



Director-General's Letter to Partners

JANUARY 2026

Dear friends,

As we begin a year that in its very first weeks seems to be testing the rules-based international order to the breaking point, I wanted to share some reflections on the way forward for the rule of law and multilateralism.

Recent years have brought not only an intensification of global challenges, but also a dramatic shift in the way institutions are valued.

As someone who has spent most of her professional life in diplomacy and in the multilateral system, I have seen it struggle under the pressure of geopolitical tensions, shrinking resources, and crises that seem too large to overcome.

I have also seen it at its best: when nations reach across geopolitical divides to pursue a shared purpose; when organizations work hand-in-hand; when the rule of law transforms lives by giving people the protection, opportunity, and fairness they deserve.

While multilateralism is far from perfect, I remain convinced that it remains indispensable.

The rule of law can be a powerful force for peace and sustainable development, and it is increasingly central to a renewed multilateralism and the ability of countries to manage risk, resolve conflict, and deliver for their people.

As we consider how multilateralism can be strengthened, and international organizations can be reconfigured to meet the challenges of the present moment, I find myself returning to five reflections.

They are shaped by the many crises, negotiations, reforms, and partnerships I have been part of, from my early days as a young diplomat, to my time in leadership roles across the United Nations system, and now at IDLO.

As I mentioned in my [Annual Report](#) to IDLO's Assembly of Parties in December, these reflections are also grounded in the choices that IDLO has made this year, the results we have achieved, and why our mission to promote the rule of law remains critical in the current environment.

1. Collective action depends on fair, effective and enforceable rules

Effective responses to common challenges such as climate change, organized crime, or conflict, require justice systems that can work together across borders in predictable and enforceable ways. IDLO supports this cooperation by strengthening national legal and institutional capacities, while fostering regional approaches to shared challenges.

For instance, over the past year, IDLO helped improve cross-border cooperation and operational trust on transnational crime among justice institutions in Kenya, Tanzania, and Mozambique through legal reform, capacity building, and structured dialogue. In Mozambique, our efforts contributed to the completion of key anti-money laundering reforms, helping the country secure its removal from the Financial Action Task Force's "grey list".

In the Sahel region, we worked in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, to reduce impunity, arbitrary detention, and case backlogs, which act as drivers of conflict, migration, and violent extremism.

In Niger, our interventions helped reduce pretrial detention times from 16 years in some cases, to under one year for over 70 per cent of detainees in 2023-2024.

In an era defined by interconnected threats, the rule of law is not only a safeguard against instability, but also a strategic enabler of cooperation, resilience, and peace.

2. Focus on results that matter most to people

For most people, multilateralism is judged not by declarations or commitments or reports, but by the solutions it delivers.

Governments are under pressure to demonstrate that public institutions work, that they are responsive, and that they can deliver justice in a way that people recognize as fair. Results are the most powerful currency of trust and supporting our partners to develop and implement practical rule of law solutions is at the core of IDLO's approach.

Even during wartime, Ukrainians have demonstrated that the work of anti-corruption institutions remains a national priority. The credibility of these efforts is essential not only for recovery and reconstruction, but also for maintaining the trust of citizens who have borne immense sacrifice.

Since 2014, IDLO's support has strengthened investigations, improved case preparation, enhanced transparency, and ensured merit-based and accountable leadership recruitment across Ukraine's anti-corruption architecture. In the past year, we continued to work closely with key institutions, including the High Anti-Corruption Court, the Public Integrity Council, the Office of the Prosecutor General, and the Bureau of Economic Security, to sustain momentum and ensure continued progress in the fight against corruption.

Gender equality and the empowerment and leadership of women must be central in efforts to strengthen multilateralism. Violence against women and girls remains one of the most pervasive human rights violations, undermining peace, stability, and development worldwide. IDLO supports countries in eliminating discriminatory laws and in implementing survivor-centric approaches.

In Uganda, for example, IDLO's support for prosecution-led investigations, strengthening responsiveness by public service providers, and expanding access to legal aid services, has contributed to improved conviction rates from 20 per cent in 2018 to 70 per cent in 2024.





