

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL
ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY OF PARTIES
November 23, 2021**

This report is submitted by the Secretariat to the Assembly of Parties for its annual meeting on November 23, 2021, for information.

Members of the Assembly of Parties who may have questions of a technical nature regarding this document are invited to contact the Secretariat.



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I. INTRODUCTION

1. I am pleased to present my second report to the Assembly of Parties. Despite facing strong headwinds throughout 2021, IDLO was able to achieve significant results in the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2021-2024, adopted by the Assembly last year.
2. The ongoing impact of COVID-19 has exacted a devastating human toll, wiping out hard-won development gains, deepening the divide between rich and poor, and exacerbating existing fragilities. The pandemic has entered a new and worrying phase of unequal recovery, made worse by severe vaccine inequity. The race between vaccination drives and the spread of ever more infectious variants continues, reminding us that none of us are safe until all of us are safe.
3. This is true not only of the current crisis, but of so many of the complex, transnational threats the world faces including climate change, extreme inequality, corruption, and lack of trust in public institutions.
4. Increased global fragility has compounded the devastating impact of COVID-19 and made our operating environments more volatile. We have seen growing violence and instability in many places that IDLO works, most notably Afghanistan and Myanmar.
5. These trends emphasised the continued relevance of IDLO's mandate and mission, even as the rule of law continued to come under pressure in many parts of the world.
6. Against this backdrop, my priorities for the first year of the new Strategic Cycle were to:
 - Maximise IDLO's contribution to peace, sustainable development and progress on Agenda 2030 through the rule of law, including by contributing to the global response to COVID-19;
 - Develop a geographically diverse and thematically balanced portfolio of integrated programmes, research, policy and advocacy;
 - Strengthen organisational resources, systems and capacities to deliver on our Strategic Goals in an uncertain operating environment; and

- Position IDLO as a partner of choice on SDG 16 and generate greater political and financial support for the rule of law.
7. The three cross-cutting principles of inclusion, integration, and innovation, which have been central to my approach as Director-General, continued to guide IDLO's efforts in the new strategic cycle.
 8. We advanced our work to empower justice seekers and strengthen institutions, adapting where necessary to meet the needs of partners and respond to a range of new legal and justice challenges presented by the pandemic. We developed greater thematic expertise in key areas including climate justice, anti-corruption and digital innovation, and initiated reforms to strengthen programme quality, improve coordination and enhance our ability to drive and measure results.
 9. During the past year, IDLO made much needed investments in human resources and undertook several systems improvements to increase efficiency, transparency and accountability.
 10. We strengthened existing and new partnerships to leverage our impact, expanding outreach and forging several important new relationships in our sector. IDLO continued to make a strong case for continued investment in the rule of law to promote a more just, inclusive and sustainable recovery from COVID-19, through our advocacy, research and engagement, including flagship initiatives like the SDG 16 Conference.
 11. These achievements, presented in the sections below, would not have been possible without the support of our partners and the dedication and ingenuity of IDLO colleagues around the world.

II. CONTRIBUTING TO THE GLOBAL RESPONSE TO COVID-19

12. Since the pandemic began, contributing to a rule of law-based response to COVID-19 has been a major priority for IDLO. Our interventions focus on three key areas:
 - strengthening legal and policy frameworks for managing COVID-19;
 - mitigating the impact of the crisis on justice systems and justice seekers, with a specific focus on those most vulnerable, particularly women and girls and marginalised groups; and
 - advocating for the critical need to maintain the rule of law, to help countries to strengthen their governance and institutions, and to support and invest in a culture of justice to protect the rights and dignity of people everywhere.
13. While the rapid roll-out of vaccines offers hope for the future, their inequitable distribution and the rise of new variants is a reminder of how COVID-19 continues

to exacerbate existing inequalities, and a confirmation that its impact will be felt for a long time to come.

14. IDLO's contribution to the global pandemic response therefore remains a key priority in our new strategic cycle and is incorporated throughout the Strategic Plan. As described in the following sections, our work includes both targeted initiatives that contribute directly to the crisis response and recovery, such as the Pandemic Preparedness and Response Project, as well as broader support under each Strategic Objective to meet emerging justice needs.

III. IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN: PROGRAMMES, POLICY, RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY

15. Anchored in the 2030 Agenda, the Strategic Plan 2021-2024 is structured around two Strategic Goals and six Strategic Objectives based on IDLO's commitment to putting people's needs at the centre of justice systems and making the rule of law a driver of peace and sustainable development.
16. The first Strategic Goal focuses on people-centred justice and seeks to make justice systems more effective and responsive to people's needs and respectful of their human rights. It builds on IDLO's traditional expertise in legal empowerment and access to justice (Strategic Objective 1), institutional strengthening and reforms (Strategic Objective 2), and addressing key justice barriers faced by women and girls (Strategic Objective 3).
17. The second Strategic Goal links IDLO's work more closely to the 2030 Agenda, through the lens of SDG 16. Under this goal, IDLO leverages the contribution of the rule of law to advance broader peace and development objectives including inclusive economic development (Strategic Objective 4), climate justice, food security and sustainable use of natural resources (Strategic Objective 5), and healthy lives and well-being for all (Strategic Objective 6).
18. Strategic Goal 1 has historically represented the majority of IDLO's work. While this trend continued in 2021, we also invested in building up our work in newer areas under Strategic Goal 2.

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

Empowering justice seekers

19. An important element in IDLO's approach to people-centred justice is empowering justice seekers to claim their rights through increased rights awareness, legal aid, and other assistance and advisory services. Our work on legal empowerment is particularly important for those living in situations of poverty and vulnerability, who rely most on legal protection and services.

