

STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LAW ORGANIZATION

FRIENDS OF THE UN INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE ON THE PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES (NCDs)

UN Headquarters

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TRANSCRIPTION

Let me start by saying that when you talk about NCD's, the rule of law is the last thing that comes to your mind. But that is understandable because for years we have looked at NCD's through the lens of public health. But today, as we take a multi-dimensional approach, we have to understand the importance of the rule of law as critical to it.

Just look at the actions recommended by WHO, most of them require legal reform, whether it is about stemming the use of tobacco or establishing minimum prices for alcohol. But law should go beyond regulation. It's also about empowerment of people so people can make informed choices, and that means giving information to people, and allowing them to make those choices. And there are groups that may need special protection. For example, marketing of food and non-alcoholic beverages. Think of children in that context, or, think of women who are adversely affected. Discrimination against women in terms of access to healthcare. And there again, the rule of law can help to balance that, either directly through legislation that prohibits discrimination and health services, or, for example, through laws that come down hard on sexual harassment, and therefore make it easier for women to access recreational facilities. So, there are many ways in which the rule of law intersects with health.

I listened to Ambassador Nordstrom talking about taking a multi-dimensional approach; it's not only SDG 3, it's also SDG 16, it's also SDG 5, and when we bring that together, we can see things happening.

My last point is that we are launching an initiative together with WHO and IDRC of Canada, and with support from Switzerland and the OPEC Fund for International Development, which will help to build the legal capacity of developing countries to address these issues, where the rule of law intersects with non-communicable diseases.

The International Development Law Organization (IDLO) enables governments and empowers people to reform laws and strengthen institutions to promote peace, justice, sustainable development and economic opportunity.