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Report of the International Court of Justice

Statement by

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Madam President,

Allow me at the outset to thank Judge Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf, President of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), for presenting report on the judicial activities of the Court for the period between 1st of August 2017 and 31st July this year. I also thank him and the Vice-President, Judge Xue Hanqin for guiding the work of the Court during this period.

Madam President,

The first and foremost purpose of the United Nations is to maintain the international peace and security. The International Court of Justice, in its role as the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, owes greater responsibility in achieving this objective of the United Nations, by performing the task of resolving disputes between the States.

The United Nations Charter and the Statute of the Court have entrusted the Court with dual jurisdiction. The Court exercises jurisdiction in deciding the disputes of a legal nature that are submitted to it by States (that is the contentious jurisdiction). And, the Court also exercises jurisdiction in giving the advisory opinion on legal questions on the request of organs of the United Nations or specialized agencies authorized to make such a request (which is the advisory jurisdiction of the Court). As a matter of reference, the Court is currently dealing with such a request from the General Assembly for advisory opinion, oral proceedings in which were conducted recently last month only.

Madam President

Taking stock of the work performed, since its first sitting in April 1946 and the submission of first case in May 1947, the Court has seized of 175 cases till July 2018. It has delivered more than 120 judgements and rendered 27 advisory opinions, with one more currently pending.

During the judicial year 2017-2018, the Court delivered judgments in 4 cases. It handed down 13 Orders required for different purposes at different stages of proceedings of the cases, and held public hearings in 3 cases. The Report, contained in document A/73/4, reveals that the Court has, as of 31st July, 17 contentious cases and 1 advisory case pending on its docket. Both the volume and the quality of work acknowledges that the Court has stood to the test of fulfilling the task of settling disputes between the States, has acquired a well deserved reputation as an institution that maintains the highest legal standards in accordance with its mandate.

Concerning the subject-matter and issues, the cases before the Court involve complex factual and legal issues relating to the variety of fields including the territorial and maritime delimitation; consular rights; human rights; environmental damage and conservation of living resources; international responsibility; the immunity of States, their representatives and assets; and interpretation and application of international treaties.

Madam President,

These facts clearly illustrate the importance of the Court's role in upholding the rule of law. Court's activities are directly aimed at promoting and reinforcing the rule of law through its judgments and advisory opinions. It has crucial role in the interpretation and clarification of the rules and principles of international law, as well as, in the progressive development and codification of the international law.

Madam President,

The Report of the Court reflects on the importance that the States attach to and the confidence that they repose in the Court. This is evident from the number, nature and variety of cases that the Court deals with and its ability in so dealing with the complex aspects of public international law. The same is very apparently reconfirmed from the fact that the pending contentious cases have been submitted by States from four continents, which speaks of the universal character of the Court. It is significant to note that the court has not lost sight to adapt itself to the

working methods including handling of emergent situations in responding to the increased work load and in dealing with the complexity involved in the cases submitted to it.

In the performance of its judicial functions, the Court has remained sensitive to political realities and sentiments of States, while acting in accordance with the provisions of the UN Charter, its own Statute and other rules of international law.

Madam President,

We appreciate the Court's efforts towards ensuring the greatest possible global awareness of its decisions through its publications, multimedia offerings and the website, which now features the Court's entire jurisprudence, as well as, that of its predecessor - the Permanent Court of International Justice. These sources provide useful information for States wishing to invoke the jurisdiction of the Court.

The Report notes about the necessity arisen for the temporary shifting of the Court elsewhere from the Peace Palace, The Hague, in order to undertake work to decontaminate and renovate the building. In this context, we appreciate the efforts being undertaken by the authorities of the Host Country, with the view to restore the worthiness of the building and at the same time ensuring the continuation of the functioning of the Court.

Finally, Madam President, India wishes to reaffirm its strong support to the Court and acknowledges the importance that the international community attaches to its work.

I Thank you.