

STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LAW ORGANIZATION

GENERAL DEBATE OF THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM

United Nations Headquarters

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Let me express, also on behalf of IDLO's Director-General Irene Khan, our appreciation for this valuable opportunity to address the current session of HLPF. The session has had a very special significance for IDLO for two related reasons:

- First, the over-all theme of the session – Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality – encapsulates extremely well what are the essential features of IDLO's work in advancing the rule of law and access to justice and supporting national and international efforts to leverage contribution that the rule of law makes to building peace and sustaining development.
- Second, we saw the session's thematic focus on, among other Goals, SDG 16 as an exceptional opportunity for IDLO to bring to bear the knowledge and lessons we learn from our country level work to project the value of SDG 16 as an enabler of over-all progress towards the 2030 Agenda, and to advance an integrated view of SDG 16 – to help ensure, that progress towards the 3 dimensions of SDG 16 (promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, providing justice for all, and building effective accountable and inclusive institutions) is pursued in a coherent, and mutually reinforcing way. Working towards an integrated view of the values underpinning SDG 16 is not only important in order to be consistent with the integrated, indivisible and universal character of the 2030 Agenda, and thus to ensure that its contribution to over-all progress in implementing the whole Agenda is fully exploited. It is equally important to promote meaningful political commitments towards its implementation across its diverse targets in a way that can significantly advance and sustain over-all progress.

IDLO's Member Parties have directed us to ensure that our current Strategic Plan maximizes the contribution of the organization to the implementation of the Agenda 2030, at all levels – local, national and global.

Pursuant to this directive, we are working at the programmatic level to advance two interrelated objectives: support efforts towards laws and policies that are fair, and institutions that are effective, accessible and accountable; and to support the empowerment of people and groups to realize their rights.

At the advocacy level, since the adoption of Agenda 2030, we have devoted every Partnership Forum that we convene in conjunction with our annual Assembly of Parties to different policy and institution building dimensions of Agenda 2030 implementation, and last year we had the honor to welcome to our Forum President Ambassador King. In addition, this year, IDLO was called upon to co-organize in Rome with DESA a very

successful Conference on SDG 16 as part of the EGM preparatory processes to the thematic discussion held last week by HLPF. One of the distinguishing features of the Conference was a deliberate effort to bring together representatives from government, the judiciary and civil society in an open, positive dialogue – the kind of genuinely multi-stakeholder national-level dialogue engaging “whole-of-society” that we see as a condition to ensure that progress towards SDG 16 is inclusive and durable. And consideration is now being given by Italy – IDLO host country and the Conference host – to make this type of dialogue and exchange of experience in advancing SDG 16 an annual occasion to contribute to the accelerated implementation of Agenda 2030 that the HLPF Summit in September will appeal for.

During the HLPF discussion last week on SDG 16, presided over by Ambassador Hilale, whom we had the pleasure to welcome at the Rome Conference, IDLO DG Irene Khan, in moderating the discussion illustrated how pressing ahead on SDG 16 means better results across the whole Agenda: *“By empowering poor farmers to claim their right to land, access to justice (SDG 16.3) improves food security (Goal 2) or by protecting women from sexual and gender-based violence, it advances gender equality (SDG 5). Access to information (SDG 16.10) encourages transparency in governance and reduces corruption (SDG 16.5). The chances of obtaining clean water (SDG 6) improve when there is clean government (SDG 16.6). Where there is rule of law, business is better able to flourish bringing decent work (SDG 8). With legal identity (SDG 16.9), children can better access health care (SDG 3) or education (SDG 4)”*.

She also highlighted some of the main insights and recommendations that emerged from the Conference. Let me briefly recall them here:

- taking a people-centered approach so that our collective energy reaches first and foremost those who are farthest behind;
- in that same vein, giving high priority to closing of the justice gap for women, marginalized and vulnerable groups;
- scaling up investment in institution-building and capacity development;
- focusing not simply on inclusion but on meaningful participation to all stakeholders;
- strengthening data collection and monitoring for effective accountability;
- expanding civic space and creating an enabling environment for civil society to participate freely and safely.

Thank you, Madam President

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.