

## **Meeting of the IDLO Assembly of Parties**

**23-24 November 2015**

### **President of the UN General Assembly/delivered by A. Sousa**

*Transcribed as delivered*

Thank you very much Mr. President, Madam Director-General, Excellences, distinguished guests and delegates, ladies and gentlemen. It is my pleasure to extend to you the greetings and this message from the President of the General Assembly of the United Nations. On his behalf I wish to thank you for the invitation to attend IDLO's Assembly of Parties and your interactive debate on the rule of law and the 2030 agenda, the role I have. I look forward to the discussion and I am sure that they will be rich and engaging helping all us to gain deeper understanding of this important topic. In September, when we adopted the 2030 agenda, world leaders across the (unknown) they agreed to what president President Lykketoft calls a revolutionary framework through which to improve the lives of people around the world and the health and vitality of this planet. What is it that it makes revolutionary after all it is nearly voluntary. It contains, as you know very well, 169 targets and multiple sub-objectives within those targets. Its follow up is somewhat vague and commitments made to implement the goals and to conduct reviews of implementation are now relatively not that strong. In my view, there are four features all of which are essential to the agenda and central to how we understand the role of rule of law in this agenda. First, the agenda is both comprehensive and integrated. Doing away with the false dichotomy between poverty eradication and climate action. Also, gone are the days where we see health outcomes as separate from productive employment; or climate outcomes as separate from sustainable agriculture and food security. Gone is the false separation of poverty from inequality, or of social development from economic development. I am going to ease the false distinction between development and sustainable development. This is a real breakthrough in terms of what we are telling our citizens, the private sector, policy makers and others about the

change that is needed. Second, as many of you know, the Agenda was prepared through the most inclusive and thorough deliberative process that the UN has seen in seventy years. Governments have ownership of this Agenda and civil society, international organizations, and citizens across the world help to shape its focus through direct and indirect participation. This really does argue well for implementation. Third, this is a universal agenda. The members shall recognize the old separation of North and South is no longer valid. Developed countries themselves are faced with many difficulties and challenges as everyone does. And the category of developing countries contains an arrange of nations, each facing very different challenges. Finally this agenda does away with the idea that governance, human rights, access to justice and the rule of law were somehow not quite part of sustainable development. Goal 16, of course, is a primary example of this, but the same can be said across the goals that demand universal access or gender equality or non-discrimination or an end to trafficking, other labor standards, or better waste, water and chemical management. This too can be a major game changer. Now, however, we need to face the even more daunting task of transporting this revolutionary agenda into action in the ground. This is a major priority of President Lykketoft during this anniversary 70th session. To do so, member states must begin to integrate the new agenda into national plans and the UN system must get itself ready to assist member states to the maximum. Implementation of this agenda however, will also require action from other international organizations, civil society, the non-governmental community, the private sector, and others. IDLO as the organization with a joint focus on the rule of law and development and with the communal leadership I recognize experience, is an unparalleled position to continue as it has done in the past and during this process, to support other actors both at the international level and nationally on the steps of action required to make these goals realities. This has already been shown today on the presentation of your report, madam Director-General, when you and your colleagues shared with us the richness and the variety of fields, countries, and institutions with whom you work daily. Also, the opportunity that you and other institutions are providing for the engagement of different stakeholders on a constructed and focused debate on the road ahead have to be commended. But we need to think about what exactly each actor can bring to the table. For instance, governments are now committed to

strengthening the rule of law, access to justice, building more inclusive and effective institutions. But how then can different actors support them to achieve this goal? Working this area has been (Unknown) focused on the best practices but has a struggle to provide a strong evidence of (unknown) we work. The question is how do we move beyond these challenges. Furthermore it is crucial that we look at the rule of law and access to justice as prerequisites for protecting workers, reducing inequalities, improving environmental standards, protecting oceans, etc. How do we change the narrative around governance and the rule of law so that they are not just seen as challenges for (Unknown) but instead that they become during this framework of Agenda 2030 a chief tool for each and every government. These are the kinds of questions that President Lykketoft high-level thematic debate will ask in July of 2016 that will revolve precisely around human rights with a particular focus on governance and the rule of law. We look forward to the participation and engagement of all the actors. I thank you very much, Mr. President.