



INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LAW ORGANIZATION
STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL, MS JAN BEAGLE

Human Rights Day

10 December 2021

Every year, the world recalls the United Nations General Assembly's adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December 1948. We reflect on improvements made to date and renew our commitment to ensure the full enjoyment of human rights.

This year's Human Rights Day theme of "Equality" underscores the importance of human rights for every individual.

In the words of the Secretary-General: *"human rights are our ultimate tool to help societies grow in freedom. To ensure equality for women and girls. To advance sustainable development. To prevent conflict, reduce human suffering, and build a just and equitable world."*

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights makes that point crystal clear. Article 1 of the Declaration states that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."

Yet today, human beings do not equally enjoy those rights.

Discrimination continues to marginalise people, create disparities, and engender abuses. Societies' most vulnerable, women and girls, minorities, LGBTI people, migrants, indigenous populations, persons with disabilities, people with illnesses, or those with different beliefs, all too often suffer unequal treatment and lack access to basic services.

These inequalities can be a source of insecurity and conflict. They hamper economic growth and prevent us from responding effectively to the challenges of our day, be it climate change, combatting a global pandemic, or reviving the global economy.

Treating all individuals equally is essential to attain the Sustainable Development Goals, which mirror the international human rights framework.

IDLO, with its mandate to promote the rule of law for peace and sustainable development, works daily to ensure that all members of society, especially its most vulnerable, are treated equally and fairly.

IDLO places people at the centre of its efforts to ensure that justice institutions operate effectively and in the best interest of the people they serve, and that justice-seekers have equal access to those institutions. We work to reduce the justice gap for women and girls and promote climate responses that listen to the voices of the most vulnerable. We assist developing countries to build expertise and

legal frameworks to promote economic growth, prepare for health emergencies, and respond to the needs of all their people.

The advancement of the rule of law at the national and international levels is essential for the protection of human rights and all fundamental freedoms.

IDLO's interventions enhance the capacities of duty-bearers to protect, respect, and fulfill human rights obligations and rights-holders to claim their rights.

IDLO endeavours to place the values and principles underpinning the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Human Rights Conventions (non-discrimination, participation, accountability, and transparency) at the centre of all stages of the programme cycle – in other words, a human rights-based approach.

Through our programmes across the globe, we see in very practical ways how treating people equally benefits all of society.

IDLO, through its Strategic Plan (2021-2024), recognises and seeks to advance the interdependence and mutually reinforcing connection between human rights, sustainable development, and the rule of law. Through its programmatic, research, and policy advocacy activities, IDLO contributes to further realising human rights, as laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments.

On this Human Rights Day 2021, we celebrate those who advocate for the dignity and rights of all human beings, placing people at the centre of their committed efforts to improve lives and well-being.