

STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LAW ORGANIZATION

SDG SUMMIT

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New York

Statement by Irene Khan, Director-General, IDLO

As the only intergovernmental organization devoted exclusively to advancing sustainable development through the rule of law and access to justice, the International Development Law Organization is honored to address this August gathering.

A lot of preparation has gone into this Summit by governments, organizations and people across the world. IDLO was privileged to do its own small part by co-convening together with the UN and the government of Italy the preparatory conference in Rome and facilitating the thematic review of Goal 16 at the High-Level Political Forum in July 2019.

There is broad recognition that peace, access to justice, and effective, accessible and accountable institutions – the three pillars of Goal 16 – are a critical link in the sustainable development chain and integral to the transformative change sought by the 2030 Agenda. Nevertheless, as noted in the UN Secretary-General’s report, progress on SDG 16 is slow and uneven.

The justice gap is enormous. An estimated five billion people – or two thirds of the world’s population – have no meaningful access to justice. Perception surveys from around the world show that high levels of corruption and exclusion are eroding public trust in institutions, undermining public services and holding back social and economic development. Entrenched conflicts and prolonged fragility exacerbate the challenges.

The need for concerted action to accelerate implementation of the SDGs, including Goal 16, is palpable.

We call on governments to prioritize access to justice in their national plans and budgets, invest in institution-building, take concrete action to eliminate illicit financial flows, bribery and corruption, promote more participatory decision making and report on their progress on SDG 16 as part of their Voluntary National Reports.

We ask international development partners to increase development assistance for nationally led and people-centered justice reforms.

IDLO stands ready to support these efforts. For our part we commit to four “Acceleration Actions” to narrow the justice gap by 2030:

Firstly, we will seek to enhance access to justice, especially for women, children and others most at risk of being left behind, so that they are empowered to claim their rights

Secondly, we will help countries experiencing conflict or fragility to build peace and sustain development by reforming laws and strengthening the capacity and integrity of justice institutions.

Thirdly, we will engage with informal and customary systems as well as formal institutions to ensure fair, accessible, affordable pathways to justice, in keeping with local context, national ownership and international human rights standards.

Finally, we would convene with partners a global multi-stakeholder forum engaging the judiciary along with government and civil society representatives in an open, periodic dialogue for mutual learning and sharing of information and good practices.

This action would build on the experience and outcomes of the other pledges I have just highlighted. It would draw on IDLO's comparative advantage in convening multi-stakeholder consultations and the experience with the 2019 global Conference on SDG 16. And it would be geared to complement and support other platforms and the international community's over-all effort to promote country-owned, all-of-society dialogues to advance progress towards SDG 16 and to generate political and financial support at all levels. In so doing, it should help accelerate SDG 16 implementation while serving to maximize its contribution to progress towards other Goals and the implementation of Agenda 2030 as a whole.

Working together with others, we pledge to unlock the rule of law's potential as a driver of sustainable development.

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.