3. Partner for impact

In an environment of constrained resources, overlapping initiatives, and sometimes competing priorities, international organizations, while focused on their core mandates, must collaborate closely to address complex challenges.

IDLO's strengths include global presence, technical expertise, and an integrated approach that combines programmes, research, and policy advocacy to maximize results through our [five levers of change](#).

When IDLO works on combatting noncommunicable diseases or rural employment and food security, we are not entering those spaces as a substitute for others, we are bringing what is often missing: legal foundations and specialized expertise.

This approach allows us to partner with subject matter experts in other organizations, to complement rather than compete, and to support our partners with holistic solutions.

The Small Claims Courts model, for instance, illustrates how targeted justice reforms can rapidly increase confidence in the business environment.

In Kenya, IDLO's support to the establishment and expansion of Small Claims Courts has transformed access to commercial dispute resolution for small businesses and informal traders. More than 40,000 cases were filed and over 33,000 resolved in 2023–2024, with an 81 per cent clearance rate and most cases concluded within weeks.

Our new issue brief on Commercial Alternative Dispute Resolution, released this month, distils lessons from nearly a decade of experience to offer practical recommendations on how improved justice can foster broad-based economic growth.





4. Mobilize new coalitions for political and financial support

We must redouble our efforts to expand the political and financial foundations of the multilateral system.

The decision of the United States to reduce foreign assistance and withdraw from membership in multiple international organizations, including IDLO, has had a significant impact on development and humanitarian action.

For IDLO, the United States has been a founding member and a valued partner for more than four decades, and we remain grateful for its longstanding contributions to our work advancing justice and the rule of law worldwide.

Over the past year, IDLO has intensified efforts to broaden its partnerships, deepen political engagement and diversify its funding base.

Growing interest in membership, including the accession of The Bahamas and Cyprus in 2025 and progress toward accession by Chile and Uruguay, reflect continued interest in IDLO's mandate.

New multi-year agreements with Sweden and the Netherlands, greater programmatic engagement with Italy, and increased and first-time core contributions from a wider range of partners including China, Cyprus, Kuwait, the Philippines, and Türkiye, give the organization greater resilience and flexibility.

Throughout the year, we showcased the effectiveness of rule of law solutions at many policy forums, including the [UN General Assembly](#), the [Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development](#), the [High-Level Political Forum](#), the [Third UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries](#), the [Second World Summit for Social Development](#), [COP30](#), the [Human Rights Council](#), the [Commission on the Status of Women](#), the [World Justice Forum](#), and the Reykjavik Global Forum.

IDLO will continue to mobilize political and financial support in 2026, establishing a presence in Brussels and strengthening our presence in key regions, including Latin America and the Caribbean and the Middle East and North Africa.

5. Build future ready institutions

A more demanding global environment requires institutions that can adapt, innovate and deliver. Over the past year, IDLO has strengthened financial management, modernized systems, enhanced risk management and cybersecurity, and reinforced duty of care for staff working in high-risk contexts.

We are focused on ensuring that our programmes are evidence-based, and designed for the specific needs of our partners, while investing in our own people, systems and accountability to ensure that resources are directed where they can make the greatest difference.

Although we have had to make tough choices and painful decisions over the past months, most significantly separating staff and closing some country operations, IDLO enters the new year more focused, more resilient, and better positioned to deliver on its mandate.

Looking ahead

The rule of law can be a strategic asset at a time of intense disruption.

It can help governments provide real, tangible benefits to their people: safer communities, accountable institutions, and more economic opportunity. It gives individuals the tools to resolve disputes peacefully, to protect their rights, and to build better futures for themselves and their families. It can rebuild public trust.

IDLO will continue to concentrate its efforts where justice systems are under the greatest strain and where the rule of law can have the greatest impact. We start the year with a new programme in the West Bank to strengthen the ability of Palestinian institutions to deliver better governance and justice services at a critical time.

Thank you for your partnership, trust, and engagement.

I look forward to working with you, over the coming year and beyond, to stand up for the rule of law and to ensure that it remains at the forefront of global efforts to promote peace and sustainable development.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jan', with a large, elegant flourish extending from the bottom of the letter 'n'.

Jan Beagle
Director-General