secretary-General, but mandated him to further elaborate on the issue in a dedicated report.

The report submitted pursuant to this request outlined the historical background of the regulations and elaborated on seven areas for consideration by the General Assembly. The report also discussed possible means of increasing the efficiency of the registration and publication process and enhancing the role played by the Treaty Section in supporting Member States in this area. During the 72nd session, during its debate under a different agenda item, this Committee did not have time - yet again - to consider this issue in depth. But the Assembly did stress that the regulations should be useful and relevant to Member States.

Our short-term objective under the current agenda item is to conclude, this year, a review of the regulations. This exercise could serve, *inter alia*, to clarify and simplify the procedural requirements for registration; to facilitate the further use of electronic resources in the registration process; to enhance efficiency; to consider whether the current publication policy meets the needs of Member States and to modernize the methods for disseminating information on registered treaties. So as to facilitate this review, a draft resolution will be circulated, containing proposed updates to the regulations in an annex, to serve as the basis for informal consultations. We encourage all States to engage in this process.

Mr. Chairman,

The debate under this agenda item could also trigger an exchange of views among Member States regarding their treaty-making practice, and serve as a platform for the identification of trends and the sharing of best practices in treaty-making. If the membership so desires, in future sessions this item could also provide a space for discussion on other treaty law-related topics, such as the Summary of Practice of the Secretary-General as Depositary of Multilateral Treaties.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman,

This is the first time that a new agenda item has been included in the agenda of the Sixth Committee at the request of Member States since 2009. As co-proponents, we consider this to be an opportunity for the revitalization of the work of the Sixth Committee. A review of the regulations is both a relevant outcome and a low-hanging fruit. Through constructive and focused dialogue, we are convinced that the General Assembly will be able to conclude it this year.

Thank you.