20. Our experience has demonstrated that justice systems are more effective if they are built around people's needs and lived realities. For this reason, we support access to justice through both formal and informal pathways, increasingly including digital platforms. We also work to promote participatory decision-making at the grassroots level.
21. Our programme in the **Sahel** seeks to improve respect for human rights and increase public trust in the criminal justice chain. It promotes greater collaboration between criminal justice officials and the communities they serve through an innovative grassroots approach using Cadres de Concertation (CdCs). The CdCs are consultation forums that bring together criminal justice officials, traditional leaders, and civil society representatives to identify and address priority criminal justice concerns within their regions and formulate possible solutions.
22. This year IDLO facilitated the creation of three new Cadres de Concertation in **Burkina Faso**, in the regions of Dori, Ouahigouya, and Fada. In **Mali**, where the CdCs have been operational for some years, IDLO is helping to implement their recommendations. In response to the need for addressing case backlogs identified by the CdCs, IDLO trained chief clerks, registrars, and members of the Public Prosecutor's Office in the Segou region on the use of judicial statistics and supported capacity-building sessions for clerks, trainees, and secretaries of the Court of Gao and the jurisdictions of Bourem and Ansongo. This support helped achieve a 15-20% reduction in the case backlog in Gao.
23. As part of the Sahel programme, IDLO also supports the work of national human rights institutions. In **Niger** we partnered with the National Human Rights Commission to conduct missions to investigate modern slavery practices in the Tahoua and Tillabéri regions. Following the missions, a report providing recommendations on the eradication of slavery was shared with the government and other partners. The findings were also presented at a restitution workshop for state and non-state actors.
24. IDLO has been working in **Myanmar** since 2013 to support the democratic transition by promoting legal awareness and cooperation between justice service providers and the communities they serve. The declaration of a state of emergency in February had a significant impact on IDLO's ability to continue work on promoting legal awareness and access to justice, even as the need for such support became more urgent. IDLO issued a [statement](#) expressing its deep concern about the suspension of the democratic process and encouraged a peaceful resolution to the crisis.
25. As the operating environment in Myanmar continued to deteriorate, IDLO shifted its support to civil society and other non-governmental actors working to provide legal services. In partnership with UNICEF, IDLO recently matched pro bono attorneys with a total of 145 clients in detention and began capacity building initiatives for paralegals aiding survivors of gender-based violence. We also launched two new projects: to support private legal aid service providers to better

meet the needs of their clients, and to assist women, the poor and other vulnerable groups to understand and claim their rights through awareness raising, community outreach and legal aid.

26. As part of our Community Justice Programme in **Uganda**, IDLO supported the delivery of mediation, legal representation, advice and referral services for over 600 beneficiaries in Kampala, Wakiso, Lamwo, and Iganga. We also helped to organise three radio talk shows in Kabale and Jinja to raise community awareness of rights related to inheritance and succession.
27. Customary and informal justice systems play an important role in promoting access to justice by offering affordability, flexibility, speed and cultural relevancy. IDLO works to increase access to justice through these systems while ensuring greater respect for international norms and standards.
28. IDLO is working with the **Kenya** Council of Elders, a national body that brings together traditional leaders from communities across Kenya, to enhance coordination between the formal and informal justice systems. Following a needs assessment, we organised a training for Kenyan elders on incorporating gender equality and human rights in Kenyan customary justice systems.
29. IDLO supported 15 Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Centres in **Somalia** that assist justice seekers in resolving their disputes under the traditional Xeer system. The ADR Centres handled a total of 1780 cases during the period January - October 2021, 50% of which were brought by women. Female community paralegals have been embedded in each Centre to support legal awareness, outreach, case classification and referrals, particularly in relation to cases concerning women. Cases that cannot be solved at the Centres, or fall outside their jurisdiction, are channelled to district courts. Formal district courts in many locations have also begun referring cases to the new Centres where appropriate.
30. Drawing on this experience, IDLO produced a research study on the quality and responsiveness of ADR Centres as a justice mechanism. The study focussed on access to justice for marginalised populations, the limited resources available in the justice system, and the existing political, socio-economic, and service environment.
31. IDLO also launched a project on “Strengthening the Social Contract through Access to Justice in Somaliland.” Starting with a six-month inception phase, the project seeks to strengthen trust between people and state in Somaliland by improving access to justice and bridging the gap between formal and informal institutions.
32. Bringing some of this work together, our [report](#) on *Community Paralegals and Customary and Informal Justice*, published in August, explores how community-based paralegals and other legal aid providers can strengthen the accessibility and inclusiveness of customary and informal justice systems.

33. IDLO organised a Regional Practitioner Dialogue to launch the report. Experts from Ministries of Justice of the Sahel countries, the Kenyan National Council of Elders, and civil society organisations across Africa shared insights and best practices on strengthening access to justice through customary and informal justice systems while improving compliance with international human rights standards.
34. This work demonstrates IDLO's integrated approach in practice. Our research draws on our country-level experience and we disseminate the findings through multi-stakeholder advocacy at global and national levels.

Making laws and institutions work for people

35. Making laws and institutions work for people is the largest part of IDLO's programme portfolio. Under this Objective, we promote smart legal reform, improve the delivery of essential justice services, strengthen criminal justice chains, support anti-corruption initiatives and increase digital innovation.
36. COVID-19 has shown the consequences of years of underinvestment in justice systems across the globe, and has challenged us to innovate, reimagine and explore alternative approaches as we support our partner institutions.
37. IDLO is working with the Judiciary of **Armenia** to familiarise it with the country's new Code of Civil Procedure. IDLO conducted trainings for judges in the Court of Cassation, Civil Court of Appeal, and local courts. We also partnered with the Judiciary and the Academy of Justice of Armenia to develop and launch an e-learning course on the Code.
38. In partnership with the Higher Council of the Judiciary in **Colombia**, IDLO is conducting a "Strategic Analysis of Needs of the Judicial Branch to Improve International Cooperation in the Justice Sector." The assessment will inform new partnership strategies towards scalable and innovative responses for people-centred access to justice mechanisms.
39. In **Honduras**, we are working to strengthen access to justice for prisoners in alignment with international and regional human rights standards. As part of these efforts, we partnered with penitentiary institutions to develop a Prisoners Treatment Plan to improve the quality of psychological, educational, and legal services available to people deprived of liberty. The plan was recently adopted by the National Penitentiary Institute and disseminated across several regions to inform future prison rehabilitation efforts.
40. We launched a programme to enhance the effectiveness, accountability, and transparency of the Public Prosecution Services in **Indonesia**. During the inception phase, we have been working in close collaboration with the Attorney

General's Office to complete an assessment of the current status of the AGO's case management system and performance-based budgeting.

41. IDLO supported the Ministry of Labor of **Liberia** in updating the country's anti-trafficking law to provide a clearer definition of child sex trafficking and prescribe penalties commensurate with those for other grave crimes. The amended law was adopted in September. We also facilitated trainings for 240 prosecutors, solicitors, and judges on effective prosecution and adjudication of TIP cases and published a curriculum for justice institutions.
42. In **Mexico**, IDLO provided training on first responder policing to municipal and state law enforcement officers in seven states. In partnership with local authorities, five replication strategies were developed to ensure the project's local ownership, scalability, and sustainability. Although this project has now been closed, IDLO will continue to explore opportunities in the region.
43. IDLO has been supporting the development of a Judicial Training Institute (JTI) in **Somalia** to increase the capacity of judges to adjudicate cases fairly and effectively. In July, IDLO co-convened a national conference to facilitate the review and validation of the JTI charter and curriculum. With the participation of 23 Chief Justices and Attorney Generals from the Federal Member States, the conference resulted in the approval and signature of the JTI Charter by the highest judicial authority in Somalia's Federal Member States, as well as the Somali Federal Government.
44. We launched a new project in **Tunisia** with the aim of enhancing the capacities of judges and lawyers to identify and remedy cases of rights violations. Implemented in partnership with the Canadian Bar Association, the project will also raise legal awareness and improve the capacity of civil society organisations to provide legal assistance.
45. In **Yemen**, we facilitated the development of a mobile application to allow field monitors in remote areas to record alleged human rights violations swiftly and securely on a case management system.
46. In September, IDLO launched a new programme to support professionalisation of corrections management training in line with international human rights standards with the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Bureau of the U.S. Department of State (INL).
47. IDLO also partners with justice institutions to develop context-specific and nationally owned approaches to digital innovation.
48. We continued to work with the Judiciary of **Kenya** to improve efficiency, reduce case backlogs and ease access to courts by digitising court systems and processes. In 2021, IDLO supported the implementation of e-filing systems to reduce case adjudication times and provided capacity-building support for judicial staff on

