

STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LAW ORGANIZATION

THE SIXTH COMMITTEE OF THE 73RD SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY
AGENDA ITEM 86: THE RULE OF LAW AT THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS

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Merci Monsieur le President,

Let me begin by saying – as I have done on previous occasions – how much my organization appreciates the annual opportunity provided by this agenda item to share with the General Assembly, through this Committee, highlights of IDLO’s work and its collaboration with the United Nations. We regard this opportunity as a privilege but also an integral part of the responsibilities devolving on us from the observer status that this Committee has granted IDLO.

IDLO and the UN

Guided by our Assembly of Parties and other IDLO governance bodies, we pursue our mandate – exclusively devoted to advancing the rule of law and its contribution to development – within the overall policy framework set by the General Assembly and reiterated in Resolution 72/119. We deliberately seek to ensure that both our operational and our advocacy work serve to support UN policies and priorities, while at the same time endeavoring to contribute our operational experience and the lessons we learn from our country level work to UN policy development on the rule of law and the role that it plays in support of peace and development.

The emphasis that resolution 72/119, as well as previous resolutions, place on inter-linkages between human rights, the rule of law and democracy; the call in these resolutions on supporting countries in the domestic implementation of their international obligations; the repeated stress they place on national ownership of rule of law assistance, on the participation of women in rule of law related activities, on sharing national practices, on enhancing capacity building and being mindful of concrete impact and results – all of these are essential parts of the DNA of IDLO’s rule of law work. In relation to all of them, we are continuing to make concrete advances and to report on progress to the satisfaction of our governance bodies.

IDLO and Agenda 2030

As I have recalled in previous statements, Agenda 2030, and its acknowledgement – explicit in SDG 16 and implicit in the other goals and in the thrust of the Agenda itself – of the rule of law and access to justice as integral parts of development and key drivers in the process of making socio-economic progress sustainable, have marked an important turning point in the history of our organization. We have seen this acknowledgement as a recognition of the foresight of IDLO founders (we are incidentally observing this year the

30th Anniversary of IDLO's establishment as an inter-governmental organization) in setting IDLO's unique mandate at the intersection of law and development. And we are drawing on this fundamental acknowledgment to further articulate the place of IDLO in the international development system, and to deepen and give new impetus to our relations with the United Nations and to the purposes that these relations are to serve.

The focus on the pursuit on equality, equity and social justice in combatting poverty and sustaining growth and prosperity that characterizes much of what is new and promises to be transformational in the 2030 Agenda is also what characterizes the distinctive approach to the rule of law that guides IDLO's policies and operational work. Policy development within the United Nations since the adoption of Agenda 2030 – the Secretary General's emphasis on "prevention", the twin GA and Security Council resolutions on sustaining peace with their focus on the synergies between peacebuilding, the promotion of human rights and sustainable development – have served to further enrich the policy framework within which IDLO's rule of law work to promote access to justice and equality and inclusion can contribute to supporting and advancing overall UN objectives. We chose this problematique as the theme of the Partnership Forum we held last year in conjunction with our annual Assemblies of Parties. And we look to the forthcoming Partnership Forum, that will convene next month in Rome along with the 2018 session of our Assembly, to make a distinctive contribution to the deliberations at the 2019 session of the High Level Political Forum that will address, among other thematic priorities, the state of play with SDG 16 as well as SDG 10 on inequalities, and, subsequently, to the first overall review of progress towards the 2030 Agenda that the General Assembly will conduct next September. The important statements made by Mr. Hochschild and delegations during the current debate will be brought to the attention of the Forum and will no doubt enrich the Forum's discussion.

IDLO Strategy 2020

In my statement last year, I outlined the main objectives and programmatic orientations set by our new strategic plan for 2017-2020, IDLO's Strategy 2020 – a strategy developed pursuant to a strong policy directive from our Assembly of Parties to maximize the contribution that IDLO can make to progress towards the 2030 Agenda.

During these first two years of implementation of Strategy 2020, we have made significant progress in advancing the two basic Impact Goals – on institution building and on legal empowerment – that frame the plan.

