

## STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LAW ORGANIZATION

### GENERAL ASSEMBLY HIGH-LEVEL EVENT ON CONTRIBUTIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE RULE OF LAW IN THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

June 10, 2014

New York

*Remarks by Irene Khan, Director-General, IDLO*

Mr. Deputy Secretary-General,  
Excellencies, distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

We cannot eradicate poverty or promote sustainable development or create inclusive economies when human rights are ignored, when the rule of law is absent, when justice and accountability systems do not function properly, when poor people are not able to participate in decisions that affect their lives and livelihoods, when women and minorities suffer from discrimination, when opportunities are open only to a few based on wealth and privilege, when corruption and bribery distort access to basic services.

Poverty is not just about low income, it is actually about the denial of human rights - the right to housing, health, decent work, the right to information, the right to participation. In short, the entire gamut of economic, social and cultural rights and civil and political rights.

The value of human rights to development is multifaceted.

First, human rights teach us to focus on the human being - on the impact on people's lives. Not only on how fast the economy is growing, but on whether there are decent jobs for people. Not on whether school buildings have been built, but whether girls have equal access to education as boys. Not on whether agricultural production has gone up only, but on whether people have enough to eat. Human rights expose inequalities and injustices. They are not about the aggregate, but about the individual, about who is being left behind and why.

Human rights are an empowering process. By asserting their rights, the poor place themselves at the centre of the debate on development and gain the dignity.

And finally human rights are an accountability framework.

Human rights and the rule of law have a symbiotic relationship: without respect for human rights and the rule of law we will fail to make development work for everyone, we will fail to prioritize those who are being left behind.

Good laws and effective institutions can transform societies especially when they are accompanied by the empowerment of citizens and full participation of civil society. The rule of law properly understood provides not only certainty and predictability, but also substantive justice. Seen in this way, it is fundamental to all three dimensions of sustainable development. It provides for predictability and certainty that is key to economic development. It promotes social development by

ensuring equal opportunity and equitable access and by strengthening the legal framework to protect the environment it ensures the environmental dimension of development.

Fifteen years ago the Millennium Declaration recognized the importance of human rights and the rule of law to development. Across the world, in countries across the spectrum of development, from law making and policy-setting to execution on the ground, from the global to the grass roots level, we have seen how people, prosperity and the planet have suffered when human rights and the rule of law have been ignored, but we have also seen the breakthroughs that have come when rights are upheld, when institutions work effectively, when the rule of law is respected.

Today we are privileged to have with us a very distinguished panel of experts that will share with us their view and experience on the relevance and challenge of integrating human rights and the rule of law in poverty eradication and sustainable development. We do not underestimate the challenges, we do not underestimate the controversies that are involved, but we hope that this panel will help to contribute to forging consensus around the priorities and set the stage for what the Deputy Secretary-General has said we are all inspiring to and that is a truly transformative agenda post 2015 for sustainable 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.***