electronic filing and payment systems, virtual hearings, court recordings, and transcription services.

49. In the **Kyrgyz Republic**, we completed needs assessments of the judiciary's integration of audio-video transcription equipment into court services, to increase the speed, availability, and convenience of judicial proceedings for citizens. We also supported the judiciary in developing detailed instructions to all courts on the issuance of transcripts. This information was publicly disseminated on the judiciary's website.
50. In **Sierra Leone**, IDLO supported the Ministry of Justice to launch a public web portal containing training manuals, legislation, and legal research. This new service will increase the accessibility of legal resources to both legal practitioners and the wider public.
51. Anti-Corruption is a growing and increasingly important area of work for IDLO. We support partners to combat corruption at the national level, and through cross-border efforts focusing on the prevention and prosecution of corruption and related offenses.
52. We are supporting the establishment of specialised anti-corruption institutions in **Armenia**, including the Anti-Corruption Committee and the Specialized Anti-Corruption Court. We also supported the Prosecutor General's Office in the area of asset recovery.
53. In **the Bahamas**, we continued to support efforts to strengthen the country's legal framework on anti-corruption. This year, we completed an analysis of the country's existing anti-corruption legal framework and research on best practices in national anti-corruption plans in other Commonwealth countries. The findings of these studies will help inform the Bahamas' forthcoming national anti-corruption plan.
54. In **Moldova**, IDLO is working to support the development of an Independent Anti-Corruption Advisory Committee, as well as an integrated digital platform for the Union of Lawyers aimed at promoting judicial transparency, integrity, and accountability.
55. In the **Philippines**, we continue to support key justice institutions including the Department of Justice, Office of the Ombudsman, the Judicial Academy and the Anti-Money Laundering Council. Our engagement focusses on strengthening the capacity of justice sector professionals, supporting the development of institutional mechanisms and tools, and improving the quality of investigations and prosecutions.
56. As part of IDLO's work to strengthen public trust in **Ukraine's** prosecution service, we supported the drafting and adoption of transparent, merit-based rules for the appointment of prosecutors to managerial positions and assisted the Prosecutor General's Office in completing case review and recruitment processes.

IDLO also contributed to the drafting of amendments to Ukraine’s Criminal Procedure Code to facilitate efficient, equitable, and transparent investigations.

57. We also organised and contributed to major global policy dialogues on anti-corruption.
58. At the Special Session of the General Assembly Against Corruption in June, IDLO reaffirmed its commitment to combatting corruption and promoting good governance, fairness and equality through the rule of law. During the general debate, I [highlighted](#) the need to transition to people-centred models of governance, judicial independence and integrity.
59. At the invitation of the Italian Presidency of the G20, we participated in the 2021 meetings of the G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group. Our [statement](#) at the third session in September highlighted IDLO’s programming and advocacy in the areas of asset recovery, ethics and integrity standards, and capacity-building of specialised anti-corruption institutions.

Reducing the justice gap for women and girls

60. Under the third Strategic Objective, IDLO promotes gender equality by pursuing it as a stand-alone goal, as well as by mainstreaming it throughout our work.
61. Our interventions help protect women’s 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.
62. For over a decade, IDLO’s largest programme of work on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) has been in **Afghanistan**. Starting in 2011, when we assisted the Attorney General’s Office to establish and operationalise the Elimination of Violence against Women Directorate, IDLO has worked with the government, civil society, and women leaders in the justice sector to develop their capacity and improve service delivery.
63. Over the past year, IDLO assisted the Ministry of Women’s Affairs to develop guidelines on processing and reporting GBV cases to relevant authorities, and standard operating procedures to guide the Ministry’s coordination with GBV service providers. While the political situation jeopardises this work and the slow gains made in securing protection for women’s rights, IDLO is committed to staying engaged and doing what we can to support Afghan women and girls.
64. Our project in **Mongolia** aims to empower GBV survivors to access justice, claim their rights and play an active role in advocating against domestic violence. This work includes identifying gaps in legislation, building the capacity of legal aid providers, and increasing legal awareness through public outreach. We provided training to representatives from legal aid and civil society organisations on the

provision of mobile GBV services in rural areas and piloted a mobile GBV clinic in Arkhangai province which will offer legal advice, psychological counselling, and social and referral services to GBV survivors.

65. In **the Philippines**, under our joint programme with UN Women on the elimination of discriminatory laws, IDLO convened a roundtable discussion with key legislators, government officials and policymakers, conducted capacity building of legislative aides and staff on gender-responsive legislation, and finalised a legal assessment on discriminatory laws to be published in partnership with UN Women and the Philippines Commission on Women. Our programming on elimination of discriminatory laws has been expanded to **Kenya, Sierra Leone, and Tunisia**.
66. In July, IDLO and the Global Women’s Institute at George Washington University launched a research project on “Access to Justice for Survivors of Gender-based Violence in Complex Situations.” The research findings will be presented in a paper featuring five case studies from **Honduras, Papua New Guinea, South Sudan, the Philippines, and Tunisia**, to be published at the beginning of 2022.
67. IDLO partnered with the National Association of Women Judges in **Uganda** to publish an assessment of the justice sector response to cases of defilement. The crime of defilement is defined as having or attempting sexual intercourse with a girl under 18 years. The report identified gaps in the justice sector response and recommended the establishment of survivor and witness protection programs, establishment of an offender database, and continued capacity development of justice officials.
68. IDLO’s programming on justice for women and girls draws on, and is informed by, our research and policy advocacy.
69. At the 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, I highlighted the fundamental importance of rule of law in the pursuit of gender equality. IDLO also organised two high-level side events on [Women Delivering Justice: Achieving Gender Parity in the Justice Sector](#), and [Eliminating Discriminatory Laws: Achieving Gender Equality on Paper and in Practice during Challenging Times](#).
70. Another key platform for advocacy was the Generation Equality Forum, hosted by the governments of Mexico and France and convened by UN Women. IDLO made [commitments](#) to accelerate progress on gender equality as part of four Action Coalitions – Gender-based Violence, Economic Justice and Rights, Feminist Action for Climate Justice, and Feminist Movements and Leadership.
71. During the Paris Forum, I was pleased to [join global leaders](#) in issuing a strong call for Feminist Action for Climate Justice, and to publicly reaffirm IDLO’s gender-transformative approach to climate justice and commitment to advance feminist climate action. In the lead up to the Generation Equality Forum in Paris in late June, IDLO convened an [online event](#) in partnership with UN Women, the World

Bank, and Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies to highlight the importance of securing justice for women and girls.

