

STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LAW ORGANIZATION

REVIEW OF SDG IMPLEMENTATION AND INTERACTIONS AMONG GOALS: SDG 16 – PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

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Delivered by Ms. Irene Khan, Director-General, IDLO

Mr. Chairperson
President Chinchilla,
Excellencies, distinguished delegates,
panelists and discussants,
Ladies and gentlemen,

As Director-General of IDLO, the world's only inter-governmental organization exclusively devoted to advancing the rule of law and sustainable development, I am honored to moderate this first HLPF review of SDG 16.

A lot of preparation has gone into this review, including a Global Conference co-organized by UN DESA, IDLO and the government of Italy in Rome on 27-29 May, which brought together over 300 participants – ranging from Government Ministers and Chief Justices to civil society leaders and youth representatives. As co-organizer of the preparatory meeting, allow me to say a few words about what we heard from that multi-stakeholder gathering.

We heard about the excitement, enthusiasm and commitment to SDG 16 at all levels.

But we also heard about barriers and obstacles, and concern that progress is slow and uneven, and even retrogressing in some areas.

Recent reports show that almost half the world's population has no meaningful access to justice. Millions of people do not have enough confidence in the police or courts to report violent crime or seek redress for land, family or commercial disputes. Perception surveys show high levels of corruption eroding public trust in institutions, undermining public services and holding back social and economic development.

The challenges are universal, not confined to any particular country or region.

Given the cross-cutting nature of Goal 16, the failure to make significant progress on this Goal could retard progress on other Goals. Conversely, pressing ahead on SDG 16 means better results across the whole Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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 (SDG4).

That is a powerful imperative for accelerating implementation of SDG 16.

The preparatory conference in Rome made some important and insightful recommendations, including:

- 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, in other words, taking an integrated “whole of society approach” as well as “whole of government” approach.

As an organization that supports justice and development programs in countries across the world, we know that just as there are challenges, there are also remarkable stories of successful implementation and innovation that need to be scaled up, and from which there is much to be learned.

I will now ask our resource persons to highlight some of the successful reforms, actions and strategies that they have initiated to make us better understand the opportunities as well as challenges, but most of all, to enthuse us all to do more and better.

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.