

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL**  
**ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY OF PARTIES**  
**28 November 2023**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. I am pleased to present my report for 2023 to the Assembly of Parties. It is also the final report of my first mandate as Director-General.
2. As I mentioned in my first report to the Assembly in 2020, my objective on taking office was to help position IDLO as a leading change agent in the field of rule of law and justice and, in turn, to strengthen the scale and scope of its distinct contributions to the global effort to build more peaceful, just, and inclusive societies.
3. The past year, like the three that preceded it, has been a tough test to the rule of law, justice, and human rights across the globe. We have seen a storm of crises, including increasing conflicts and coups, devastating effects of climate change, massive food insecurity, growing inequalities, and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Their combined effects have impacted decades of progress and put peace and sustainable development at risk.
4. According to the United Nations' latest SDGs report, we are significantly off track to achieve the 2030 Agenda, having made progress on only 15 percent of the targets. In 2022, for the fifth year in a row, most countries have regressed in the rule of law. Since 2015, 68 percent of nations have declined on measures of constraints on government powers; 62 percent on measures to fight corruption; and 76 percent on fundamental rights.
5. In the face of these global crises, it is my firm belief that IDLO's mandate has never been more relevant or needed. While the past four years have presented many challenges, I am pleased to report that IDLO has been able to make good progress on its mission.
6. Our approach combining programming, research, and policy advocacy, helped us position IDLO as a prominent champion for the rule of law and SDG 16 as catalysts to achieve all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The three guiding principles of integration, inclusion and innovation have been key to our work.
7. Despite the majority of IDLO's work being carried out in fragile and conflict-affected settings, we continue to assist partners around the world to apply rule of law-based solutions to address these pressing crises.

8. We have continued to advance our expertise by strengthening the nexus between the rule of law and priority thematic areas: food security, climate justice, health law, and inclusive economic development.
9. Over the past year, IDLO released several major knowledge products on issues such as customary and informal justice, food security, and pandemic preparedness and response, highlighting the contribution of our mandate to the global project of building peace and realizing sustainable development.
10. We advocated for the rule of law in major policy forums, including the United Nations General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, the Commission on the Status of Women, the High-Level Political Forum, the G-20 Anti-Corruption Working Group, UN FSS +2 Stocktaking Moment, COP 27, and the Africa Climate Summit.
11. We invested in our own people and systems, to better deliver results, increase efficiency and achieve our Strategic Goals. We prioritized outreach to reinforce existing partnerships and build new ones and made efforts to strengthen our resource base.
12. This year, we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the establishment of IDLO (or IDLI as it was initially known). To mark the occasion, we are planning a series of engagements to promote IDLO and its vision, and gauge interest across constituencies for potential new Member Parties and partners.
13. I would like to express my sincere appreciation for your unwavering dedication for IDLO's mission and for the support I have received as Director-General. My gratitude goes to all Member Parties, and particularly to members of the Standing Committee, and the Audit and Finance Committee, for their counsel and commitment to IDLO. I am grateful to our partners who have prioritized the rule of law in their countries, and provided development assistance during a time of disruption and economic uncertainty. I also want to thank my IDLO colleagues who work tirelessly in difficult contexts around the world. The results presented below would not have been possible without them, and their safety and security remain my top priority.

## **II. IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN: PROGRAMMES, POLICY, RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY**

14. During the reporting period, we made progress toward the achievement of all six Strategic Objectives of the [Strategic Plan 2021-2024](#). The Plan is based on our commitment to putting people's needs at the centre of justice systems, and making the rule of law a driver of peace, human rights, and sustainable development.
15. IDLO's unique strength lies in its integrated approach, which combines research, learning, policy advocacy, and programming on the ground. It allows us to maximise

our contribution to a rule of law-based response to peace, justice, and development challenges.

16. Under Strategic Goal 1, we continued to advocate for people-centred, effective, and inclusive justice systems. Our efforts focused on legal empowerment and access to justice, legal and institutional reform, and justice for women and girls.
17. Significant progress was also made on Strategic Goal 2 aiming to advance the rule of law as a driver of sustainable development. We continued expanding initiatives on inclusive economic development, climate justice and sustainable use of land and natural resources, food security, and health.

## **Justice systems are more effective and responsive to people's needs**

### *Empowering justice seekers*

18. Under the first Strategic Objective, IDLO works from the bottom-up to empower people to access justice and claim their human rights. We do so by promoting legal awareness, providing legal aid and other assistance services, engaging with customary and informal justice systems, and advocating for participatory decision-making.
19. Despite narrowing public space and increased scrutiny by the de facto authorities, IDLO has maintained its presence in **Afghanistan**. Our primary focus has been on supporting justice seekers, particularly women and other vulnerable groups, through non-state service providers and community justice systems. To determine the current state of the justice system, including the role of customary and informal justice (CIJ) actors, the status of women's access to justice, and the conditions of defence lawyers, IDLO conducted a Justice Sector Context Assessment across the country.
20. IDLO continued developing the Afghanistan Rule of Law Observatory (ARLO), an online platform collecting recent developments in the justice system of the country for use by non-state justice service providers. Currently, we are integrating an e-learning section on the platform to offer online courses for civil society stakeholders. Following a series of assessments, we are also working to provide capacity development to civil society organizations (CSOs). We have completed a trends analysis report to estimate the operational status and challenges facing the remaining CSOs in the country.
21. In the face of growing instability and democratic backsliding in the **Sahel**, highlighted by the withdrawal of MINUSMA and the crisis in Niger, IDLO has strengthened its support to CSOs and national human rights institutions, which can play an important role in ensuring oversight of the criminal justice system, as well as in empowering justice seekers to report human rights violations.
22. In **Burkina Faso**, IDLO trained 91 lawyers to use international legal instruments in national proceedings and refer cases to international bodies. One hundred opinion leaders, chiefs, and religious figures were sensitized about legal aid mechanisms. We

also enhanced legal awareness for journalists and civil society members, particularly youth and women, on criminal proceedings and victim support. Additionally, IDLO organized radio programs connecting people with legal aid providers. This led to legal consultations that assisted 190 individuals in addressing concerns and obtaining required legal documents.

23. In response to security-related access to justice challenges in **Mali**, IDLO supported the relocation of correctional hearings from Gundam to Timbuktu, resulting in the resolution of 25 percent of the cases scheduled for 2023. IDLO facilitated a meeting between the court in Gao and CSOs to discuss the functioning of the justice system and the difficulties faced by magistrates in the unstable security environment. The parties agreed to collaborate on interactive radio broadcasts focusing on access to justice and gender-based violence (GBV) to create awareness.
24. Before operations were paused in July, IDLO assisted the Ministry of Justice of **Niger** in enhancing coordination across the criminal justice chain. We also worked with the National Agency for Legal and Judicial Assistance to provide legal aid to 563 defendants and supported judicial inspection missions in penitentiaries to address case backlogs and reduce prolonged detention, resulting in legal judgments in 455 cases. IDLO suspended programming in Niger in the immediate aftermath of the crisis, but we are committed to remaining engaged in the country and adapting our programmes to fit the evolving situation, if possible.
25. This year, IDLO launched the second phase of a project on expanding access to justice for children in **Mongolia**. This new phase focuses on research and supports the implementation of Mongolia's first juvenile rehabilitation programme to strengthen social protection and reintegration for at-risk children. Additionally, IDLO introduced a capacity development initiative to promote child internet safety, reaching out to 470 children in Darkhan-Uul province and Terelj National Park.
26. In **Tunisia**, IDLO strengthened the capacity of lawyers and members of civil society to assess the constitutionality of legislation and prepare strategic litigation cases to review laws that violate constitutional rights and freedoms, particularly focusing on the most vulnerable groups. We also supported workshops on the development of innovative advocacy tools and opportunities for collaboration with government institutions.
27. IDLO's Community Justice Programme in **Uganda** seeks to enhance access to justice for women, children, and marginalised communities. This involved supporting legal aid service providers. As a result, from November 2022 to September 2023, a total of 4,390 vulnerable individuals received legal aid support, with 1,040 successfully resolving their legal matters within a three-month period.
28. IDLO partnered with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to produce an issue brief [\*Addressing Statelessness through the Rule of Law\*](#), which can serve as a toolkit for States and development actors to join global efforts to meet the needs of this particularly vulnerable group.