72. At the invitation of the Italian Ministry for Family and Equal Opportunities, I participated in the first-ever G20 Ministerial Conference on Women's Empowerment. IDLO also provided a [written contribution](#) to highlight the Organization's work to reduce the justice gap for women and girls.

Rule of law drives peace and sustainable development

Inclusive economic development

73. Under the fourth Strategic Objective, IDLO works to promote enabling legal frameworks, strengthen governmental capacities to enforce commercial and economic laws, negotiate and implement investment agreements and resolve disputes, and support women's economic empowerment.
74. This work is particularly relevant in the context of the economic crisis unleashed by COVID-19, particularly in least developed countries.
75. In **Armenia**, IDLO is supporting the newly established Insolvency Court in efforts to enhance the transparency and effectiveness of insolvency procedures.
76. In **Jordan**, IDLO held consultations with representatives from banks, insurance companies, and other business associations to produce an analysis and action plan aimed at strengthening commercial mediation. These documents will be shared with the Ministry of Justice and Judicial Council. A Guide on Commercial Mediation has been approved by the two institutions and will be made available on their website.
77. As part of our work on commercial mediation and alternative dispute resolution in **Montenegro**, IDLO developed guidance on remote mediation for practitioners and developed a set of mediation clauses for business contracts in commercial disputes. The clauses are publicly accessible on the website of the ADR Centre of Montenegro and were shared during roundtables with small enterprises and commercial entities.
78. In **Serbia**, IDLO finalised a comprehensive analysis of comparative legal frameworks on commercial mediation drawing from different jurisdictions. The report was presented to the Ministry of Justice and will help to inform current efforts to reform the country's ADR framework to facilitate the use of mediation in commercial disputes.
79. In **the West Bank and Gaza**, IDLO is working to increase judicial capacity on commercial law. In partnership with the Capacity Building Unit of the High Judicial Council, IDLO developed training materials on commercial acts, contracts, and negotiable commercial instruments. A group of judges also attended

IDLO's online Training of Trainers course to promote prospects for sustainability and build local capacity.

80. Developed in collaboration with the UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS), IDLO's Investment Support Programme for Least Developed Countries (ISP/LDCs) extends legal and technical assistance, and related capacity building in investment negotiation and dispute settlement, to LDC governments and eligible private sector entities. In the past year, the following activities were carried out under the Programme:

- In **Ethiopia**, IDLO provided capacity building support to the Ethiopian Investment Commission (EIC) on international investment and arbitration law, and delivered trainings to representatives from Ethiopian government entities with a focus on the negotiation of sustainable international investment agreements and frameworks.
- In **Liberia**, IDLO provided legal assistance to the National Investment Commission on the development of legal strategies to deal with two potential disputes with foreign investors.
- In **Malawi**, IDLO supported the development of a template for joint venture agreements to be used as a basis for negotiations with foreign investors.
- At the request of the Ministry of Trade of **The Gambia**, IDLO reviewed a draft Model Bilateral Investment Treaty to ensure its alignment to the Sustainable Development Goals and national development objectives. The Model Treaty will be an important instrument in promoting The Gambia's capacity to attract and sustainably manage foreign investment in line with national priorities.
- In Uganda, IDLO partnered with the Ugandan Law Society (ULS) to co-sponsor its Annual Law Conference and supported the delivery of modules on international investment law, arbitration, and intellectual property law to over 100 members of the ULS. IDLO will continue to provide capacity building support to the ULS in banking and finance law, and mergers and acquisition law.
- We are contributing to the work of the Preparatory Committee for the Fifth UN Conference on the LDCs to be held in Doha in January 2022 and have provided input to the Doha Program of Action to be adopted by the Conference.

Climate justice and sustainable use of natural resources

81. Climate change represents the single largest threat to peace and sustainable development and has been identified by many as the most pressing challenge of our time. It is recognised by the 2030 Agenda under SDG 13 (Climate Action) as a cross-cutting issue with disproportionate effects on vulnerable and marginalised people. Scaling up our work on climate justice is a major priority in the new strategic cycle.
82. IDLO recently launched a policy brief on [Climate Justice](#), which draws the link between the rule of law and climate action. The brief outlines our approach to climate justice and proposes seven recommendations to advance transformative climate action grounded in the rule of law and human rights.
83. We are also engaging with key events on the international calendar to identify entry points for programming, advocacy and partnerships and to generate greater support for this important yet often overlooked dimension of climate change.
84. The most significant of these is the meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 26). Later this month, I will be leading IDLO's delegation to Glasgow, where we will continue to highlight the links between SDGs 13 and 16 and advocate for a rule of law-based approach to climate action.
85. In September, we organised a [discussion](#) on "A Rule of Law Approach to Accelerating Climate Action" as part of the All4Climate campaign organised by the Italian Ministry of Ecological Transition. The discussion featured a panel of high-level climate experts, including the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment.
86. IDLO also co-hosted an HLPF [side event](#) in partnership with the American Bar Association on "Climate Justice: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment." The event highlighted the key linkages between rule of law, gender and climate action and shared innovative approaches for expanding gender integration into national and local climate measures.
87. In June, IDLO co-organised an [Implementer Dialogue](#) in partnership with the Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law, the Clingendael Institute, and Radboud University. The discussion examined the transformative potential of rule of law and people-centred justice approaches to tackle climate change and foster adaptation and mitigation.
88. We also have a small but growing portfolio related to climate and the sustainable use of land and natural resources at the country level.
89. In **Kenya**, for example, IDLO supported the development of a referral tool for the National Environmental Tribunal, Ministry of Environment and Forestry, and

County Governments. The tool is intended to guide strategy development, documentation, case management, litigation and engagement on natural resource management.

