

## **Side event**

### **Providing access to legal information to accelerate sustainable development**

The objective of this side event is to offer Member States the opportunity to discuss how free, timely and online access to legal information can become a strong and transformative enabler to accelerate advances in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda and help create a conducive environment for the achievement of the SDGs.

A broad-based and shared knowledge of policies and norms throughout society is essential to sustainable development. Yet, despite two decades of Internet and digital growth, and some initiatives with respect to access to public data, free online access to legal information, and the benefits that come with it, have yet to be fully realized by governments anywhere in the world.

In the context of the post-2015 agenda, making legal information freely available to all via the Internet, on a timely basis, will be particularly significant as it can help address simultaneously many development goals, with major impacts at the national and international levels.

Access to legal information, including primary and secondary legal sources – such as laws, statutes, regulations, case law, treaties, etc. – can encourage trade and foreign investment, foster private sector growth, help mobilize domestic resources, promote a predictable business climate, and deter bribery and corruption. Legal empowerment through free access to law can help fight discrimination and safeguard the rights of women, minorities, migrants and persons with disabilities, support the implementation of productive employment and social protection measures, and enhance the spreading of education. The availability of legal information can also become a powerful instrument to promote and support changes in unsustainable patterns of consumption and to defend the health of individuals and the environment they live in.

Also, by providing free access to legal information official bodies can strengthen institutional transparency, engage a larger audience of stakeholders, and make many more people aware, at all levels, of both the laws that protect them and the laws that regulate behavior.

Despite these benefits, there have been only sporadic and fragmented attempts by the international community to support countries to develop capacity to establish systems for citizens' access to legal information or, sometimes, simple thematic databases of current laws.

During the side event, participants will have the opportunity to interact with experts around concrete governmental and non-governmental practices and experiences, as well as to contribute their countries' experience and views in the area of access to legal information for sustainable development.



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
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Wednesday, 24 June 2015

1:15 – 2:45 pm

Conference room 7

1:15 – 1:30 pm	<p><b>Opening remarks</b></p> <p>H.E. Mr. Thomas Gass, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs</p> <p>H.E. Mr. Sebastiano Cardi, Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations</p>
1:30 – 2:10 pm	<p><b>Interventions</b></p> <p>Professor Thomas Bruce, Research Associate and Director, Legal Information Institute of the Cornell Law School</p> <p>H.E. Ms. Paddy Torsney, Permanent Observer of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) to the United Nations</p> <p>H.E. Mr. Patrizio Civili, Permanent Observer of the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) to the United Nations</p> <p>H.E. Mr. Robert Reeves, Deputy Clerk, House of Representatives of the United States of America</p>
2:10 -2:25 pm	<p><b>Country presentations</b></p> <p>H.E. Mr. Hahn Choonghee, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations</p> <p>H.E. Mr. Jorge Dotta, Minister Counsellor of the Permanent Mission of Uruguay to the United Nations</p>
2:25 -2:45 pm	<p><b>Open discussion</b></p> <p><b>Closing remarks</b></p> <p>H.E. Mr. Thomas Gass, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs</p>