

STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LAW ORGANIZATION

31ST REGULAR SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
STATEMENT TO THE ANNUAL HIGH-LEVEL PANEL ON HUMAN RIGHTS MAINSTREAMING:
“The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Human Rights, with an emphasis on the
right to development”

February 29, 2016

Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland

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

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Mr. President,

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to address the Council, and we thank you and this distinguished panel for such rich and inspiring insights.

In your choice of theme for this year’s high-level discussion on human rights mainstreaming, the Council has made a loud and clear statement: that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a pathway to realize the right to development and, in turn, to make good on the grand promise set out in the Preamble of the United Nations Charter: “fundamental human rights” for all, human “dignity”, “social progress and better standards of life”.

As the only intergovernmental organization exclusively devoted to advancing the rule of law, the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) has long been committed to the centrality of human rights to the entire development agenda.

Human rights is central to development in many ways. Human rights teaches us to be human centered:

- to focus not solely on economic growth, but whether growth translates into decent work opportunities;
- not only on bricks and mortar for school buildings, but whether girls enjoy equal access to education;
- not just overall agricultural production, but on whether children still go to bed hungry.

Over the years, IDLO has emphasized at every relevant opportunity, within and outside the United Nations, that poverty cannot be eradicated, sustainable development achieved, or inclusive economies created without the fulfillment of human rights and a culture of rule of law.

Rule of law is essential to realizing human rights, including the right to development. In providing equal protection, accountability and transparency, rule of law enables sustainable development in all three of its dimensions:

- for economic development, it secures property and investments, and provides stability and certainty in commercial activities;
- for social development, it counters discrimination and promotes equal access to rights and services;
- for environmental protection, it advances equitable and sustainable use of natural resources.

As we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Covenants, we would like to highlight that the rule of law promotes democratic participation, peaceful resolution of disputes, and accountability in the fulfilment of civil and political rights, as well as economic, social and cultural rights.

The express reference to access to justice and the place of rule of law in Sustainable Development Goal 16 -- which was championed by many Member States, IDLO, and by civil society among others -- makes clear that the need for good governance, fair laws, accountable institutions and people's access to justice are development ends in and of themselves.

As an intergovernmental organization that works on the ground providing technical assistance in countries and communities around the world, IDLO is seizing the new opportunities presented by the decision of UN Member States to place rule of law and access to justice at the heart of the sustainable development agenda.

In the letter and spirit of Goal 17, IDLO looks forward to furthering our cooperation and capacity building in countries as part of the global partnership for sustainable development, in particular strengthening our cooperation with the Human Rights Council, as well as with OHCHR, UNDP, UNHCR, UNAIDS, WHO and others.

The Forum on human rights, democracy and the rule of law, established by the Council at its 28th session, and to which we stand ready to contribute, will be an important opportunity to advance the linkages between rule of law, human rights, peace and security, and development.

As IDLO Director-General Irene Khan said in her address to the UN Sustainable Development Summit last September, the icon for Goal 16 that the UN has adopted is no mere coincidence. It is the dove of peace perched on the gavel of justice.

Its message is clear: peace, human rights and sustainable development depend upon a firm foundation of law and justice.

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.