90. In cooperation with the Government of **Rwanda** and partners, IDLO recently started the inception phase of a project to operationalise Rwanda's new land dispute resolution mechanism. The goal is to contribute to a more just decision-making process in land dispute cases by strengthening the legal capacity of mediators, traditional dispute resolution committees called Abunzi, and Cell Land Committees nationwide.
91. We also initiated a research project on the climate, security and justice nexus in **Honduras, Indonesia, Rwanda, Somalia, and Uganda** to increase knowledge and understanding of the contribution of people-centred justice and good governance to climate action. This ongoing research will inform an upcoming report identifying good practices within rule of law interventions towards climate-sensitive development.

Food Security

92. IDLO recognises the urgent need for fair and effective food systems to ensure access to affordable, safe and nutritious food for all, especially the most vulnerable. Over the last year, we continued to work at local, national and international levels to advance the right to adequate food through the rule of law.
93. In collaboration with FAO, we are working to strengthen the legal environment for food security and nutrition of vulnerable groups in **Honduras** and **Uganda** as part of pandemic response and recovery. Coordination teams have been established in both countries to support programme implementation and to conduct legal assessments. IDLO and FAO also launched a global assessment of laws and policies on food security in October.
94. The 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit and pre-Summit meetings were important opportunities to highlight the link between the rule of law and inclusive and sustainable food systems transformations.
95. IDLO joined the Summit's cross-cutting Action Area on Governance and has since supported the working group in identifying opportunities and solutions for food systems reform. IDLO participated in the pre-Summit meetings in Rome and I joined a panel on a human rights-based approach to food systems with current and former Special Rapporteurs on the Right to Food. We also attended the Summit Meeting in New York in September.
96. In advance of the Summit, IDLO organised an [Independent Dialogue](#) on "The Rule of Law and Food Systems Transformation in the Sahel: Addressing the Conflict-Climates-Food-Security Nexus." With high-level participants from the Ministry of Agriculture of **Burkina Faso** and Initiative Prospective Agricole Rurale, the event

explored challenges affecting food systems and security in the Sahel and means of promoting rule of law-based governance of food systems.

97. At the annual meeting of the Committee on Food Security, IDLO joined FAO, WHO, UNICEF and the University of Laval to organise a side-event on “Human Rights, Nutrition and Law: Keys to transform food systems.” The event promoted a human rights approach to food systems transformation, including the involvement of civil society.

Healthy lives and well-being for all

98. At a time where health issues are a global priority, IDLO is promoting rule of law solutions for greater access to health services, supporting pandemic preparedness, and strengthening capacity to prevent and manage non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

99. IDLO’s Pandemic Preparedness and Response Project (PPRP), developed in collaboration with WHO, aims to strengthen legal and policy frameworks to prevent, detect and promptly respond to Public Health Emergencies of International Concern and other public health risks, including COVID-19, in line with the International Health Regulations (IHR). The project is being piloted in two countries:

- IDLO is supporting the Government of **Uganda** in conducting legal reviews of the country’s Public Health Act, Animal Diseases Act, and Biosafety and Biosecurity Act. The legal analysis will help inform the review and possible reform of these laws, in line with the IHR.
- In **Zambia**, IDLO is working to develop three statutory instruments to support the operationalisation of the Zambia National Public Health Institute Act.

100. IDLO also joined the Global Health Security Agenda Legal Preparedness Action Package, an initiative led by the United States, Argentina, and the O’Neill Institute, to advocate for coordinated action around legal preparedness for public health emergencies at the global level.

101. In partnership with the World Health Organization and the International Development Research Centre, IDLO’s Global RECAP Program is aimed at strengthening the capacity of countries to promote healthy diets and increase physical activity for the prevention of NCDs.

102. Under the programme, IDLO has developed toolkits on regulatory approaches to promoting healthy diets and physical activity to sensitise legal and public health scholars in **Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania**. We are also developing similar toolkits for **Bangladesh and Sri Lanka**.

103. IDLO and the International Development Research Centre also launched the Human Rights and Healthy Diets Research Support Initiative to help strengthen the understanding and application of human rights-based approaches to promote healthy diets by researchers, civil society organisations and policymakers in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda.
104. In September, we hosted an expert consultation to discuss the role of legal mechanisms, including international human rights law, in advancing the social determinants of health across the Sustainable Development Goals. Participants included representatives from UNDP, UNICEF, the SDG Lab, the O’Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law, the UN Working Group on Discrimination against Women and Girls, the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa and the Queen Mary University of London. The findings from this consultation will form the basis of an issue paper on the intersection of the social determinants of health, the SDGs and the rule of law.
105. At the United Nations High-Level Meeting on AIDS in June, I [highlighted](#) the key role of the law, human rights, and access to justice in the global HIV response and other global health challenges, with particular focus on the underlying inequalities, stigma and discrimination that remain the most significant barriers to ending AIDS by 2030. These are, of course, the same inequalities that are confronting the world with COVID-19.

IV. DELIVERING ON THE STRATEGIC GOALS: ORGANIZATIONAL ENABLERS

106. The Strategic Plan 2021- 2024 identifies four Organizational Enablers to strengthen key aspects of our systems, capacities and resources to achieve our Strategic Goals and deliver the increase quality and value our partners expect.

Innovation, integration, and impact

107. The first Enabler seeks to further strengthen the quality, integration and innovation in IDLO’s work and increase our focus on evidence and results.
108. As an integral part of the Results-Based Management for the Strategic Plan, we developed a Strategic Results and Resources Framework (SRRF) that translates the Strategic Plan into a set of development and organisational results, with the aim of promoting a results culture that enables management of IDLO’s work based on performance.
109. Over the past year, IDLO completed consultations on the SRRF and finalised the indicators. The indicators are currently being integrated into project-specific monitoring frameworks, and data on baselines and targets is being developed to ensure common understanding and consistent application of the Framework across IDLO.

110. We also conducted a comprehensive review of the programme cycle to strengthen programme design and development, implementation, evaluation and learning processes, and to increase the integration of programming, research, and advocacy in IDLO interventions.
111. IDLO updated its Theory of Change Guidelines, which are applicable to all programmes. The review focussed on integrating emerging practices in adaptive programming and provides updated guidance on mainstreaming gender, human rights and research into programme design. A specialised training module for staff on Theory of Change design is also being developed.
112. Considering the travel restrictions in place during the pandemic, remote data collection has become increasingly important. IDLO has developed a draft methodological paper on Remote Data Collection to strengthen the evaluation of our interventions during travel restrictions and to improve quality evaluations using remote data collection more generally.