29. A significant part of our work on legal empowerment involves engagement with Customary and Informal Justice systems, which serve as the primary means of dispute resolution for people worldwide. We work to promote reforms that increase respect for human rights and protection for women, youth, and other vulnerable groups.
30. IDLO continued to provide technical assistance to 19 Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Centres in **Somalia and Somaliland**, in addition to supporting 3 mobile ADR Centres in the latter. The Centres primarily address civil disputes and minor offenses, and promote respect for the rights of women and vulnerable groups. In the past year, these ADR Centres have handled 7,058 cases and received 2,830 calls through their associated hotlines. IDLO also contributed to the development of the Child Rights and Protection Standard Operating Procedures for the Centres and conducted training for adjudicators and staff on their use. We are currently assisting in the development of the country's first ADR National Strategy.
31. IDLO published a major report, [Diverse Pathways to People-Centred Justice](#), on behalf of the Working Group on CIJ and SDG16+, a multi-stakeholder initiative. The report issues a call to action to accelerate access to justice for all through CIJ systems and makes several concrete recommendations for practitioners and policymakers. I was pleased to moderate the high-level launch event during the International Law Week in New York last month. The event included interventions by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, the Vice Minister for the Promotion of Justice of Colombia, and the President of the Supreme Court of Justice of the Dominican Republic.
32. IDLO released a publication on [Women's Participation and Leadership in CIJ Systems](#). It assesses the multifaceted roles women play in CIJ systems, underscores how their involvement empowers women, and offers evidence-based recommendations to enhance women's representation and participation within CIJ systems.
33. IDLO also responded to a call for inputs for the report on legal empowerment by the Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers. Among other issues, our input emphasised the need for legal empowerment initiatives to engage with CIJ systems, especially in contexts where the most marginalised people seek justice through such mechanisms.

*Making laws and institutions work for people*

34. IDLO also works from the top down with justice institutions to promote smart legal reform and improve the delivery of essential justice services. We strengthen criminal justice chains, support anti-corruption initiatives, and increase digital innovation in justice systems.
35. As part of our programme in the **Bahamas**, IDLO is working towards enhancing the capacity of criminal justice stakeholders. We are also assisting the Office of the

Attorney General in developing a road map for legal and policy reforms aimed at enhancing institutional transparency, integrity, and accountability in public administration, as well as strengthening whistle-blower protection and public disclosure. In addition, IDLO is contributing to the drafting of a new Ombudsman Bill.

36. This year, IDLO initiated a project to strengthen access to justice in **The Gambia**. IDLO will partner with local institutions to develop specialized training for judges, magistrates, and prosecutors, as well as work with civil society to sensitize individuals to claim their rights.
37. In **Honduras**, IDLO contributed to the development of a protocol for the publication of judicial sentences, which was adopted by the Supreme Court of Justice. In addition, IDLO provided training to 258 judicial officials and judicial facilitators across the country, focusing on promoting open justice principles and implementing best practices to enhance transparency within the judiciary.
38. The Global Programme on Corrections Reform aims to improve prison management in line with international human rights standards through capacity development. Under this programme, IDLO recently completed the design of 5 courses on human rights approaches to corrections developed with the support of a group of international experts. The courses are adaptable to different geographical contexts and were piloted for prison officers from **Colombia, Guatemala, Dominican Republic, Morocco, and Senegal**, who were also trained to be trainers in their respective regions. Currently, an online version of the training curriculum is being finalized.
39. To enhance the effectiveness, accountability, and transparency of the Public Prosecution Service of **Indonesia**, IDLO is supporting the development of an electronic case management system and strengthening of performance-based budgeting. As part of this process, we conducted assessment of the link between budgetary allocations and case management within the Attorney General Office in 6 provinces. Additionally, IDLO organized the first training engaging the participants from 12 prosecutorial offices in South Sulawesi Province. The results of these activities will inform the development of a Special Cost Index for performance-based budgeting in 2024.
40. IDLO continues its longstanding partnership with the **Kenyan** judiciary, currently focusing on enhancing people-centred justice and ensuring justice outcomes at the community level. This year, IDLO supported the development of a Monitoring, Reporting, and Analysis System for the Court Users Committees to enhance the courts' responsiveness to community needs. IDLO continued to work with the judiciary on the Small Claims Courts (SCCs), which now play a crucial role in resolving most lower monetary value disputes that used to clog the court system. Over the last year we have supported the operationalization of SCCs in several counties and are assisting with the development of practice directions.

41. IDLO is currently developing a brief, drawing on its decade of work in Kenya, to highlight the remarkable progress of the Kenyan judiciary and the critical role of justice systems in peace and sustainable development. The brief will address Kenya's Judiciary reforms on access to justice, inclusive economic development, and decentralization.
42. IDLO began a new phase of its work to reinforce the capacity of **Liberia's** law enforcement agencies to investigate, prosecute, and adjudicate trafficking in persons (TIP). The project will also build the capacity of CSOs and strengthen local communities' awareness to identify and avoid risks associated with human trafficking. Over the past year, IDLO supported the development of Liberia's Annual TIP Report, facilitated community engagement events, revised capacity-building materials, and evaluated potential safe homes in TIP hotspots. This work will be complemented by IDLO's new regional programme on countering Trafficking in Persons in the Mano River Union, which also covers **Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Sierra Leone**.
43. At the policy advocacy level, IDLO contributed to the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on TIP. The submission drew on the discussions from an Expert Group Meeting on Conflict-related trafficking and accountability, co-hosted by IDLO at its office in the Hague, together with the Special Rapporteur and the Duke University School of Law International Human Rights Clinic.
44. IDLO launched a new project in **North Macedonia** to support the country's transition to an adversarial criminal justice system. The project focuses on enhancing legal education and creating criminal law legal clinics to strengthen the capacities of law school graduates in handling cases within the adversarial system.
45. In the **Philippines**, IDLO aims to strengthen the capacities of partner institutions on monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL). During the reporting period, IDLO supported the Office of the Ombudsman, the Department of Justice, and the Anti-money Laundering Council in developing institution-specific MEL handbooks. Dedicated training was delivered to the Supreme Court's Judicial Academy.
46. IDLO is providing technical support to **Somalia** to review and reform the Criminal Procedure Code. A high-level national conference was convened in July to launch the review process. A forensics assessment was conducted on the existing capacity to collect, store, and transfer forensic evidence in Puntland, Jubaland, Galmudug, and Southwest states, as well as the Somali Police Force's Hospital in Mogadishu.
47. IDLO assisted the **Ugandan** judiciary with the induction of newly appointed judges. The training emphasized the updated rules and procedures for the judicature, developed with IDLO's support as part of the judiciary's transformation agenda. These revisions aimed to reform outdated laws, strengthen judicial processes, and improve access to justice.
48. One and a half years into the war in **Ukraine**, IDLO continues to support partners to enhance their institutional resilience and meet priority justice needs, including

ongoing support to the Office of the Prosecutor General (OPG). This included the implementation of a pilot programme for assessing prosecutors' yearly performance and analysis of the functional and structural aspects of the OPG. We also provided targeted technical assistance to the OPG on issues including asset recovery and mutual legal assistance. IDLO has continued to provide technical, expert, and legal assistance in the fields of International Humanitarian Law and International Criminal Law. For instance, we contributed to the development of a legal memorandum on the establishment of specialized court chambers on international crimes and the investigation of conflict-related sexual violence.