Institution Building

Assisting in building effective, transparent and accountable institutions has traditionally been a central area of IDLO's work and continues to account for close to 60% of the program portfolio. As IDLO's largest ever capacity building program in Afghanistan came to an end last year, lessons learned in transitioning training capacity to national institutions have been analyzed and disseminated. Meanwhile, several other multi-years institution building programs mostly with a focus on justice delivery have been initiated or are being pursued in Africa and other regions.

In Mali, IDLO is pursuing an innovative approach that engages institutional actors (police, judges, correction officers) as well as grassroots and community leaders to jointly identify

and address concerns in the functioning of the criminal justice system and enhance public confidence in the system. Also in light of this experience, IDLO has been encouraged to develop, and is designing in close collaboration with UNODC, a multi-year program to strengthen criminal justice systems and improve access to justice across the Sahel region, thus seeking to contribute to address root causes of instability and violence in the region, in support of the peace building work of MINUSMA and the G5 Sahel Force.

Areas of growth

Many new programs as well as ongoing programs currently being expanded cut across the institution building and the legal empowerment Impact Goals of the plan. Program areas in which demand as well as donor support are definitely growing include anti-corruption work (with on-going projects in Ukraine and the Philippines); community based and informal justice (an important illustration being a project to reform and modernize the Alternative Resolution Dispute System in Somalia); and, most notably, work on the rights of women and girls.

Gender programmes

A critical success factor in the rapid expansion of our gender work has been the dual approach of systematically main-streaming gender and at the same time implementing dedicated projects for women and girls. Projects have so far largely focused on combatting sexual and gender-based violence (with projects underway or recently concluded in Afghanistan, Honduras, Liberia, Mongolia and Ukraine). However other significant program streams, particularly those aimed at the economic empowerment of women, are beginning to emerge, with projects in Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi and Jordan.

Economic development

Along with programs focused on gender equality and social inclusion, and in line with the emphasis that Agenda 2030 places on integrating the economic and social drivers of development and leveraging the rule of law to contribute to their sustainability, IDLO, is also expanding progressively its work on commercial law and the legal dimensions of economic development.

This expansion is being supported by a framework agreement we have concluded with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development which is resulting in collaboration with the Bank on programs not only in Europe but also in Central Asia and the MENA region, and a recent agreement with the Kuwait Fund for Economic Development which focuses on supporting legal capacity building in the commercial and economic areas.

Another relevant development with significant potential in this area is the MoU that IDLO has entered into in 2017 with the Ministry of Commerce of China which opens prospects for IDLO to provide legal support to countries engaged in China's One Belt One Road initiative.

In the same context I referred in last year's statement to our new Investment Support Program for LDCs. The ISP/LDCs program was developed in cooperation with the Office of the High Representative for LDCs, Landlocked and Small Island States, has received a

significant pledge of support from the European Union, and has been highlighted in the latest Secretary General's report on the implementation of the Program of Action for the LDCs and in the Ministerial Declaration adopted by the LDCs at their most recent meeting in New York. I look forward to an opportunity to brief further members of this Committee on this Program as it becomes operational, since it is quite relevant to a number of issues and concerns on the Committee's agenda.

Emerging areas

Two new thematic areas are emerging where there appears to be scope for exploiting further relevant aspects of IDLO's comparative advantage and where we have been encouraged by the UN Agencies and Programs concerned to step-up our involvement. One is the migration area where we can build on initial projects we are currently undertaking in support of Syrian refugees in Turkey and of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Somalia. The other is work on non-communicable diseases where we can draw on our experience in both health and commercial law on some of our current projects focusing on the response HIV-AIDS.

Geographical diversification

I should add that our programme portfolio is increasingly diversified not only thematically but also geographically. Africa now accounts for over half of the portfolio. At the same time, demand for IDLO programs is growing in other regions particularly in Latin America, where we are initiating a major new program aimed at strengthening the capacity of the security sector to consolidate reforms of the criminal justice system in Mexico, and we are pursuing a range of other projects in Honduras and other Central American countries.

Conclusion

Before concluding, let me take the opportunity to express IDLO's appreciation to Italy and also Sweden, The Netherlands, the European Union and the United States for the generous financial support they are continuing to extend to the organization, and to thank other current and potential donors, that have been reiterating in this debate the priority they attach to advancing the rule of law, and are engaging with us in the common effort to leverage the rule of law to build peace and sustain development.

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.