

occasions. The first expansion took place in 1956 when the number of members was increased to 21. The second expansion took place on November 6, 1961, during the recent session of the General Assembly, at which time it was enlarged by another four seats, bringing the total number to 25. In both cases, the enlargement was necessitated by the rapid growth in United Nations membership that has taken place since 1947, when the Commission first came into existence, and which, as a result, left certain legal systems and civilizations unrepresented on the Commission. By Article 8 of the statute of the International Law Commission, it is required "that, in the Commission as a whole, representation of the main forms of civilization and principal legal systems of the world should be assured". For instance, immediately prior to the recent elections, there was no member representing either African customary law or civilizations. Consequently, it was necessary to adjust the composition of the Commission in order to accommodate these newcomers to the United Nations.

Accomplishment

To a large degree, the evolution of firmly acknowledged rules of law to govern the day-to-day behaviour of the members of the international community stems from the work entrusted to the members of the International Law Commission, which is, as mentioned earlier, concerned with the codification of international law and its progressive development. At the time of its creation in 1947, the International Law Commission selected, on a provisional basis, 14 topics of international law for codification. Of these, it was decided to give priority to the following three: Law of Treaties, Arbitral Procedures, and Regime of the High Seas. Although in its first years the Commission experienced some difficulty in devoting sufficient time to its agenda because of the number of assignments referred to it by the General Assembly, during the 14 years of its existence the Commission has accomplished significant results. Out of the 14 topics included in the provisional agenda, work has been initiated on nine. Of these the Commission has completed its work on six topics and study is progressing on the remaining three, of which the Law of Treaties still has the highest priority; the others being State Responsibilities and the Law of Asylum. Of the six topics, three have been concluded by way of appropriate conventions, namely the Regime of the High Seas, the Regime of the Territorial Sea and Diplomatic Intercourse and Immunities. A draft convention has also been prepared on Consular Relations. This draft was submitted to the Legal Committee of the United Nations at the Sixteenth General Assembly which, in turn, recommended the convening of an international conference in Vienna in March 1963 to study the draft articles and formulate a convention. The remaining topics on which the Commission has completed its work are a Draft Convention on Arbitral Procedures and a Draft Convention on Statelessness.

The scope of the International Law Commission's agenda and accomplishments is indicative of the importance of these topics and its other projects. Indeed,