49. IDLO participated in the high-level international conference “United for Justice” in Lviv, organized by OPG, which was attended by Attorneys General and Ministers of Justice from several countries, and regularly participates in the meetings of the Atrocity Crimes Advisory Group.
50. Anti-corruption remains a major priority for IDLO and constitutes a growing area of work.
51. IDLO has maintained its support to the government of **Ukraine**, recognizing the key role of anti-corruption efforts for a successful post-conflict recovery. In the past year, we helped re-establish the High Council of Justice, responsible for appointing and managing judges. Our support extended to enhancing the institutional independence of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU). We provided technical assistance on the resolution of procedural disparities among NABU, the High Anti-Corruption Court, and the Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor’s Office, and initiated the concept of a NABU Training Centre. On the policy front, IDLO contributed to aligning national legislation with the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention and establishing Legal Entities' Liability for Corruption Crimes.
52. Drawing from our experience in Ukraine, IDLO carried out technical and legal assessments to facilitate the competitive selection of **Armenian** prosecutors and the Anti-Corruption Committee’s operative investigators. This led to the examination of over 330 candidates for various judicial, prosecutorial, and other anti-corruption roles.
53. IDLO continues to support **Moldova's** Independent Anti-Corruption Advisory Committee (CCIA). IDLO provided technical assistance for the implementation of the recommendations from the Committee’s first report, which focused on systemic fraud and money laundering in the government’s financial sectors. Our support aims to ensure these recommendations contribute to the development of draft legislation, including a bill that clarifies the jurisdiction of two anti-corruption bodies for prosecuting corruption cases. IDLO also supported the release of the Committee’s third report, examining corruption in political and campaign finance. We have recently started a new project to assist Moldova in implementing an extraordinary vetting mechanism for prosecutors, one of nine key recommendations made by the European Commission in preparation for Moldova’s EU accession negotiations.



54. In **Mongolia**, IDLO facilitated the development of the new National Anti-Corruption Programme for 2023 – 2030. This included two study visits of the members of the Independent Authority on Anti-Corruption, the Ministry of Justice, and the Prosecutor General’s Office to Singapore and the United States, to meet with their counterparts and gain insights into best practices. Additionally, IDLO is contributing to the development of a handbook on Mutual Legal Assistance.
55. We continued to support the Financial Reporting Centre (FRC) of **Somalia**, which has become an important part of the government’s efforts to disrupt the financing of Al-Shabaab. IDLO helped the FRC formulate a strategy and action plan for disrupting illicit financial flows, set up a government-wide financial disruption task force, and create guidelines for mobile money regulations. We also strengthened capacities of law enforcement officials to combat cross-border money laundering and improve inter-agency coordination.
56. Following the conclusion of a Host Country Agreement with the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, IDLO has initiated efforts to establish an operational presence on the ground and scale up support to the National Anti-Corruption Commission.
57. At the policy advocacy level, IDLO participated in the G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group meetings in India and a meeting of the Italian Coordination Task Force on Anti-Corruption, chaired by the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs. We are grateful to the Italian Government for including IDLO in the G20 Working Group during its Presidency and appreciate that this partnership has continued under the Presidencies of Indonesia and India.
58. Among other global engagements, we participated in the 2023 OECD Global Anti-Corruption and Integrity Forum, the 12th open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Meeting to enhance International Cooperation, the resumed 14th session of the Implementation Review Group, and the 17th meeting of the Working Group on Asset Recovery under the UN Convention against Corruption.
59. IDLO continued supporting the implementation of measures to enhance justice delivery through digital innovation.
60. We provided technical assistance to **Armenia's** Chamber of Advocates and Penitentiary Service through the "Secure Online Video Conferencing" pilot project. This included workshops for Public Defenders and Armavir Penitentiary Institution personnel on efficient software usage for confidential video communication. Additionally, IDLO contributed to the revision of the cybercrime provisions of the Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code.
61. To enhance judicial transparency and access to justice in **Honduras**, IDLO supported the improvement of the Electronic Case Management System to make the information more accessible to citizens through protocols, performance indicators, websites, and

portals. IDLO also provided training on the principles of open justice to 115 justice operators.

62. IDLO continued to support strengthening of the e-filing system through the rollout of e-filing at the Kisumu, Homabay, Siaya, and Kiambu Law Courts in **Kenya**. The system introduces a range of services, including electronic case filing, online court fee payments, and efficient case retrieval and tracking mechanisms. The e-filing rollout is part of a wider package of interventions geared towards leveraging technology to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of the judiciary.
63. IDLO continues to advance its work on digital innovation by broadening its network and collaborating with key stakeholders involved in justice and technology. In June, we hosted an event on “Gender and Artificial Intelligence in Justice, Peace, and Security” in The Hague. Co-organized with the Embassy of the Republic of Cyprus and the Embassy of Switzerland, in partnership with the International Gender Champions, Den Haag Hub, and Women Leading in AI, the event emphasized the significance of inclusivity and diversity in the application of advanced technologies.

#### *Reducing the justice gap for women and girls*

64. IDLO mainstreams gender equality throughout its work and aims to protect women's human rights through the promotion of gender-responsive legal, regulatory, and policy frameworks; the elimination of discriminatory laws and barriers to the full participation of women in society; and the empowerment of women professionals in the justice sector.
65. In 2023, in Afghanistan, IDLO conducted sessions on women’s labour rights, bringing together women jurists, professors, and traditional leaders to assess the challenges that women and girls have been facing since the introduction of new restrictions, as well as solutions and opportunities at the provincial level. The discussions are a unique platform for Afghan women to exchange best practices and empower each other.
66. While these activities are currently on hold, following the announcement of new restrictions on International Organizations operating in Afghanistan, they underscored a tremendous desire and potential for positive change, even in the most challenging circumstances. IDLO remains committed to nurturing this potential in Afghanistan and beyond, and continues to support women’s organizations and advocates to the extent possible.
67. In **Kenya**, IDLO continued to support the establishment and operationalisation of specialized Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) Courts. This included the launch of SGBV Court Users Committees and the creation of practice directions. The overarching goal is to establish a uniform, victim-centred approach for handling GBV cases, streamlining judicial processes, ensuring consistent court experiences, expediting case resolutions, and promoting technology use in proceedings. Additionally, as a result of IDLO's assistance in building capacity, the Kenyan judiciary

will, for the first time this year, incorporate gender-disaggregated data in its reports. This data will provide insights into case numbers and types to inform analysis and policies to strengthen gender equality.

