

STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LAW ORGANIZATION

IDLO SIDE EVENT ON ACHIEVING GENDER PARITY IN INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATION

60th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

March 17, 2016

New York

Delivered by Patrizio Civili, Permanent Observer to the UN, IDLO

Check against delivery

Thank you Federica

Let me say at the outset, on behalf of IDLO's DG Irene Khan and of my colleague Judit Arenas (who has spearheaded with Federica Scala IDLO's collaboration with GQUAL and the Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL) that has made this event possible, but has unfortunately been prevented by a family emergency to be here today:

- How proud we in IDLO are to be cosponsoring this event with GQUAL and the Center
- How grateful we are Ministers Mora and Kariuki and the other distinguished speakers for agreeing to share with us their experience and insights from different regions and different institutional perspectives
- How much we value the support that the the many governments and institutions whose logos appear in your invitation have lent to this event, which is emblematic of the strength and breadth of the coalition that the international community can count on to promote the cause that is the subject of this event ; and
- How gratified we are at seeing how many of you – women and men , diplomatic and civil society representatives – have chosen to participate in this event, notwithstanding the great “competition” presented by the unprecedented number of events that are accompanying this year's session of the Commission on the Status of Women

Ms. Krsticevic's comprehensive presentation has put on the table facts and figures that illustrates the magnitude of the challenge that the international community is facing in bringing about the qualitative change in women's representation in international judicial bodies; and has set out in a very compelling way why meeting this challenge is key to realizing the ambition of the 2030 Agenda to be a truly transformative agent within societies and across the globe.

There is a vicious circle of discrimination, violence and conflict that characterizes today's national and world affairs. This vicious circle must be broken and reversed if the great ambitions of the 2030 Agenda have to have a chance to be realized.

The cause represented by this event may appear narrow in relation to this challenge but it is in fact central to facing it. The international bodies that are the focus of this event have a crucial role to play in advancing justice and the rule of law at all levels. In turn, the message of the 2030 Agenda is that no one should be left behind; that justice – at all levels – is the

force that will ensure that development, in its interrelated economic, social, environmental components will be sustained.

[In concluding her address at the Summit that adopted the 2030 agenda IDLO's DG Khan said: 'it is no mere coincidence that, in the icon for goal 16 that the UN has designed, the dove of peace is holding fast On the gavel of justice. The message is clear: peace, progress and sustainability are built on the foundation of justice. Justice must come first'.]

IDLO is the only intergovernmental organization exclusively devoted to advancing the Rule of Law. But the rule of law can mean different things to different people. We at IDLO draw a strong distinction between rule by law and the rule of law. We recognize that the law can be an instrument to entrench discrimination, to embed the status quo. By the rule of law we mean the opposite: the law as a key instrument of progress and change, a key means to make human rights legally enforceable.

In this outcome-oriented perspective of the rule of law, not only the contents of the law but also the way it is administered – and indeed who it is that administers it – law become crucial.

Ensuring adequate representation of women in international judicial bodies becomes from this point of view not only a key goal in advancing gender equality and ensuring that women can make their full contribution to society's progress. It becomes a central factor in ensuring the legitimacy of these bodies and in determining quality of the contribution to engendering and sustaining progress for all.

In this same perspective, it is no surprise that SDG 5 that calls on us to “to ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic, and public life” is among the SDGs embodied in the 2030 Agenda, perhaps the Goal that is most deeply rooted in the rule of law, and perhaps the Goal most closely linked with SDG 16 with its emphasis on building strong and equitable institutions is a key force to engender and sustain development.

And it is natural, I would say imperative, that an organization such IDLO, devoted to promoting the role of law as a force for sustainable development, should make gender equality and women empowerment, including within adjudicatory and monitoring bodies, one of the main priorities of its work.

In the aftermath of the 2012 High Level Meeting of the General Assembly on the rule at the national and international levels , IDLO chose women's increased participation in the justice system as the theme of the its pledge to contribute to advancing the outcome of the High Level Meeting. As part of this pledge, and drawing on its long standing work in Afghanistan, IDLO has carried out a comprehensive assessment of Women in the Justice Sector in Afghanistan and has since developed a template methodology that includes a special framework for measuring women participation and engagement with formal and informal justice systems.

Let me add that IDLO's governance in electing for the first time in the life of the Organization a woman - from a developing country - as the Director General of the institution - not a judicial body but an institution deeply involved in promoting a culture of justice within institutions and in society at large - has, in so doing, made in some ways a contribution to advancing the cause that this event is seeking to promote.

I trust that in that spirit IDLO Member Parties, and indeed all of you present here today, will want to commit to the objectives of the GQUAL Campaign, as an important integral part of the commitment to the Goals of the 2030 Agenda.

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.