



INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LAW ORGANIZATION
STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL, MS JAN BEAGLE

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Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates,

I have the privilege of addressing the Council at this critical moment on behalf of the only global intergovernmental organisation exclusively devoted to promoting the rule of law.

Over the past decade we have seen a growing backlash against human rights, multilateralism, and international solidarity.

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated these trends, further deepening inequalities, exacerbating fragilities and exposing major trust deficits in governance.

Just this week, the scourge of war returned to Europe as Ukraine joined the long and growing list of global crisis spots, including Afghanistan, Myanmar and the Sahel.

The International Development Law Organization works in all regions of the world, including the countries I mentioned.

I am here today to share one simple message.

If we want to protect human rights, and promote peace and sustainable development, we must invest in the rule of law.

Allow me to offer three reasons why.

First, human rights and the rule of law have a symbiotic relationship. Neither can survive long without the other.

The women and men who drafted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights understood that rights without remedies are little more than paper promises.

In its preamble, the Universal Declaration calls for human rights to be protected by the rule of law.

We see this truth in conflict zones and humanitarian crises around the world, where the rule of law is absent or has broken down, and where some of the most serious violations of human rights take place.

At the same time, human rights provide the law with its moral content, helping distinguish the rule of law from rule by law.

Without human rights, laws and institutions become mere instruments in the exercise of power.

In a growing number of countries, justice institutions are being ignored, suborned or undermined.

Where the legal system should work to level the playing field and make even the least powerful feel that their voice is heard, it is instead used to promote the interests of the most powerful and influential, generating popular resentment and alienation.

To help rebuild trust and ensure that rights are respected, IDLO's approach to the rule of law puts people and their human rights at the centre.

It incorporates both substantive justice and due process.

We work from the bottom-up to empower justice seekers and arm them with the knowledge they need to engage with laws and institutions that affect their lives.

In the Sahel, for instance, we are working through community platforms called Cadres de Concertation to improve respect for human rights and increase trust in the criminal justice chains of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger.

We also work from the "top-down" with governments and duty bearers, to strengthen laws and institutions, adapt, and innovate to address the most pressing justice needs.

IDLO is working with UN Women and national partners in Kenya, the Philippines, Sierra Leone, Uganda, and Tunisia to help eliminate laws and practices that discriminate against women and girls.

Second, the rule of law is a powerful force for sustainable development, which is essential for the realization of the full spectrum of human rights.

It is key to catalyzing progress across the entire 2030 Agenda.

Many SDGs implicitly draw on human rights principles and require the creation of new legal frameworks and institutional capacity for their implementation.

For example, the rule of law can provide the clarity and predictability countries need to attract investment and promote economic development, while ensuring that it is both sustainable and inclusive.

IDLO's Investment Support Programme is an example of a public-private partnership model that provides no-cost access to legal advice on investment issues to Least Developed Countries.

Through this programme, we have supported initiatives in Ethiopia, the Gambia, Liberia, and Malawi.

The rule of law is also key to developing legal and regulatory mechanisms that will allow countries to cooperate fairly and equitably on issues like climate change, vaccine inequity, and the digital divide.

At this time, IDLO is partnering with WHO to help countries strengthen their legal and policy frameworks to better manage the pandemic in line with the International Health Regulations.

Third, and finally, increased political and financial support for the rule of law is urgently needed right now.

The past few years have seen significant global deterioration in several dimensions of the rule of law, along with steep declines in financing for justice issues in national budgets and international development assistance.

We have both a moral duty, and an overwhelming self-interest, to reverse these trends. There are some encouraging glimmers of hope.

Around the world, coalitions of governments, international organizations and civil society are rallying together, determined to break the nexus between injustice, exclusion, and poor governance.

IDLO is proud to be part of that mobilization and we encourage you to join this growing movement for justice.

We encourage governments to prioritize justice in their national plans and budgets and to promote more participatory decision making.

We encourage international development partners to increase development assistance for nationally led, people-centred and human rights-based justice reforms.

We encourage the private sector's strong endorsement of the SDGs and invite them to back their rhetoric with concrete actions to eliminate illicit financial flows, prevent bribery and corruption, and promote inclusive economic development.

IDLO also welcomes the Council's growing attention to linkages between the rule of law, human rights and democratic governance.

I was pleased to have been invited to chair the Council's Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and Rule of Law last November and look forward to presenting its report later this month.

Mr. President,

Recent events have shown us that the status quo is not working.

The world now faces fundamental choices about its future direction.

We must act urgently and decisively to avoid the path of narrow self-interest, of unilateral action, and governing by might rather than right.

IDLO stands ready to partner with you to help build a more peaceful, just and sustainable world, grounded in human rights and the rule of law.

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