Investing in people

113. As a specialised, knowledge-based organisation, IDLO's main asset is our people. The COVID-19 crisis forced IDLO to look closely at its staffing, human resources systems, policies and procedures, and compelled us to work together in new ways and further strengthen support for each other across the Organization.
114. Despite the challenges, colleagues rose to the occasion during the last year—developing crisis management strategies and business continuity plans, strengthening risk assessments, building staff trackers and instituting new mechanisms for remote working. We have made major steps towards breaking down the silos in HQ and between HQ and the field.
115. IDLO has been developing a comprehensive human resources strategy that incorporates all aspects of human resources management, with the aim of strengthening IDLO's capacity to attract, develop and retain high-performing staff with the dedication and commitment to deliver on the Organization's mission. Over the next months, we will work to finalise and implement this strategy, further aligning policies and practices with IDLO's values, mission and strategic priorities.
116. We are also developing a cross-cutting Gender Action Plan to mainstream gender equality not only throughout our programs, research, and advocacy, but also within IDLO. The Plan will also support increased organisational learning on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.
117. In this context, I am pleased to report that gender parity has been achieved in IDLO's senior management over the past year. Women now constitute 50% of the Senior Leadership Team compared to 20% in 2020.

118. Maintaining healthy professional communication has become even more vital in recent times, especially when we are physically distanced. I have therefore made it a priority to communicate with colleagues through regular updates, messages, and all-staff town hall meetings.
119. At a time of increased stress related to the pandemic, promoting mental health and wellness in the workplace is also a key priority. In October, we launched a wellbeing webinar series that offers practical guidance to staff on maintaining positive mental health during these challenging times.
120. We continue to disseminate curated online courses and articles to staff on a monthly basis, and host internal policy dialogues to foster information sharing across departments. In September, for example, over 50 staff attended our internal webinar on climate justice, which focussed on new initiatives within IDLO's policy, research and programme development at the intersection of the rule of law and climate action.
121. We have also taken steps to strengthen a culture of continuous learning and high performance in the Organization through the development a transparent system for salary progression based on performance and achievement of annual learning objectives. In September, an organisation-wide salary survey was initiated and its results are anticipated by the end of 2021.
122. Drawing on the experience of the last three years of implementation of the New Employment Model, the Employee Rules were reviewed to ensure that they are best suited to the evolving operational context. A number of areas requiring change were identified and amendments were approved by the Standing Committee in July. The amendments include updates consistent with our commitment in the Strategic Plan to invest in people and also aim to ensure proper and consistent application of the Rules.
123. Further investments in internal learning and professional development are planned for 2022 and reflected in IDLO's 2022 Operating Budget.

Improving systems and processes

Systems improvement

124. As part of our commitment to improve organisational efficiency and coordination over the course of the new strategic cycle, we have invested in updates to systems and business processes to better align them with institutional needs and priorities.
125. Following a pilot period in select countries, a new procurement module is being integrated within IDLO's Enterprise Resource Platform, which will help to increase efficiency while providing greater transparency and accountability. The

new module is currently being rolled out across IDLO's global operations in a phased approach, which includes training for management and staff.

126. To improve budgeting accuracy, we developed a new budgeting tool which is now being piloted. A strengthened institutional cost reporting system allows expenditures for institutional projects and activities to be coded and downloaded directly from the system, further increasing the accuracy and timeliness of financial reporting.
127. IDLO has increased the capacity of existing ICT platforms to meet additional remote working needs, as well as to set up platforms for collaboration and communication. We responded to the needs of colleagues working remotely by procuring more IT equipment, including laptops, and supporting flexible working arrangements to accommodate both organisational requirements and individual needs. The ICT team also provided additional staff training and support in a wide range of operational environments.
128. In March, we issued a revised Personal Data Protection Policy to strengthen our regulatory framework for the processing of personal data, consistent with the best standards of protection recognised by international organisations. The revisions improve, among other things, the clarity of roles and responsibilities for implementing the Policy.
129. As part of improvements in human resources service delivery, we have developed a ticketing system which will facilitate more rapid resolution of queries addressed to Human Resources and Office Services.

Security risk management

130. At a time of elevated risks and instability, IDLO's foremost priority is ensuring our staff's safety and wellbeing while they carry out their critical work in some of the most challenging operating environments around the world.
131. To strengthen organisational security risk management, we have updated the structure of IDLO's Security Management Team to improve monitoring and response for emerging security risks.
132. IDLO continues to monitor the evolving security situation, particularly in countries with volatile situations including Myanmar, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Somalia, and has implemented country-specific mitigation measures to safeguard our staff and operations.

IDLO Operations in Afghanistan

133. The rapid deterioration of the security situation in Afghanistan has been a matter of significant concern. Afghanistan has been IDLO's largest country programme from the time the Organization started to have significant work at the

country level. We first began operations in Afghanistan in 2001, and the country became a Member Party in 2012.

134. Over the last two decades, IDLO has established itself as a leading supporter of the justice sector in Afghanistan. We have worked with a range of partners including the government, civil society organisations, and international development actors.
135. In line with IDLO's mandate and the needs of the Afghan people, our work has focussed on strengthening access to justice, upholding human rights, and expanding the capacity of the justice sector. We have also placed an emphasis on protecting the rights of women and girls, particularly through legal empowerment and promoting a survivor-centric approach to gender-based violence.
136. In total, IDLO has implemented 24 projects in Afghanistan. We currently have three projects in the country, which centre on ensuring the safety and security of justice workers; facilitating professional development in the legal sector; and countering gender-based violence and supporting survivors.
137. While we have been following events in Afghanistan closely throughout the year, I established a dedicated Crisis Management Team in August to monitor developments and ensure that all necessary action is taken to address and mitigate any risks that may arise. The security and wellbeing of our staff is our paramount concern. We have been in constant contact with staff in Afghanistan to provide support and security advice. We also established a dedicated hotline to respond to requests from current and former staff, as well as other stakeholders.
138. Our operations in Afghanistan are currently paused in light of the political and security situation, and we have suspended all support to government entities.
139. IDLO management is committed to staying engaged and supporting the Afghan people to the extent possible. We propose to use a 'Humanitarian Plus' approach, designed to contribute to broader humanitarian and development outcomes by supporting the Afghan people in accessing justice and securing greater recognition for their rights.
140. Through this approach, we would hope to protect past investments to the extent possible, and safeguard some of the gains made in Afghanistan over the last 20 years. Our ability to carry out this work is contingent on continued donor support and we are engaging in discussions with current and prospective partners.
141. We are grateful for the assistance provided to IDLO by its Member Parties during this time and look forward to the continuation of support in the challenging period ahead.