68. As part of a shift towards working with civil society in the **Sahel**, IDLO finalised partnership agreements with 13 local CSOs to offer protection and redress to GBV survivors. These partnerships enabled capacity-building activities for women's organizations engaging with the criminal justice system in **Mali**. The training aimed to enable the facilitation of speedy processing of gender-related cases, as well as to strengthen the capacity of women's groups to monitor violations of prisoners' rights.
69. As part of the support to ADR Centres in **Somalia**, IDLO contributed to the establishment of 15 GBV task forces. The task forces ensure an accompanied referral for GBV cases that fall beyond the scope of the ADR jurisdiction. They also offer additional support to the victims, such as shelter, medical services, psychological support, and childcare. To operationalise the task forces, IDLO is contributing to the development of a GBV referral case management toolkit and related capacity-building materials.
70. In **Tunisia**, IDLO conducted a needs assessment for the implementation of the law on the elimination of violence against women. Currently, we are in the process of establishing a multi-stakeholder GBV coordination platform to address these identified needs.
71. IDLO's support to the Penal Reform Institution in **Uganda** has yielded positive outcomes on the treatment of women charged with petty offenses in the Western Region. This support enabled the women to secure bail or represent themselves in court, leading to their swift release and the restoration of their normal lives and livelihoods.
72. IDLO launched a research study on [Survivor-centred Justice for SGBV in Complex Situations](#) developed in partnership with the Global Women's Institute at George Washington University. The publication includes case studies from **Afghanistan, Honduras, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, South Sudan, and Tunisia**. It provides different perspectives on the complexity of accessing justice, examines a range of justice approaches for addressing GBV in situations involving conflict, organized crime, climate-related disasters, and health emergencies, and offers recommendations for ensuring women's access to justice in such contexts.
73. IDLO released an issue brief [Enabling Access to Justice for Survivors of Gender-Based Violence Against Women](#). Based on data from **Somaliland**, the research describes the key barriers preventing access to justice for survivors of GBV and outlines opportunities for addressing some of these barriers through ADR Centres.
74. IDLO continues to promote increased active participation and leadership of women legal professionals in all parts of the justice sector.

75. In 2023, we started a new project aimed at enhancing professional expertise of women working in the law enforcement sector in **Liberia**. The activities include supporting a Professional Development Fund and mentorship programme for 193 beneficiaries, improving coordination among female law enforcement associations, and advocating for specialized units to investigate gender discrimination cases. IDLO facilitated the drafting of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit and the Women and Children Protection Section of the Liberian National Police to enhance their collaboration on TIP case investigations. We also supported the development of an MOU between the Liberia Female Law Enforcement Association and the Gender and Security Sector National Taskforce, aimed at fostering collaboration and addressing issues like sexual harassment.
76. In **Tunisia**, IDLO is supporting the Ministry of Justice to set up an internal digital data collection system to map the professional participation of women judges.
77. We advocated for women’s active participation in justice delivery at international and regional platforms.
78. In March, I led IDLO’s delegation to the 67th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, where IDLO organized several side events in collaboration with partners to highlight the link between justice and gender equality. These included:
  - *Survivor-Centred Justice for Gender-Based Violence in Complex Situations* highlighting the findings from the above-mentioned research report. The event was organized in partnership with George Washington University’s Global Women’s Institute, the U.S. Department of State, the Government of the Netherlands, and the Government of the Philippines.
  - *Women at the Forefront of Justice Delivery* underscoring the importance of women’s participation and leadership in the justice sector. The event was co-organized with the Permanent Mission of Qatar to the United Nations, the International Association of Women Judges, and the American Bar Association.
  - *Feminist Foreign Policy and Gender Equality in International Justice*, organized in partnership with the Government of Chile, the GQUAL campaign and the Co-Impact Collab collective, explored the interaction between feminist foreign policies and equal representation of women in international justice.
79. As part of the Hague Justice Week, IDLO partnered with the Dutch Gender Platform WO=MEN to co-lead an event on “Strengthening the Role of Women as Change Agents for Justice”, organized and hosted by the Deputy Mayor of the Hague.
80. IDLO participated in the Women Deliver Conference in Kigali, Rwanda. Held once every four years, this year’s edition focused on Spaces, Solidarity, and Solutions. IDLO’s contribution included the organization of two sessions on “Advancing Feminist Climate Justice through the Rule of Law” and “Survivor-Centred Justice for Gender-Based Violence in Complex Situations”.

81. I was pleased to join high-level speakers at the event “Accelerating Action toward Equality in Law for Women and Girls by 2023”, organized by UN Women, in September. IDLO also participated in the Generation Equality Midpoint event.
82. During the second Shaping Feminist Foreign Policies Conference, hosted this year by the Government of the Netherlands in the Hague, IDLO co-organized a side event "A Feminist Foreign Policy Inspired by Grassroots Perspectives" together with UN Women, GROOTS Kenya, and Stand4HerLand.
83. Members will recall that IDLO has been championing policy advocacy efforts on feminist climate justice at global and regional policy forums, including Stockholm+50, the Commission on the Status of Women, the UNFCCC COPs, and in support of the Global Acceleration Plan for Gender Equality. In recognition of these efforts, the Feminist Action for Climate Justice (FACJ) invited IDLO to become a FACJ Leader, making IDLO the first commitment maker asked to assume a leadership role.
84. As part of IDLO’s engagement with the Justice Action Coalition, we are working on the development of the Financing Justice for Women Report in partnership with UN Women, the World Bank, Pathfinders, and other organizations. This report aims to enhance the understanding of the need for increased investment in preventing and addressing intimate partner violence.

## **Rule of law drives peace and sustainable development**

### *Inclusive economic development*

85. To advance inclusive economic development, IDLO assists partners in developing effective economic laws and policies and enhancing state regulatory capacities; supporting dispute resolution and the negotiation and management of investment agreements; engaging with the private sector; and promoting the economic empowerment of women and girls.
86. We are working in a number of contexts to promote mediation as a means for resolving commercial disputes to reduce the burden on courts and increase speed and efficiency.
87. IDLO has continued to support the expansion of Court-Annexed Mediation (CAM) in **Kenya**. During the reporting period, IDLO facilitated the establishment of CAM registries at five court stations, conducted the induction of judiciary staff, developed the Training of Trainers Manual for Conciliation, and supported the sensitization of members of the public and court users on CAM processes and procedures. From July 2022 to June 2023, 4,708 matters were referred to a court-annexed mediation, with nearly 95 percent successfully resolved. The overall turnaround time for resolving disputes was reduced, and the cases resolved unlocked nearly USD 57 million which would otherwise be tied up in litigation.

