

Permanent Mission of Colombia to the United Nations

Observations of the Republic of Colombia on General Assembly resolution 78/236 of 22 December 2023, entitled “Strengthening and promoting the international treaty framework”

Pursuant to resolution 78/236 of 22 December 2023, by which the General Assembly decided that States would undertake a regular thematic debate in the Sixth Committee to foster a technical exchange of views on practice relating to the strengthening and promoting of the international treaty framework, and in that regard invited States to submit, by 28 February 2025, any information on their practice regarding the role of technology in shaping treaty-making practice, the Republic of Colombia has the honour to submit the following comments:

- Technology plays a fundamental role in the management of legal affairs in Colombia. This is particularly true for the conduct of negotiations of international instruments to which Colombia is a party. Technology is indispensable to many of the negotiations currently under way, as they are being conducted remotely. In particular, technology makes it possible to exchange initial draft texts or negotiate specific issues without having to organize in-person meetings.
- While it is true that before the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, some negotiations were conducted remotely, during the pandemic and since, most of the instruments concluded by Colombia have been negotiated online.
- This is because we have seen that this method, when used properly, is highly effective and beneficial. However, this does not mean that in-person negotiations are not necessary on certain occasions.
- In practice, and depending on the difficulty of the issue to be negotiated, it is often convenient to make use of both negotiation formats. For example, with respect to the negotiation of instruments such as extradition agreements, judicial cooperation agreements or trade and investment agreements, we have noticed that holding initial and final rounds of negotiations in person, and alternating these with remote rounds for discussion of specific issues, has been extremely beneficial and has made it possible to very quickly conclude agreements that otherwise would have taken years to adopt.
- Nowadays, for instruments such as headquarters agreements, the vast majority of negotiations are conducted fully remotely, such that more instruments can be adopted, and more quickly.
- Technology is also fundamental to establishing the negotiating positions of Colombia. Having immediate and effective access to all the treaties signed by Colombia enables negotiating teams to quickly identify practices related to specific clauses and issues.
- In addition, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs recently reopened its virtual treaty library to the public. The library is the most valuable working tool for the internal working group on treaties of the Directorate for International Legal Affairs, as it makes it possible to consult treaties through the internal system of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The system was developed in-house and it draws on the database of the physical archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which contains, in digital format, data and documents related to the treaties in the archive.

- The system has a private interface for drafting, editing and consulting treaties. The interface is also currently available for external consultation by the public, through the official web page of the Ministry, at: <https://sismre.cancilleria.gov.co/PUBLICA/tratados/informacionTratado>. This site contains all the international treaties to which Colombia is a party and details of their respective durations and content.
- The tool makes it possible to track the entire life cycle of a treaty, which can be displayed as a Power BI graphic. For the time being, artificial intelligence tools or other advanced technologies are not incorporated into the system.
- In addition, the system makes it possible to display treaties visually by topic. It enables the generation of tables in Excel and other tools, which in turn makes it possible to visually represent the policy of Colombia in relation to specific topics; the instruments concluded by the Republic of Colombia can be displayed according to the filter applied, and it is even possible to identify trends in the negotiation policy of Colombia.

Colombia reserves the right to submit additional information, insofar as there are new developments to be reported, in advance of the deadline.

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