





opportunity for lawyers from different regions to study international law with an emphasis on legal issues that are of particular interest to their region. They also enable the participants to exchange views and gain a better understanding of how these issues are being addressed in the different countries of their region, as well as to explore common approaches to the global challenges of our time.

During the first five decades of the Programme of Assistance, the Regional Courses suffered from insufficient funding and the difficulties inherent in conducting the courses in different countries. Between 1965 and 2015, there were only nine Regional Courses for Asia and the Pacific. These courses were held in the Philippines in 1969, in Qatar and Bangladesh in 1976, in the Republic of Korea in 1982 and 2010, in Thailand in 1986, 2005 and 2012, and in the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1999.

When I joined the United Nations as Legal Counsel, I made the Programme of Assistance one of the priorities of the Office of Legal Affairs. With the support of Member States, we succeeded in obtaining regular budget funding in 2016 to ensure that the Regional Courses could be held every year and





outstanding quality of the Regional Courses is attributable to the continuous cooperation of the most eminent international lawyers worldwide who accept to travel long distances for a short time to share their expertise with us all, and we are very grateful.

In conclusion, I would like to recall Article 1, paragraph 1, of the United Nations Charter, which states that the Organization shall settle international disputes between States by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which are likely to bring about friction and disturb the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Regional Courses in International Law constitute one vehicle toward the achievement of this core Purpose. The Regional Courses offer a unique platform for studying and disseminating the common language of international law that we all speak, and for an exchange of views among participants from different countries, legal cultures and professional backgrounds. Indeed, in the coming weeks, the 29 participants from 22 countries will not only learn from the lecturers but also from each other.

With these words, I am delighted to formally open the 2018 United Nations Regional Course in International Law for Asia and the Pacific.

We look forward to continuing this excellent partnership with the Kingdom of Thailand and ESCAP in the future.

Thank you very much.

