

## STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LAW ORGANIZATION

HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON PEACEBUILDING AND SUSTAINING PEACE  
PLENARY DEBATE  
UN Headquarters  
April 25, 2018  
New York

Mr. President,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

As the world's only inter-governmental organization exclusively devoted to advancing the rule of law and access to justice, the International Development Law Organization welcomes this opportunity to contribute to the High-Level Meeting on Peacebuilding and Sustaining peace.

Access to justice and the rule of law lie at the heart of inclusive and sustainable development. They are also critical to building and sustaining peace.

Many root causes and drivers of conflict such as discrimination and exclusion, unequal distribution of public goods and of natural resources, human rights violations, corruption and lack of accountability stem from or are exacerbated by the absence of the rule of law.

For peace to take hold, people must have confidence in justice institutions. By promoting equality and access to justice, protecting the vulnerable, ensuring equitable access to resources and services, providing the means for fair and transparent adjudication of disputes, encouraging peaceful collaboration and sanctioning violence, the rule of law helps to build stability, resilience and public confidence in constitutional processes, laws and institutions.

The rule of law encourages an environment conducive to trade, investment and economic growth that generates jobs, which, especially when targeted towards unemployed youth, can reduce the risk of social unrest and violence.

The value of the rule of law to peace-building and sustaining peace is evident. Implementation, however, is fraught with many challenges. That makes this High-Level Meeting and the proposals of the UN Secretary-General all the more vital.

IDLO works in fragile and conflict affected countries in all regions of the world. Based on that experience, I would like to make four key points:

Firstly, meaningful and sustainable justice sector reforms are only possible when they are nationally led and owned, tailored to the specific context and inclusive in approach. Our work, and that of other organizations, shows that community level engagement and the

participation of marginalized groups, such as women, youth and historically excluded minorities, are extremely important factors to help build mutual trust and confidence.

Secondly, like other aspects of peace-building and sustaining peace, rule of law initiatives benefit when they are both top-down and bottom-up. That means supporting capacity development for institutional and legal reforms on the one hand, and legal empowerment of justice seekers on the other, including in particular women and girls. Legal empowerment not only enhances access to justice but also contributes to build trust and confidence in fragile and conflict affected situations.

Thirdly, justice sector reforms need greater and more sustained investment. Short funding cycles and unrealistic time frames not only fail to achieve targets, they risk creating perverse negative impact by alienating stakeholders when they fail to deliver what they promised. IDLO welcomes the emphasis placed by the Secretary-General on sustained efforts and adequate resources for peacebuilding.

Finally, as the report of the Secretary-General notes, restructuring global peace and development efforts calls for the active involvement of a wide range of international, regional and national actors. IDLO has partnered successfully with UN political missions as well as development programs in some of the most fragile and conflict affected countries. We look forward to further deepening and broadening our collaboration with the UN system and with Member States to build and sustain peace.

Thank you.

*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.*