88. Our efforts in strengthening mediation in **Kyrgyzstan** included the development of mediation dispute resolution clauses, capacity building of judges, a nationwide awareness campaign on mediation, and specialised training for mediators on conducting online mediation.
89. In **Moldova**, we continued supporting the integration of judicial and private mediation into the electronic case management system. Our comprehensive approach included research into the status of mediation in the country, the development of legislation to enhance the related regulatory framework, and the creation of a Mediation Informational System for the Moldova Mediation Council. Additionally, IDLO provided training sessions for judges on national and international best practices for enforcing arbitral awards.
90. IDLO delivered advanced training on commercial mediation for mediators at the Centre for Alternative Dispute Resolution of **Montenegro** (CADRM). A handbook and training module were developed to support the replication of similar training in the future. We also carried out a Training of Trainers session on commercial mediation for experienced mediators at the CADRM and organized two regional workshops for small and medium enterprises. Additionally, IDLO developed a public awareness campaign plan on commercial mediation.
91. In the **West Bank and Gaza**, IDLO developed specialized training modules, which are being converted to e-learning course modules to support the Palestinian Judicial Institute's e-learning platform. A study visit was organized to introduce Palestinian judges to economic courts in Egypt and an in-person training was conducted for 50 judges.
92. IDLO supported the Ministry of Justice of **Tajikistan** to develop a draft law on mediation.
93. Drawing from relevant experiences in other countries, IDLO is developing a handbook and training program for mediators in **Uzbekistan**. We organized an exposure visit for a group of senior officials from Uzbekistan to Italy, where they had a chance to engage with several Italian experts and institutions.
94. Since its operationalization in 2019, the Investment Support Programme for Least Developed Countries (ISP/LDCs) has responded to requests for support from over 10 LDCs, and demand for its services continues to grow. The programme has been included in Doha Programme of Action and has provided assistance on investment-related matters in several countries during 2023.
95. IDLO supported the development of a model dispute resolution clause for the Centre International de Médiation et d'Arbitrage de Mauritanie (CIMAM) and training on International Commercial Arbitration for CIMAM arbitrators and selected representatives of the **Mauritanian** private sector.

96. In **Rwanda**, IDLO worked to enhance the judiciary's capacity in the application and interpretation of commercial and investment contracts. The training covered the fundamentals of contractual interpretation, including the distinctions between common law and civil law systems. It also highlighted the judiciary's role in enforcing contracts through arbitration.
97. IDLO provided technical support and capacity development in **Senegal** to assess international investment agreements and the risks of exposure to investor-state disputes.
98. IDLO provided technical assistance to the **Somalia** Investment Promotion Agency, delivering a three-day training on investment contract negotiation. The training focused on contract fundamentals, share purchase agreements, joint venture agreements, and negotiation skills.
99. Drawing on its experience, IDLO published an issue brief [A Rule of Law Approach to Inclusive Economic Development: Supporting Fair and Equitable International Investment Agreements in Least Developed Countries](#). The brief uses examples from the ISP/LDCs programme to provide an overview of how the rule of law can drive inclusive economic development.
100. In March, I led IDLO's delegation to the **Fifth United Nations Conference for the Least Developed Countries (LDC5)** in Doha. It was an important opportunity for IDLO to highlight the role of the rule of law in accelerating sustainable development in LDC contexts, including by contributing to an attractive business climate, making development more inclusive, and combatting climate change and environmental degradation. We also organized a side event, featuring participation from Ministers from Uganda and the Gambia, the Permanent Representative of Malawi, as Chair of the LDC Group, and senior officials from UNCTAD and UNCDF. The event highlighted the critical role of ISP/LDCs in advancing investment-related legal reform, with a focus on expanding partnerships and implementing the provisions of the Doha Programme of Action.
101. I participated in the Rome Symposium on the World Openness Report, jointly organized by the Hongqiao International Economic Forum Secretariat, the Italy-China Council Foundation, and the Embassy of China. During the event, I emphasized the critical importance of the rule of law in addressing the concerning trends outlined in the 2022 Report. I highlighted the potential for the rule of law to foster inclusive economic development, promote heightened transparency, rebuild trust, and address the complex transnational challenges of current times.

### *Climate justice and sustainable use of natural resources*

102. IDLO has continued to scale up efforts to promote rights-based, intersectional, feminist approaches to environmental action; support the development of laws and regulations on biodiversity; and advocate for the sustainable use of natural resources.

103. Under the self-funded project “Advancing Women’s and Girls’ Action for Climate Justice through the Rule of Law,” gender assessments of the legal and policy frameworks on climate issues are being completed in **Burkina Faso** and the **Philippines**. IDLO also conducted a workshop on Burkina Faso’s Nationally Determined Contribution under the Paris Climate Agreement, to strengthen the capacity of sectoral focal points in understanding international climate change instruments, managing gender-related commitments, and incorporating gender perspectives into development tools. Additionally, IDLO is working to create legal education opportunities for students and legal aid providers, focusing on assisting women and girls living in communities that are particularly affected by climate change.
104. IDLO continued supporting locally led climate action in **Kenya**. During the reporting period, we contributed to the development of the County Climate Change Policy and Climate Change Bill of the Kilifi County. The law aims to strengthen the development, management, implementation, and regulation of mechanisms to enhance climate change resilience and low-carbon development for sustainable development.
105. In Mopti, **Mali**, IDLO trained traditional and religious authorities on the prevention and management of land disputes.
106. IDLO completed a project on enhancing land security by strengthening public confidence in the registration of land transactions in **Rwanda**. This included the drafting of a Practice Manual on land dispute resolution for *Abunzis* (traditional leaders). We also developed Dispute Resolution Guidelines to be used by the Ministry of Justice, National Land Authority (NLA), and local leaders. To maximize the utility of these resources, IDLO has developed a training course and complemented it with an e-learning version available in English and Kinyarwanda. An awareness-raising campaign on land rights, developed in collaboration with NLA, is now being broadcasted via local radio stations.
107. Among recent research products, we released a brief [Rule of Law Approach to Climate Insecurity](#). Based on case studies from **Burundi, Indonesia, Rwanda, and Somalia**, the research demonstrates how people-centred justice interventions can respond to risks of insecurity and conflict arising from the adverse effects of climate change.
108. Our issue brief [Strengthening Climate Justice in Somaliland: The Role of ADR Centres](#) aims to showcase how working at the intersection of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13 (climate action) and SDG 16 (peaceful, just, and inclusive societies) is key to achieving climate justice. This approach facilitates more inclusive, equitable, and effective climate action while ensuring that the most climate-vulnerable people are not left behind.
109. We also continued our advocacy on climate justice through participation in multilateral dialogues and other global events.



110. I led IDLO's delegation to the UN Climate Change Conference (COP27) in Sharm el-Sheikh. Through co-organizing a series of side events and delivering a statement at the high-level plenary, we aimed to highlight the interlinkages between the rule of law, human rights, gender equality, and climate action and to keep "climate justice" high on the agenda. We are currently preparing to build on this momentum at COP28 in Dubai.
111. IDLO contributed to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change's (UNFCCC) first Global Stocktake of the Paris Agreement. The submission addressed the main ways in which a rule of law approach to climate action at the intersection of SDGs 13 and 16 can promote climate justice, strengthen institutional capacity for climate adaptation and mitigation, and enhance international cooperation.
112. IDLO participated in the UN Convention on Biological Diversity COP15 in Montreal, Canada, emphasizing the catalytic role of rule of law approaches in implementing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Further, we engaged in a peer review of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) draft guidance on including human rights considerations in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans following the adoption of the Framework.
113. IDLO participated in the UN Human Rights Council's Interactive Dialogue with the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment, highlighting the need for participation of, and legal empowerment for, women and girls so they can fully enjoy their right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment. IDLO also contributed to the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Context of Climate Change, on enhancing climate change legislation and advancing the principle of intergenerational justice.
114. In May, the IDLO office in The Hague hosted an Implementers Dialogue on Climate Justice and Conflict Prevention, with legal experts from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Hague Conference on Private International Law. The event focused on emerging climate justice concepts, such as intergenerational justice, feminist climate justice, and the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.
115. IDLO participated in the LANDac (The Netherlands Academy on Land Governance for Equitable and Sustainable Development) Annual International Conference. Together with GROOTS Kenya, we organized a session on strengthening women's land rights and an event on integrating justice in land governance.
116. In preparation for COP28, we actively engaged in the lead-up events. In June, IDLO followed the proceedings of the Bonn Climate Change Conference and delivered closing remarks at the side event "Climate Law and Governance Bonn Roundtable", organized by the University of Cambridge and Centre for International Sustainable Development Law.