COVID-19 Risk Management

142. The Crisis Management Team on COVID-19 continues to monitor the situation across our offices and to make necessary adjustments in our posture.
143. As a result of IDLO's membership in the UN Security Management Team for Italy, IDLO was able to participate in a vaccination initiative for UN personnel organised by FAO and the Government of Italy.
144. In view of recent improvements in the epidemiological situation in Italy, and the high vaccination rate of IDLO personnel at HQ and branch offices, an increased physical presence of staff at IDLO HQ premises has been initiated, aimed at a daily presence at 70% capacity. Health and safety protocols, as well as access certification aligned with measures applicable in the host country, have been implemented.
145. Heads of IDLO branch, liaison and country offices are continuing to implement customised plans for their respective offices, taking into consideration local contexts and public health measures imposed by host governments.

Strengthening Partnerships

146. I consider partnerships and collaboration to be key to IDLO's success. Throughout this report are examples of how IDLO has been able to pool expertise and resources, strengthen our convening power and leverage our impact through partnerships with likeminded organisations.

Stakeholder Outreach

147. Strengthening IDLO's outreach to key partners, including Member Parties and partner countries, the UN system, civil society, academia, and the private sector, has been a major priority.
148. Throughout the year we have engaged with Ambassadors and representatives of IDLO Member Parties, as well as other current and prospective partners, despite the restrictions imposed by COVID-19.
149. As part of our ongoing dialogue with our Host Country, I have met with the Vice Minister and senior officials from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, to discuss current and future collaboration.
150. In September, I travelled to Washington, D.C. to meet with key partners from the U.S. Department of State and other D.C.-based stakeholders. A major focus of the mission was the situation in Afghanistan, and I was able to exchange views and discuss future plans with several senior counterparts.

151. We have strengthened our links with the United Nations system through bilateral engagement and cooperation with UN entities including FAO, IFAD, OHCHR, UNDP, UNICEF, UNICRI, UNHCR, UNODC, UN Women, WFP and WHO on programming, research and policy advocacy.
152. In June, UNODC Executive Director, Ms. Ghada Waly, and I signed a Memorandum of Understanding between our two organisations. The MOU represents a significant step forward in IDLO's growing partnership with UNODC, and will help to reinforce our complementary mandates to advance justice and the rule of law.
153. Our partnerships with Rome-based organisations grew through engagement with ICCROM, UNIDROIT and Bioversity International. We also strengthened our links with the Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development and the Bar Association of Rome.
154. I attended the third edition of the Italy-Africa Ministerial Conference organised by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was a key opportunity to discuss multilateral approaches to sustainable development in Africa, with a major focus on climate change, and to meet Foreign Ministers from several programme countries in the region.
155. IDLO's Branch Office in the Netherlands facilitated engagement with the peace and justice community in The Hague through policy exchanges, implementers' dialogues and advocacy. One highlight was our participation in the annual conference of the Knowledge Platform on Security & Rule of Law in The Hague, where we promoted IDLO's locally owned and context-specific rule of law interventions around the world in line with this year's theme of asymmetric power.
156. We have also scaled up our global partnerships with organisations working to advance the rule of law, access to justice and human rights, including the American Bar Association, the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF), the International Anti-Corruption Academy, the International Bar Association Human Rights Institute, the Pathfinders Initiative, and the World Justice Project.
157. We engaged with current and prospective development partners as part of our goal to strengthen and diversify IDLO's resource base.
158. I would like to thank all donors, and in particular, Italy, the United States, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Kuwait, for their generous financial support over the past year.
159. I am pleased to report that, in July, IDLO signed a new multiyear agreement with the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) to support the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2021-2024. We expect to conclude a new

multiyear agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Netherlands shortly.

160. IDLO is pursuing a strategic partnership with the European Union through the completion of a Pillar Assessment, which will enhance our ability to enter into funding agreements with EU institutions. In September, the European Commission’s Directorate-General for International Partnerships gave its approval for IDLO to undergo the assessment, which is expected to take place in early 2022.

Policy Advocacy

161. In addition to the work already highlighted under the relevant Strategic Objectives, we engaged in several 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.
162. The most significant of these was the organisation, in partnership with UNDESA and the Government of Italy, of a second global SDG 16 Conference, focusing on “transforming governance for a more peaceful, just, and inclusive future.”
163. The three-day Conference convened over a hundred high-level speakers, including ministers, judicial officials, heads of UN entities, academics and members of civil society. The Conference sought to take stock of the impact of COVID-19 on progress toward SDG 16 and to examine the contribution of SDG 16 to the response to current global challenges through thematic sessions that dealt with topics such as “addressing our shared fragility”, “renewing the social contract”, and “rebuilding trust between governments and their citizens.”
164. At the Conference, IDLO launched a [Roadmap for a Rule of-Law Based Recovery](#), which built on the eight priority actions laid out in our [Policy Brief on Rule of Law and COVID-19](#). An innovative advocacy campaign, [16 Voices for SDG 16](#), amplified the initiative through messages from prominent speakers including United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Michelle Bachelet, World Health Organization Director-General, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, and Co-Chair of the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response, Ms. Helen Clark.
165. The SDG 16 Conference served as an input to the 2021 High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). At the invitation of the President of ECOSOC, I moderated a thematic discussion on building peaceful, equal and inclusive societies. During the discussion, which reviewed progress on SDGs 3, 10, 16, and 17, Italian Vice Minister Marina Sereni shared key takeaways from the SDG 16 Conference.

166. IDLO's Crisis Governance Forum series, launched last year, continued to serve as an important forum for advocacy. In February, we hosted a session on *Leaving No One Behind in COVID-19 Response and Recovery Policies*, with a keynote address by Dr. Natalia Kanem, Executive Director of UNFPA. We also organised an edition of the Crisis Governance Forum on the "Roadmap for a Rule of Law-Based Recovery" as an official side event during the HLPF.
167. IDLO engaged with multilateral forums to highlight the importance of access to justice, rule of law and human rights to sustaining peace and promoting sustainable development as an essential part of COVID-19 response and recovery efforts.
168. We participated in the 19th Session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute in January. At the meeting, we highlighted our ongoing efforts to strengthen the capacities of the criminal justice institutions to investigate and prosecute crimes and human rights violations, in line with international human rights standards.
169. In February, I addressed the high-level segment of the 46th Session Human Rights Council. My [statement](#) emphasised the link between the rule of law, human rights, good governance, and sustainable development, and highlighted IDLO's work to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on justice systems and justice seekers.
170. We have continued active engagement with the human rights community in Geneva through our liaison office and I have been asked by the President of the Human Rights Council to chair the 2021 Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and Rule of Law.
171. IDLO was invited by Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) to make an opening statement at the PyeongChang Peace Forum in February.
172. IDLO participated in the 14th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in March. During the high-level segment, I [emphasised](#) the importance of effective laws and justice institutions in sustaining peace and development and called for innovations to increase transparency and efficiency in the criminal justice system while expanding access to previously excluded groups.
173. At the Tashkent Law Spring, hosted by the Ministry of Justice of Uzbekistan in April, I [highlighted](#) IDLO's work to put the rule of law at the heart of the global pandemic response and the role of digital innovation in increasing the quality and accessibility of justice services.
174. In May, IDLO and the East African Community (EAC) convened the annual joint session for chief justices and judicial officials to strengthen judicial education across the region. The theme this year was the judiciary's role in promoting environmental justice, I was pleased to [reaffirm](#) IDLO's commitment to

partnership with the judiciaries in the EAC to address the impact of climate change through the rule of law.

