

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

19 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 functions of the Division on numerous occasions, most recently in its resolution 72/73 of 5 December 2017, 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 2018, 32 fellows from 29 developing and regional organisations in important fora and processes related to ocean affairs and the law of the sea.

and maintain the capacity to actively participate in ocean 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 international instruments, to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 14; from the implementation of commitments under the Paris Agreement, which noted the importance of ensuring the integrity of all ecosystems, including oceans, to the active participation in the ongoing negotiations under 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, the needs are many and the challenges are plentiful.

It is therefore critical that awards under this Fellowship be implemented continuously consistently and that the necessary funds be 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 2015. In addition, owing to insufficient funds for a standard award, in 2016 a short award was made.

Let me recall that the General Assembly, in its resolution 72/73 on oceans and the law of the sea, urged States, and other stakeholders to make voluntary financial contributions in support of the HSA Memorial Fellowship, so that a regular award may be granted for 2019 and thereafter.

We therefore thank States who have made the current and previous awards, and encourage States to make voluntary contributions to the 32 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.