117. In September, IDLO participated in the Africa Climate Summit and the Africa Climate Week in Nairobi, organized by the Kenyan Government, the African Union Commission and the UNFCCC. The meetings were important milestones in the preparation for COP28. Given their significance, IDLO's delegation included representatives from headquarters as well as our offices in the region. We contributed to the events through several engagements, including a side event co-organized with the Kenyan judiciary and Africa Judicial Education Network on Environmental Law (AJENEL), focused on "African Judiciaries and the Green Economy." IDLO, Open Society Foundations (OSF) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) also organized an event on "Rule of Law and Community Land Governance in Advancing Climate Resilience, Justice, and Peace" focused on transformative climate action and economic development. Recognizing IDLO's contribution, the African Union and the African Development Bank have invited IDLO to partner in hosting the Bi-annual Africa Land Conference in Addis Ababa in November 2023.
118. IDLO remains committed to promote rule of law approaches to food security and nutrition.
119. The pilot project "Food Security and the Rule of Law in Time of Emergencies", implemented in partnership with Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in **Honduras** and **Uganda**, was completed. Lessons learned from this engagement will be reflected in a joint IDLO-FAO issue brief, to be published soon. Currently, IDLO is discussing with the Honduran Government the development of a roadmap for the implementation of selected recommendations. We are also exploring opportunities to secure additional resources for future work in this important area.
120. We released a policy brief [Rule of Law for Food Systems Transformation](#), providing policymakers with a set of recommendations for incorporating the rule of law, transparency, and accountability mechanisms into food systems. The goal is to improve access to justice for all participants in these systems, particularly vulnerable groups, to enhance food security and nutrition.
121. We are enhancing our engagement with global food platforms. This year IDLO took part as an Observer in the 43rd Session of the FAO Conference for the first time. We have contributed to the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food on the right to food in the context of Covid-19 recovery.
122. IDLO participated in the second Arab Forum on Equality: One Voice, Quality in Food Security in Beirut, highlighting the link between rule of law and food security. We also took part in the "Climate Security and Migration in the Mediterranean" event, organized by CGIAR.
123. In July, we participated in the UNFSS+2 Stocktaking Moment, including in a special event on "Governance for Food Systems Transformation" presenting rule of law solutions for improved food systems governance. Following the Stocktaking Moment, I met with the Director-General of FAO to discuss the crucial role of the rule of law

and good governance in food systems transformation and explore future collaboration.

124. In our capacity as an observer at the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), IDLO has monitored the discussions surrounding the latest Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls. This document received formal approval during a plenary session at CFS51 in October, where IDLO delivered a statement at the high-level plenary session and provided remarks at the side event “Human rights-based approaches to global challenges and climate action to realise the Right to Adequate Food for all”, organized by the Group of Friends of the Right to Food.

*Healthy lives and well-being for all*

125. IDLO has continued working at the nexus of health, sustainable development, and the rule of law to promote greater access to healthcare and pandemic preparedness, and to strengthen capacity to prevent and manage non-communicable diseases.
126. Under the second phase of the Global RECAP Programme, IDLO developed [Toolkits on Regulatory Approaches to Non-Communicable Diseases](#) (NCDs). The document is designed to assist academics and students in public health and related fields in applying legal measures to combat NCDs and potentially other global health challenges. Additionally, IDLO supported CSOs in **Bangladesh, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda** to carry out advocacy and community education projects on combatting NCDs. These initiatives aim to create an enabling environment for policy and regulatory reforms promoting healthy diets and sufficient levels of physical activity to prevent NCDs. We are also in the final stages of negotiating an agreement with the European Commission to expand the Programme to five additional countries.
127. IDLO remains committed to advancing the rule of law in preparedness and response to public health emergencies. We are actively seeking funding to expand our support and technical assistance to low- and middle-income countries, including the in-country implementation and monitoring of the International Health Regulations (IHR), in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) IHR Secretariat.
128. Our recent issue brief [Preventing Pandemics Through The Rule Of Law: Strengthening Countries’ Legal Preparedness For Public Health Emergencies](#) represents IDLO’s view on the matter. It offers governments a structured framework to create, enact, and supervise laws and policies that align with the rule of law and human rights principles, ultimately enhancing preparedness for public health crises. The brief was launched at the High-Level Meeting on Pandemic Preparedness and Response, held during High-Level Week at the UN General Assembly in September. A dedicated event was organized as part of the 10-year anniversary celebrations at the IDLO Geneva Office.
129. This year, IDLO joined the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA). Following the World Health Assembly’s (WHA) decision to grant IDLO Observer Status in 2022, we participated in this capacity for the first time at the 76th WHA in May.

130. Throughout the year, IDLO participated in meetings of the Working Group for Amendments to the IHR and is closely following the discussions within the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body, focusing on pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response under the WHO Constitution.
131. IDLO was also a featured speaker at two webinars organized by the GHSA and aimed to offer expert perspectives on the ongoing international negotiation processes.
132. In May, IDLO participated in the 17th World Congress on Public Health, organized by the World Federation of Public Health Associations, the Association of Schools of Public Health, and the Italian Society of Hygiene, Preventive Medicine, and Public Health. The Congress served as a platform for IDLO to showcase its initiatives, through organizing two thematic workshops and a poster presentation.
133. IDLO participated in the meeting of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board in June. Our intervention emphasized the need for attention to the rule of law as a key tool to address inequalities, including through improved legal services, legal literacy, and empowerment.

### **III. DELIVERING ON THE STRATEGIC GOALS: ORGANIZATIONAL ENABLERS**

134. The Strategic Plan 2021-2024 identifies four Organizational Enablers, key areas to invest in our capacities, systems, and resources to optimally implement IDLO's Strategic Goals and Objectives. Progress during the reporting period under each area is listed below.

#### **Innovation, integration, and impact**

135. The first Enabler seeks to further strengthen the quality, integration, and innovation of IDLO's work and increase our focus on evidence and outcomes.
136. IDLO began implementation of a more integrated approach to programme development. The changes introduced seek to promote greater integration by involving thematic experts and support functions early in the process, thereby enhancing effectiveness and speed of procedures.
137. As part of efforts to transition from a project-based implementation to a more integrated programmatic approach, IDLO is developing context-specific country strategies drawing on evidence-based analysis and consultations with national stakeholders. The development of country strategies will be piloted in a limited number of countries and rolled out on an iterative basis.
138. IDLO has developed a Strategic Results and Resources Framework (SRRF) to measure progress on the implementation of its Strategic Plan. This is the organization's first

attempt at implementing a quantitative, results monitoring system and is being implemented in a phased approach. During the reporting period, the data collected for 2022 was validated and analysed and lessons from the exercise are being used to strengthen IDLO's results focus and internal monitoring capacity.

139. IDLO has established its first institutional Data and Knowledge Management function and will be working on developing an organizational data strategy to better create, manage, and use data for both internal management and external advocacy.