175. During the Italian Presidency of the G20, IDLO was able to join several streams of the Group’s work, including participating in the G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group and the G20 Ministerial Conference on Women’s Empowerment. This engagement helped to raise the Organization’s profile and allowed IDLO to contribute to several important policy debates relevant to our mandate.
176. The high-level week of the United Nations General Assembly in September was a significant opportunity to meet government representatives and senior officials of the UN and other organisations. This was the first large-scale meeting in New York since the beginning of the pandemic. While it was in hybrid form, a significant number of Heads of State and Government participated in person, reflecting a tangible commitment to multilateralism.
177. The Secretary General’s “Our Common Agenda” report, launched in advance of the General Assembly, presents an ambitious plan to address global challenges, through the restoration of the social contract and strengthened multilateralism. As the report recognises, respect for international law, ensuring justice, and promoting a “new vision” of the rule of law will be key to building back better.
178. IDLO welcomes the report’s acknowledgement of the need for a “new vision” for the rule of law. At the Meeting of the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly on the theme of the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels, we [expressed](#) our commitment to cooperating with Member States and the United Nations to help shape and promote the development of a new vision through our work.

Membership

179. As an intergovernmental organisation, IDLO relies on the active engagement and political support of its Member Parties for its governance, multilateral positioning and advocacy.
180. I am pleased to report that Mauritania became the newest Member Party of IDLO this August. Our engagement with Mauritania spans several decades. We have more than 500 Mauritanian alumni who have completed legal and judicial training activities, either in Nouakchott or in Rome. I met recently with both the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Mauritanians Abroad and the Ambassador to Italy to welcome Mauritania to IDLO.
181. As Member Parties are aware, in July, we received a formal expression of interest from the Republic of Cyprus to join IDLO. Following an objection received from a Member Party, the President of the Assembly of Parties requested Member

Parties to confirm in writing whether they approve the accession of Cyprus to the Establishment Agreement. As of the writing of this report, this process was ongoing.

182. In September, IDLO received a formal notification that the Government of Norway has decided to withdraw from the Organization. The withdrawal will become effective on 26 November.
183. IDLO is committed to pursuing a strategic approach to growth in membership and is pursuing discussions with several countries who have an interest in our mandate.

Legal Status

184. IDLO's efforts to secure appropriate recognition of its legal status, including through Host Country Agreements (HCAs), continue to be a priority. Following the request by the Assembly of Parties last year in Resolution 3/2020, I welcome the opportunity to provide an update on our efforts and on the progress we have made.
185. IDLO has HCAs with 14 countries and other mechanisms of recognition of legal status in several others.
186. With respect to new agreements, IDLO concluded a binding Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of **Armenia** that entered into force on 1 September. The MoU, intended as a precursor to a full Host Country Agreement, recognises the status of IDLO as an intergovernmental organisation and provides for the establishment of an IDLO office in Armenia.
187. Negotiations on HCAs continue with several countries, including some Member Parties:
- IDLO will send a delegation to **Armenia** this year to begin discussions of the HCA that is contemplated as the next step under the recently concluded MoU.
 - In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, an initial draft text has been shared and follow up is anticipated in the coming months.
 - In **Moldova**, IDLO is scheduling a mission this year to discuss progress on the text, which is pending with the government.
 - In **Rwanda**, a delegation met with the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Foreign Affairs to exchange views on the process and possible content of an HCA. IDLO is following up to initiate negotiations.

- In **Tunisia**, discussions are well advanced on a proposed compromise text shared in October.
 - In **the Philippines**, IDLO is anticipating a reply to a proposed text.
 - In **Ukraine**, where negotiations are at an advanced stage, IDLO submitted a text for consideration in October.
 - In **Uzbekistan**, I signed a Memorandum of Understanding in February with the Minister of Justice in which the Ministry committed to support the process for recognition of IDLO's legal status as an intergovernmental organisation.
188. IDLO also made progress on ensuring the implementation of previously concluded Host Country Agreements. In August, the government of **Uganda** published in its national gazette a statutory instrument formalising under domestic law the provision of privileges and immunities to IDLO and its officials, a significant step forward in implementing the HCA that entered into force last year. In January, the government of **Niger** had similarly published our HCA that entered into force last year in the Official Journal of Niger.
189. We are also liaising with countries, including **Burkina Faso, Kenya and Mongolia**, to ensure follow-up on the full and effective implementation of the respective HCAs.

V. FINANCIAL RESULTS

190. Financial results for 2021 were impacted by the evolving restrictions related to COVID-19 and the increased volatility in our countries of operation, particularly the situation in Afghanistan.
191. Healthy financial reserves, and the Operational Fund established by the Assembly of Parties, gave IDLO some confidence in navigating an uncertain financial environment.
192. As a result of prudent forecasting and operational adaptations, IDLO has seen a steady increase in the monthly programme implementation rate and we are cautiously optimistic of meeting our budgeted revenue target for 2021. With careful financial management, we are on track to end the year with a positive operational result.
193. In light of a highly fluid context, the 2022 Operating Budget presented to the Assembly of Parties has been prepared using a conservative approach.

VI. LOOKING AHEAD

194. The world is still in a period of profound uncertainty. The pandemic continues to impact all aspects of daily life, with its future direction and impact unknown. The ongoing global health crisis is compounded by parallel crises of extreme inequality, vaccine inequity, climate change and entrenched conflict in many parts of the world.
195. In such a fraught environment, the rule of law can be a powerful force for peace and sustainable development.
196. People-centred justice systems can build trust and tackle the root causes of conflict and instability by promoting transparency and accountability and empowering the least powerful to claim their rights and participate in decision-making. The rule of law is also key to transforming governance and building the fair, inclusive and effective rules-based laws and institutions we need to tackle complex transnational challenges.
197. In the first year of a new strategic cycle, IDLO has been working with partners around the world to promote such a rule of law-based response to global challenges. We could not have achieved what we have without the support of our Member Parties and partners, and the dedication, resilience and ingenuity of IDLO staff around the world. I am grateful for their invaluable contributions.
198. I look forward to continuing our work together to help advance IDLO's mission and mandate to achieve our shared goal of a more peaceful, just and inclusive world.

/ENDS