

**Pakistan's statement at the General Debate of the
Meeting of the Assembly of Parties of IDLO
23 November 2015**

Mr. Chairman,

Director General (Irene Khan),

Ambassadors,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would begin by thanking Foreign Minister Paolo Gentiloni for his opening address. Our thanks also to Director General Irene Khan for her report.

We are proud to speak today as a full member of IDLO.

We acknowledge and appreciate the work done by IDLO for advocating the centrality of the rule of law in laying the foundations for sustainable economic and social development.

The Organization is making an important contribution to strengthening the capacity of judicial institutions in a number of developing countries.

We particularly appreciate the fact, that despite its small size and limited resources, IDLO is carrying out crucial capacity building activities, in several countries in our region in extremely challenging circumstances. This work will contribute to the establishment of rule of law in those societies.

It is heartening to note that IDLO's programme portfolio has seen a significant growth from 81.5 million euro in 2014 to an estimated 91 million euro in 2015.

IDLO's advocacy at the UN was important for the inclusion of an access to justice goal in the 2030 Agenda.

Strengthening the rule of law and providing access to justice is an essential prerequisite for promoting socio-economic progress and sustainable development.

This year's report of the UN Secretary General for the agenda item "Rule of Law at the national and international levels" rightly notes that the rule of law is a common thread that runs through peace and security, development and human rights.

The essence of the rule of law is access to justice; and the essence of access to justice is legal empowerment of people so that they can enjoy their full civil, political, social, economic, and cultural rights.

Investing in rule of law of societies that are facing challenges is actually a saving in the long run, as the international community would not have to deal with the long-term consequences of breakdown of rule of law.

Over the years, Pakistan has made serious efforts to make our judicial system more accessible and responsive. Our priorities on the rule of law include access to speedy and inexpensive justice, having a culture of accountability, and elimination of corruption.

We are also focusing on developing new laws, strengthening and expanding the network of judicial institutions, increasing the number of judicial officers and building the capacity of police, prosecutors and judges. The Government is envisaging procedures to reduce the need for the public to resort to courts for matters such as obtaining succession certificates etc. This will allow the courts to focus on essential cases.

In recent times, our superior courts have asserted their independence by ensuring accountability of state institutions and functionaries as well as improving structures of the lower courts to enhance access to justice to the common man and curb corruption.

The provincial governments have also undertaken initiatives to enhance efficiency and build capacity of relevant institutions for improving access to justice. One such initiative is the establishment of Punjab Criminal Prosecution Service (PCPS) by the Government of the Punjab Province with technical assistance of our international partners.

We look forward to continued support from our international partners in our endeavors to implement rule of law and provide access to justice.

Despite being a non-member country, Pakistan benefited from IDLO through its capacity building activities. More than 100 of our professionals, both in the government and private sector have so far attended training programmes organized by IDLO both in Rome and Pakistan. These individuals are now contributing to the development of Pakistan.

Director General Irene Khan visited Pakistan during 2015. During the visit she had interactions with important stakeholders dealing with rule of law. We look forward to continued cooperation and strengthen our relations with IDLO.

By becoming a member of IDLO, we hope to not only benefit from the Organization but also contribute to its activities and decision-making.

In conclusion, I would wish the Organization success in its activities in the year 2016.

I thank you.