### **Investing in people**

140. We continued to implement the Human Resources Strategy developed last year to ensure that IDLO can attract, manage, and retain a talented and motivated workforce and support colleagues working in extremely challenging operational environments.
141. With the majority of our staff stationed in the field, and travel opportunities limited during the COVID-19 pandemic, I was very pleased to organize a week-long gathering of all our Country Managers in Rome in February. Our field-based colleagues had the opportunity to engage in strategic discussions with senior management and headquarters staff, review progress in the implementation of IDLO's Strategic Plan, and discuss the way forward with our new Management Plan for 2023-2024, as well as to exchange views on challenges and opportunities.
142. After the launch of a new recruitment platform, a career webpage is in the process of development and will provide prospective job applicants with information on IDLO's work and conditions of employment.
143. IDLO is also developing information materials for onboarding, induction, and orientation of new staff. This will include an online orientation course, an onboarding video, and other materials with information about IDLO, our policies, procedures, and organizational values.
144. An improved grievance management process has been put in place, as well as an ethics framework that provides IDLO staff access to advice on ethics matters and on the implementation of ethics-related policies.
145. IDLO marked World Mental Health Day in October with several events to promote good mental health and well-being for IDLO staff, including colleagues working in hazardous duty stations. Over 200 staff from around the world participated in the activities which included several webinars, yoga, and meditation sessions.
146. The organizational change process I initiated last year continues. Over the past year, IDLO organized a series of workshops involving all departments and, offices, as well as country managers, to strengthen staff engagement. We also concluded a 360-degree

feedback process for senior managers, aimed to improve teamwork and effectiveness through confidential feedback and team discussions.

147. In October, I was pleased to support an initiative of the Staff Association of IDLO to participate in the UN Inter-Agency Games, which bring together international civil servants from around the world.

## **Improving systems and processes**

### *Systems improvement*

148. As part of efforts to improve efficiency and coordination over the course of the current strategic cycle, IDLO is investing in updates to systems and business processes to ensure that the Organization's operational modalities are best suited to institutional needs and priorities.
149. IDLO has made improvements to existing systems related to the human resources management system, including its further integration with the payroll system. Additional enhancements include developing a centralized repository and process automation related to project opportunity review.
150. During this year, IDLO has been admitted as an observer to the United Nations system's interagency bodies on finance and budget, human resources management, and procurement, which allows us to learn from other organizations' experiences. In this context, we also secured participation in the United Nations Global Marketplace, enabling the organization to connect with reputable suppliers, streamline processes, and achieve cost savings.
151. In addition, progress is being made regarding the introduction of an anti-money laundering system, for which potential sanction check providers are currently being sourced.
152. Having negotiated a new lease agreement for the Headquarters, IDLO has acquired additional space, including the ground floor and original entrance to the building, which will enable us to meet office space needs and to make the building more accessible to individuals with mobility challenges. We are collaborating with the experts from the World Food Programme (WFP) to plan the refurbishment of this new space. The construction phase is scheduled to commence in 2024.

### *Security risk management*

153. Safeguarding the well-being of our staff remains my top priority, as a significant portion of our work takes place in fragile and insecure environments. This is particularly true for conflict-affected and other complex contexts including Afghanistan, Myanmar, Ukraine, and the Sahel.

154. In response to the growing unpredictability in our operating environment, we have increased capacity at headquarters to support organization-wide security services.
155. Our Security Management Team is in close contact with the Country Offices to ensure the well-being of the personnel, provide safety guidance, and advise on health and welfare. Several missions have been conducted to assist the personnel in the field in the revision of security plans and systems and to provide additional training.
156. In April, in response to a directive from the de facto authorities in Afghanistan, stating that Afghan women were not allowed to work in UN facilities, IDLO took measures to ensure the safety of its female employees by asking them to work remotely. In May, following consultations with the UN, other partners, and our staff, it was decided that female national staff were able to return to work from the office. IDLO security staff continue to monitor the situation closely.
157. Following the crisis in Niger, our Country Office activated a hibernation plan with all the staff working remotely from home. Following an improvement in security conditions, operations have now resumed.

#### *Recognition of legal status*

158. IDLO continued to prioritize efforts to secure recognition of its legal status in the countries where it operates or plans to operate. This is mainly achieved through the signing of host country agreements (HCA), which ensure our legal status as an international organization, facilitating smooth operations, protecting our staff and facilities, and enabling the efficient use of donor funds.
159. During the reporting period, IDLO concluded HCAs with **The Bahamas**, the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, and **Ukraine**. I would like to thank all members, particularly the United States, for their support throughout the negotiation process.
160. We are looking forward to concluding HCAs with the **Philippines** and **Tunisia** soon. IDLO has also made progress in the negotiations of HCAs with several other countries.

#### **Strengthening Partnerships**

161. The Strategic Plan's fourth Enabler aims to maximize IDLO's impact through enhanced partnerships, strengthened communications, and impactful advocacy for political and financial support for the rule of law.

#### *Stakeholder Outreach*

162. Strengthening IDLO's outreach to key partners, including Member Parties and partner countries, judiciaries, the UN system and other international organisations, civil society, academia, and the private sector, has been a major priority.
163. IDLO expanded its membership, with Niger becoming our 38th Member Party on 21 February 2023. Discussions are ongoing with several more States to promote a balanced growth in IDLO's membership.
164. Throughout the year, I engaged Ambassadors and representatives of IDLO's Member Parties in Rome, Geneva, and New York to thank them for their support and partnership.
165. We have strengthened our links with the United Nations system through bilateral engagement and cooperation with UN entities including the UN Secretariat, FAO, IFAD, IOM, ITU, OHCHR, UNDP, UNICEF, UNICRI, UNHCR, UNODC, UN Women, WFP and WHO, on programming, research, and policy advocacy. IDLO also stepped up its engagement with other Rome-Based Agencies including UNIDROIT and ICCROM.
166. The annual meeting of the IDLO Board of Advisers took place at our headquarters in Rome in September. During the meeting, IDLO senior management provided updates on the progress made since the last gathering, emphasizing key programmatic, research, and advocacy priorities. The discussion also explored avenues through which the Board could offer support to IDLO in delivering priorities and strengthening partnerships. I would like to thank Board Members, particularly the Chair, for their advice and active engagement.
167. I was honoured to have a private audience with His Holiness Pope Francis in September. We discussed our shared commitment to advancing justice, the rule of law, gender equality, and supporting the most vulnerable. In view of many common priorities, IDLO is looking forward to strengthening cooperation with the Holy See to promote peace and sustainable development through the rule of law.
168. In October, IDLO participated in the second U.S. – IDLO Strategic Dialogue in Washington, D.C. The Dialogue brought together different geographic and thematic bureaus within the U.S. State Department, as well as other government departments and offices, to review progress in key areas and explore future opportunities. Earlier, IDLO hosted the Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs of the U.S. State Department, as well as the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs, to discuss shared priorities.
169. In July, IDLO Headquarters hosted the Chair of the Committee on Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid of the German Bundestag.
170. During my visit to Vienna in June, I had meetings with key officials, including the Federal Minister of Justice of Austria and representatives from the Federal Ministry



for European and International Affairs and the Federal Chancellery Division for Women's Affairs and Equality.

