

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

25 October 2018

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea to provide you with an update on the implementation of the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe (HSA) Memorial Fellowship on the Law of the Sea.

Capacity-building activities are one of the core mandates of the Secretary-General under relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and, on numerous occasions, most recently in its resolution 73/124 of 11 December 2018, the Assembly recognized, and expressed its appreciation for, the important contribution to the capacity-building of developing countries and the promotion of the law of the sea made by the HSA Memorial Fellowship.

The Fellowship was established in 1981 to assist government officials and other professionals from developing States to acquire additional knowledge on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, in order to promote its wider application, and to enhance specialized experience in maritime affairs and related disciplines.

As of 2019, 33 fellows from 30 developing countries have completed the HSA Memorial Fellowship, of these, 15 are women and 18 are men. These professionals are now making important contributions in their respective countries and regions. Indeed, our office has seen many of them back in New York taking active roles on behalf of their States or other national and regional organisations in important fora and processes related to ocean affairs and the law of the sea, including the *Intergovernmental Conference on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and*

sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ IGC).

It is now more than ever important for developing countries to build and maintain the capacity to actively participate in ocean-related processes. From better understanding and effective implementation of international law of the sea, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, its two implementing Agreements and other related international instruments, to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 14; from the implementation of the commitments under the Paris Agreement, which noted the importance of ensuring the integrity of all ecosystems, including oceans, to the effective participation in the ongoing BBNJ IGC negotiations, the needs are many and the challenges are plentiful.

It is therefore critical that awards under this Fellowship are implemented continuously and consistently, including so that States can plan accordingly for the application and eventual release of Staff. This implies that the necessary funding is made available to this end. I note in this regard that, due to insufficient funds, no awards were made from 2007 to 2009, in 2014 and in 2016. In addition, owing to insufficient funds in 2017, only a short award was made. Currently there is only sufficient funding for this year's award.

Let me recall that the General Assembly, in its resolution 73/125 on oceans and the law of the sea, urged States, and other relevant stakeholders to make voluntary financial contributions in support of the Fellowship, so that a regular award may be granted for 2019 and beyond.

We therefore thank States who have made the current and previous 33 fellowships possible, and strongly encourage voluntary contributions in support of future fellows. The Division remains available to address any question in this regard.

Thank you.