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Mr Chair

I make the following statement on behalf of Iceland and Norway.

Let me start by thanking Ms Virginia Morris for her very informative presentation and for her dedicated service to the Programme of Assistance. We are also thankful for the report by the Secretary-General (A/69/516) which in our view illustrates the breadth of the work carried out by the Programme of Assistance. We are especially encouraged to see the number of activities taking place in developing countries and thus empowering legal communities in places where legal resources are often lacking.

Ensuring respect for international law lies at the heart of the United Nations. A peaceful and stable world order is predicated on an international community that respects the rule of international law in all its different forms and branches. Over the last decades, we have seen

how international law has grown into a multifaceted and vast academic and practical discipline in continuous development. International law is the product of a multitude of factors and actors: state practice, inter-state agreements, international, regional and national jurisprudence, and scholarly literature from all corners of the world all play a crucial role in the formation of international law. As a result, international law is a refined, but also an extremely complex body of law.

The United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law recognizes the value of mastering the complexities of international law, and in this regard, the fundamental importance of making the most advanced and sophisticated international legal resources available to all. The Programme of Assistance is instrumental in the strengthening of the rule of law, and in ensuring peaceful relations between States. We would in particular want to emphasize the benefit of the Programme of Assistance for lawyers from all countries, especially those in developing countries.

The hard work of all of those who contribute to the Programme of Assistance is not in vain. Since its creation in 2008 the Audiovisual Library has been accessed by some 862 000 computers in all of the UN's 193 Member States, and the number of applications for the regional courses and fellowships is staggering and confirms the demand for international law training and research materials in developing as well as in developed countries.

We have noted with concern the continued problem