171. In May, I participated in the Tashkent Law Spring event alongside Ministers from Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Singapore, as well as other global leaders. During the event, I emphasized the critical importance of ensuring that the rule of law and access to justice are available to all to promote peace and sustainable development.
172. While in Uzbekistan, I travelled to Samarkand to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development's (EBRD) 32nd Annual Meeting and Business Forum where I met with the EBRD General Counsel and discussed how to further strengthen IDLO's longstanding partnership, in line with the Bank's expanding mandate. IDLO subsequently hosted an EBRD delegation in Rome in June to discuss the implementation of our Framework Agreement, signed in November 2022, and identify opportunities for future collaboration.
173. I also participated in the second OPEC Fund Development Forum in Vienna, which was dedicated to climate innovation, and met with the Director-General of the OPEC Fund for International Development. These engagements provided valuable opportunities to discuss the importance of the rule of law in protecting vulnerable groups and supporting the transition to a greener more sustainable development model.
174. While in Doha for the LDC5 Conference, I had the opportunity to meet with the Assistant Foreign Minister of Qatar, and the Director General of the Qatar Fund for Development, to discuss ways to strengthen our cooperation.
175. I travelled to Nairobi, in November, to meet with senior officials from the Government of Kenya, the Judiciary and development partners to strengthen our longstanding partnership and cooperation.
176. A major accomplishment in the past year was the successful completion of the Pillar Assessment conducted by the European Commission, certifying the effectiveness of IDLO's systems, rules, and procedures for control and protection. We have since been actively strengthening our partnership with the European Union (EU). Notably, IDLO was selected to co-lead the Working Group on Accountability and Rule of Law, Access to Justice, Anti-Corruption, and Transparency within the EU Team Europe Democracy Network. Currently, we are working on strengthening our in-house capacities to engage with the EU at the operational level.

*Advocating for political and financial support for the rule of law*

177. In addition to the work already highlighted under the relevant Strategic Objectives, we engaged in several major policy advocacy initiatives over the past year to further

position IDLO as a thought leader and champion for SDG 16 as an enabler of peace and sustainable development.

178. Our flagship policy advocacy event was the fourth edition of the [SDG16 Conference](#), co-organized in partnership with the Government of Italy and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) from 30 May to 1 June in Rome.
179. Titled “SDG16 as a Compass Navigating Intersecting Crises”, the Conference aimed to review progress and challenges related to SDG16, focusing on conflict, and shrinking trust in public institutions, and projecting the Goal's key role in responding to the crises of food systems and climate change.
180. For the first time since COVID-19, the conference was held in person, bringing together 200 experts, and almost 700 users registered for online attendance. High-level speakers included the Minister and Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy, the Deputy Secretary General, the President of ECOSOC, Government Ministers, Heads of UN Agencies, and other international organizations, as well as the leading figures from civil society, academia, the judiciary, youth, and the media.
181. Prior to the SDG16 Conference, IDLO hosted a Civil Society Day, co-organized together with the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS) and the Transparency, Accountability & Participation (TAP) Network. The hybrid event gathered more than 40 civil society representatives, providing them a space to review and finalize the 2023 edition of the [Rome Civil Society Declaration on SDG16+](#).
182. The outcomes of the Conference fed into major UN events, including the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) in July and the SDG Summit in September. The [key messages of the conference](#) were, at the request of Italy, circulated by the Secretary-General to all UN Member States as a joint General Assembly and ECOSOC document.
183. We have also provided submissions to several multilateral processes and delivered statements at the consultations, including the Political Declaration for the SDG Summit; the New Agenda for Peace; the Declaration on Future Generations; the Global Digital Compact; and the High-Level Meeting on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response. Our messages stressed the importance of the rule of law, access to justice, and the role of SDG 16 as an enabler of the 2030 Agenda. Additionally, IDLO has regularly convened meetings of a Like-Minded Group in New York to coordinate advocacy and engagement of intergovernmental organizations and CSOs interested in SDG 16 around these events.
184. In May, I was invited by the President of ECOSOC to deliver the opening remarks at a Special Meeting focusing on "Harnessing the Game-Changing Potential of SDG16: Enhancing Governance and Combating Corruption". This important event provided an opportunity to reflect on the catalytic power of SDG16 to accelerate progress towards the 2030 Agenda. Additionally, I was invited by the President of ECOSOC to moderate the thematic review of SDG 9 during the HLPF in July.

185. During High-Level week at the UN General Assembly, we built on this work to advocate for the rule of law and access to justice in different policy forums. I addressed the Leadership Dialogue on “Strengthening integrated policies and public institutions for achieving the SDGs”, co-moderated by the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands and the Prime Minister of Denmark. We also delivered statements at the High-level Meeting on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness, and Response and the ministerial meeting to prepare for the Summit of the Future to make a case for greater political and financial support for the rule of law.
186. I represented IDLO at the High-Level Opening of the 52nd Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva and IDLO has been actively engaged in the sessions of the Human Rights Council throughout the year. Our interventions consistently emphasized the need for prioritizing the application of the rule of law in addressing issues such as statelessness, safeguarding the rights of Indigenous Peoples and communities affected by climate change, and advancing gender equality.
187. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the establishment of IDLO's Liaison office in Geneva. To commemorate this milestone, we have organized a series of events to promote IDLO, its mandate, and our engagement in Geneva and the UN. I was pleased to join a high-level event on the Rule of Law as a critical tool for Rights, Development and Peace. Speakers included the Minister of Justice of the Gambia, the Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, the US Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, and representatives of civil society.
188. IDLO is actively engaging in several networks, advancing our global positioning, and offering expertise. We continued our engagement with the Justice Action Coalition and participated in the Ministerial Level meeting of the Coalition hosted by the Government of the Netherlands in June.
189. IDLO became a member of the World Bank’s Justice and Rule of Law Partner Network and took part in its inaugural partner meeting. Designed to provide thought leadership, generate, and disseminate knowledge, and leverage resources, this initiative reflects the growing emphasis on justice and the rule of law within the World Bank.
190. IDLO joined the Rule of Law and People-Centred Justice cohort of the Summit for Democracy and contributed to the group’s Joint Statement and Call to Action, publicly launched at the Summit.
191. IDLO took part for the first time in the Mo Ibrahim Foundation’s Governance Weekend in Nairobi.
192. In November, IDLO co-organized the annual conference of the Dutch Knowledge Platform on Security and Rule of Law in Nairobi. Held outside the Netherlands for the

first time, the Conference brings together policymakers, practitioners, and experts to explore current and emerging trends related to security, rule of law, and development.

#### **IV. MANAGEMENT UPDATES**

##### *Financial results*

193. IDLO has secured ninety four percent of its budgeted unrestricted revenue for the year. An unexpected decrease in unrestricted revenue in the middle of 2023 caused the organization to make some adjustments to planned expenditures on institutional projects and activities, as well as employee-related costs, in order to balance the budget. IDLO has continued to closely monitor expenditures to mitigate the adverse impact of this reduction.
194. Restricted, or programme revenue is at 68% at the end of the third quarter and on track to meet the budget target, but IDLO remains mindful of the potential impact of the current volatility in many of the contexts where the Organization operates.
195. The 2024 Operating Budget was prepared in alignment with the 2023-2024 Management Plan. It has been reviewed and endorsed by the Audit and Finance Committee and the Standing Committee and is before the Assembly.

#### **V. LOOKING AHEAD**

196. A challenging external environment has reinforced the relevance of our mandate, and IDLO's comparative advantages may be particularly valuable in the kind of world we are living today.
197. As the Strategic Plan 2021-2024 comes to an end, IDLO will develop a new Plan for the next strategic cycle. We are determined to build on our strengths and engage where we can add the most value in the shared project to build and sustain peace and accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda. We will also continue to explore rule of law solutions to global challenges from achieving gender equality, to addressing climate change, and ensuring the responsible use of frontier technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence. Achieving these objectives will require further investments in IDLO's people and systems and will need sustained political will and expanded financial support.
198. Real change will only be possible if we work together across sectors, across societies, and across the world. Thank you for your continued support and commitment to IDLO's mission.

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