



INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LAW ORGANIZATION
STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL, MS JAN BEAGLE
WORLD DAY AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

30 July 2021

Trafficking in persons is a severe human rights violation that undermines human dignity and threatens international peace and security. By exacerbating inequalities, damaging health and wellbeing, and undermining the rule of law, trafficking in persons also poses a significant challenge to sustainable development. With its impact falling disproportionately on the most vulnerable, in particular women and children, human trafficking puts the 2030 Agenda's commitment to "leave no one behind" at risk.

On the World Day against Trafficking in Persons, IDLO stands in solidarity with the victims of trafficking in persons and reaffirms its commitment to support international efforts to combat human trafficking in all its forms.

This year's theme, "Victims' Voices Lead the Way" recognises the importance of empowering victims and engaging them in the fight against trafficking in persons. It acknowledges the unique insight that survivors have, and the critical role they can play in preventing trafficking, supporting victims, and holding perpetrators to account.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the inequalities and fragilities that increase vulnerability to trafficking in persons. It has also created unprecedented challenges for the justice sector, straining institutional capacity and generating new trafficking risks. Border restrictions mean that traffickers are resorting to even more dangerous transport routes and methods, and trafficked persons are often forced to work in close and unsanitary conditions which put them at greater risk of infection. In this context, empowering survivors and hearing their voices has never been so important.

As the only global intergovernmental organisation exclusively devoted to promoting the rule of law to advance peace and sustainable development, IDLO is committed to contributing to the fight against the scourge of human trafficking. A people-centred approach is essential to ensuring that institutional responses are effective, flexible, and grounded in humanity.

For instance, IDLO has been working in Liberia to build the capacity of law enforcement officers and other stakeholders across the justice chain to effectively address human trafficking cases since 2015. In partnership with the United States Department of State, we supported the Liberian Anti-Trafficking Taskforce to develop its 2019-2023 National Action Plan on Trafficking in Persons. We have also supported the Government of Liberia to establish case monitoring and develop training curricula for justice-sector officials. IDLO's programme also seeks to enhance public awareness of trafficking through community-based initiatives.

Globally, IDLO is committed to strengthening its partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to harness the rule of law as a tool for combatting trafficking and promote greater compliance with the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons.

It is essential that we redouble our efforts to combat this crime and support its victims. IDLO will continue to assist governments, organisations, and survivors to strengthen systems to combat trafficking in persons and ensure access to justice for all.