



**INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LAW ORGANIZATION**  
**STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL, MS JAN BEAGLE**  
**SDG 16 CONFERENCE**  
**HIGH LEVEL OPENING**

6 May 2024

Your Excellency, the President of the Italian Republic  
Madam Deputy Secretary-General  
Ambassador Massari  
Under-Secretary-General Li,  
Distinguished delegates,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the fifth SDG 16 Conference on behalf of IDLO, the only global intergovernmental organization dedicated to promoting peace and sustainable development through the rule of law.

For over 40 years, we have partnered with people and governments in all regions to address justice needs and advance nationally led solutions to major development challenges.

I would like to thank Italy and DESA for their continued partnership and support for this SDG 16 Conference.

Our discussion this year comes at a time when the world is facing a perfect storm of intersecting crises, which have exacted a huge cost in human suffering and threaten to reverse decades of hard-won development gains.

There is ample evidence that the causes, and effects, of these crises – whether we talk about conflict, climate change, or the crisis of confidence in public institutions - are deeply rooted in issues of justice.

SDG 16 provides a practical roadmap for tackling these challenges.



It is a critical enabler of all seventeen Sustainable Development Goals and is at the heart of what makes the 2030 Agenda transformative.

At its core lie rule of law, human rights and good governance - fundamental principles that underpin stability, and prosperity, in our societies.

In IDLO's experience, SDG 16 can be a game changer in three important ways.

First, it emphasizes that conflicts must be prevented rather than managed.

Conflicts are at their highest level since the founding of the United Nations.

Massive violations of international humanitarian and human rights law are occurring in many parts of the world.

Given how hard conflicts are to resolve, we must put our energy to preventing them from breaking out in the first place.

This means investing in measures to address inequalities, impunity, and breakdowns in the rule of law, which are the most common drivers of conflict, to resolve disputes before they escalate into full-blown crises.

This approach also makes economic sense.

The Pathways for Peace report found that for every dollar spent on conflict prevention, we can save 16 dollars in emergency response and reconstruction.

Secondly, progress on SDG 16 contributes to the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and can accelerate the delivery of the entire 2030 Agenda.

We can see this relationship clearly when we consider the other Goals under review at HLPF this year.

Effective laws, and accessible and accountable institutions, are essential for ending poverty and hunger, and achieving climate justice.



Strengthening governance, promoting transparency, and ensuring inclusive decision-making, can attract investment, generate economic opportunity, and lift people out of poverty.

Recent conflicts are a stark reminder of the link between war and famine, but even in more stable times, the rule of law is essential for securing land rights, enabling sustainable agriculture, and ensuring food security.

Empowering communities at the frontline of climate change can help ensure that the costs and benefits of climate mitigation and adaptation are distributed fairly, and that the most climate-vulnerable people are not left behind.

Third and finally, SDG 16 provides a framework to advance the whole of society approaches needed for sustainable development.

Restoring trust in governance requires a genuine effort to understand and address people's concerns and aspirations.

SDG 16 can help ensure fairness, accountability, and transparency, giving people confidence that institutions are working in the interest of all, rather than a privileged few.

People-centred justice systems protect the rights of the least powerful, and empower them to participate in decision-making.

By bringing together governments, multilateral organizations, civil society, business and academia, we can pool resources, share expertise, and advance the collective project of promoting sustainable development.

I particularly want to emphasize the fundamental role of women and young people.

IDLO puts gender equality at the centre of its mandate, promoting transformative measures to close the gender justice gap.

We are also committed to engaging with young people as equal partners in building a better world for current and future generations.



In these difficult times, it is sometimes easy to lose sight of the fact that positive change is possible, and happening.

We will hear examples today from innovators who have pioneered approaches from expanding access to justice through customary and informal systems, to using technology for inclusive policymaking.

We must focus on such action-oriented solutions that can help to accelerate progress on SDG 16 and make a real difference in people's lives.

IDLO is proud to be a member of the coalition that fought for the inclusion of SDG 16 in the 2030 Agenda.

Time has proven the centrality of this Goal, and we must continue to keep it high on the international agenda, including prioritizing rule of law in the Pact of the Future.

IDLO looks forward to working with you to make the promise of peaceful, just, and inclusive societies a reality.