

STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LAW ORGANIZATION

INFOPOVERTY WORLD CONFERENCE

TRANSFERRING KNOWLEDGE AND ADEQUATE TECHNOLOGIES

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New York

Remarks by Patrizio Civili, IDLO

Excellences,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you Pierpaolo and thanks to the organizers for inviting me to moderate this panel on health for all.

Except for Pierpaolo of course, I may well be the participant who has attended the largest number of these conferences, that marks today its 17th edition. I have done so in different capacities as United Nations Assistant Secretary General first, and, later until today, as the Permanent Observer to the United Nations for IDLO – the International Development Law Organization. So, the main asset I bring to this conference is “longevity”, but longevity accompanied by sincere commitment to the causes that these conferences are called upon to serve.

I will let my IDLO colleague who will speak in a subsequent panel this afternoon address IDLO’s position and contribution to these causes.

Now, speaking in a personal capacity as a long time participant, let me highlight here what continues to strike me the most about these conferences: how consistent they have been throughout in the messages they brought to the table; consistent in being result-oriented – in bringing practical action, real accomplishment and lessons learned to back up these messages; and consistent in the priorities they have pursued. Combating poverty and exclusion has been the overriding objective that these conferences have consistently prioritized in bringing to the fore the unique contribution that ICT can make to human progress, and in seeking to focus ICT policies and actions towards this fundamental objective.

Consistent messages and priorities but, at the same time, a deliberate effort to reflect the continuing change that we are witnessing not only in the capacity and reach of these technologies, but also in the economic, social and political environment within which ICT policies and actions are being pursued and the changes in the multilateral policy frameworks that interact with and try to affect this environment. Hence, a deliberate effort to “fit” ICT advocacy and action in the over-all effort to support advances towards the MDGs that the UN has been promoting since the year 2000, and, now, the drive towards SDGs set in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The “fit” of the messages of these conferences with the main new policy orientation that Agenda 2030

seeks to advance is manifold: ICTs are powerful tools to respond to the strong calls that Agenda 2030 contains for knowledge and policy integration; are crucial instruments to help achieve the Agenda's "transformative" ambition, and to respond to its appeal to leave no one behind; and are key to redress the inequalities that Agenda 2030 strongly highlights as crucial impediments for sustainable development. This "fit" becomes even more precise and telling if one moves from the broad orientations that these conferences have been pursuing to the specific initiatives that have been carried forward. I have in mind the food security centers, the initiatives focused on health for all and, across sectors, the focus on ICT villages and on empowering rural areas. These initiatives are all aimed at advancing basic human rights – the right to food, to health, to basic services – and point, as such, to practical action to realize the basic economic and social rights on which Agenda 2030 is anchored.

But the "fit" with the basic policies that the UN is pursuing at the moment is, in a sense, even broader than the SDGs. I have in mind the policy development in the UN Security Council and the General Assembly that is taking shape at the moment under the label of "sustaining peace", stemming from a deepening recognition of the links between human rights, the rule of law, sustainable development and the basic objective of advancing and nurturing peace. We see every day how national and international politics are shaped by disparities and exclusions, and peace and solidarity endangered, by growing divides between the haves and the haves not – divides between urban and rural areas, and within and among communities and individuals. In this perspective, ICTs are key instruments to bridge these divides and thus powerful tools of peace building as well as sustainable development.

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.