

STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LAW ORGANIZATION

32ND SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL: HIGH-LEVEL PANEL ON THE 10TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Palais des Nations, Geneva

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Geneva

*Delivered by Julian Fleet, Permanent Observer to the United Nations and Other International
Organizations in Geneva, IDLO*

Mr. President,

This year, the Human Rights Council marks its tenth anniversary. This is an opportunity for the international community to celebrate the Council's vital contributions to the promotion and protection of human rights around the world. Much progress has been made. True to the spirit of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Council, as a subsidiary body of the UN General Assembly, is a symbol of the centrality of human rights in contemporary international relations,

In addition to celebrating the Council's successes, we must assess ways in which the Council can be further strengthened. As with other global institutions, it is essential to undertake a review and analysis of the Council and ensure that it is working to its highest potential and maximum impact for all those whom it serves in countries and communities around the world.

The Council and its stakeholders continue to face great challenges.

As High Commissioner Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein stated in OHCHR's 2015 report: "2015 was a year of massive paradoxes. On the one hand, it was wracked with violence, brutal oppression, deprivation and despair. [...] But at the same time, across the world, grassroots movements for greater freedom continued to do brave inspiring work to advance the rights of women and girls; ethnic, racial and religious minorities; and oppressed social groups, such as castes and sexual minorities."

Friends of the Council -- including government, multilateral and civil society sectors -- have called attention to the need to redress the lack of full and effective implementation of the Council's recommendations at national levels. The Council must have the support of national, regional and international institutions to address this deficit.

The Council's recommendations and international human rights standards must be domesticated and implemented on the ground.

With its expertise working on rule of law and access to justice in countries in every region of the world, the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) is ready and eager to cooperate with the Council in its efforts to further strengthen itself, specifically in

domestication of international standards and implementation of the Council's recommendations.

IDLO believes that the rule of law, properly understood and applied, is essential to ensuring respect for all human rights. Good legal frameworks, effective and capable institutions and empowered citizens are fundamental to the protection and fulfilment of human rights and to ensuring that perpetrators of human rights violations are held accountable.

In this regard, IDLO wholeheartedly welcomed the Council's adoption of Resolution 28/14 on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law. We recognize the outstanding work of the members of the Resolution's Core Group: Romania, Peru, Tunisia, Norway, Republic of Korea and Morocco. This Resolution is the result of many years of hard work by the General Assembly and its Sixth Committee, the Office of the UN Secretary General and its Rule of Law Unit, and OHCHR.

The first Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law is due to take place in November. IDLO has over 30 years of experience in promoting the rule of law, including through technical assistance, often in very challenging settings. IDLO reiterates its support to the Council and OHCHR as you advance with the preparations for the Forum. It is in this spirit of cooperation that IDLO is organizing, in collaboration with OHCHR and members of the Core Group, a side event that will take place on June 17th to brainstorm on the theme of the first edition of the Forum: "Widening the democratic space: the role of youth in public decision-making."

The Council, as an institution that addresses the rule of law within the framework of human rights, is in a strong position to support Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly target 16.3 to "promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all".

As IDLO Director-General, Irene Khan, stated at the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, "the rule of law is about equal protection of rights, about leaving no one behind. By empowering people, it helps to build resilient societies. By strengthening the integrity and capacity of institutions, it ensures justice and accountability. "

In closing, we would like to express our gratitude for and recognition of the hard work of all the past and present Members of the Council. We thank the Council's 10 Presidents, honoring us today with their presence, for their dedication and commitment to the past and current 32 sessions of the Council.

We call on the international community to maintain and reinforce its commitment to the United Nations Human Rights Council. IDLO will continue to play its part to support the Council to advance its vital work ever more strongly in its second decade.

Thank you.

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.