

## STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LAW ORGANIZATION (IDLO)

41<sup>ST</sup> SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL: ANNUAL FULL-DAY DISCUSSION ON THE HUMAN  
RIGHTS OF WOMEN

PANEL 1: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE WORLD OF WORK

Room XX, Palais des Nations

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Geneva

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*Permanent Delegation to the UN and other International Organizations in Geneva*

### Check Against Delivery

Mr. President,

The International Development Law Organization (IDLO) greatly appreciates the opportunity to address this distinguished panel and audience. As the only intergovernmental organization with an exclusive mandate to strengthen the rule of law, IDLO is present in all regions of the world.

As has been emphasized by independent UN and regional women's rights experts, violence and harassment against women and girls in the world of work is first and foremost a human rights violation. Research mentioned in the *Justice for Women Report* of the High-level Group convened by IDLO, UN Women and the World Bank also shows that sexual harassment has major negative repercussions for women's health and career opportunities, and also entails high costs for employers, in the public or private sectors. And, yet, more than three hundred and fifty million women do not have legal protections against sexual harassment at work.

As an organization committed to both rule of law and gender equality, IDLO carried out research on the situation of women justice professionals as well as into what works to advance justice for women, including women victims of workplace violence and harassment.

Our research on women's participation in the justice sector - *Women delivering justice: Contributions, Barriers, Pathways* - reveals that threats, intimidation and corruption hinder women legal professionals. Women prosecutors and judges face threats or pressure to drop cases in a series of matters, but particularly in matters of SGBV. Female legal aid staff and defense lawyers, as well as women's human rights defenders from civil society receive threats from various sources, especially when they are involved in supporting victims of gender-based violence.

The report recognized that a critical mass of women in the judiciary can support attitudinal change in society regarding the role of women in decision-making and positions of authority, and this can in turn create an enabling environment for the prevention of harassment or violence against women in the workplace.

IDLO also conducted research on women entrepreneurs' access to justice which revealed that they too face violence, threats and harassment in the world of work. IDLO recommended that addressing discriminatory provisions in legislation, ensuring protection from sexual

harassment and freedom of movement, and improving women's entrepreneurs' access to legal aid service and legal awareness are among the measures that should be taken to remove barriers to women entrepreneurs' full enjoyment of their rights and economic opportunities.

Finally, addressing discriminatory laws, norms and practices are central to justice for women. IDLO is an implementing partner to UN Women's strategy *Equality in Law for Women and Girls by 2030*, which aims to assist governments and civil society to work towards the repeal of discriminatory laws.

Mr. President,

Ending violence against women in the world of work is part of advancing justice for women and making tangible progress toward the 2030 Agenda. I would like to ask the panel:

**In your view, what justice and rule of law measures (and good practices) should be given priority to address workplace violence against women?**

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.*