

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

**23-24 November 2015**

### **Ms. M Wierda / The Netherlands**

*Transcribed as delivered*

Thank you very much and it's a pleasure to be here and to share some thoughts with you. I will be speaking briefly, very briefly about the challenge because I think we have had quite some discussion now on the challenge, but then I will focus my remarks also on what the Netherlands is doing as a donor as a way to perhaps inspire conversation about what donors generally can do, and then I would also like to discuss what IDLO can do, so in terms of the challenge actually to take a slightly more positive note, our Minister put an Op-Ed in the Guardian last week. It was referred to yesterday, but in it she comments, in fact, we are winning the fight against poverty. She said, "in 1981, 15% of the world's population suffered extreme poverty, but comments that now actually the number's 10% but she warns that by 2025, 80% of all of these will be in conflict affected states and therefore, she warns against this issue of creating ghettos of poverty in terms of poverty being more difficult to reach because states are ridden by conflict and are facing conflict challenges. This is a dilemma IDLO knows all too well because in fact in many of these societies the law is out of reach or alternatively it's used by to exclude many on behalf of the benefit of just a few people. In many societies we see rule by law rather than rule of law and what can protect us against this situation it's in fact goal 16, the building of sound and legitimate institutions and justice systems which act as an immunity and what gets us to that state it's development. I think that this is a global challenge very much and I should say that the current challenges that we face in countries like mine that come out of terrorism and that come out of mass migration there are as likely to make Goal 16 very challenging for us to implement as there are in many countries that are themselves affected by conflict. So, I think we are united in our quest for solution to these issues. Then, the role of the Netherlands, and first specifically of course we did certain things to lobby for and advocate

for the adoption of Goal 16 and we also organized an expert workshop on this very important issue of monitoring and implementation and measurement, but I think what might interest you more is that within our development assistance security and rule of law is one of just four areas of concentration and we seek to partner and with other governments, but also with a wide variety of other partners, we have strategic partnerships with civil society organizations that account for 25% of our development budget and indeed we want to be creative and innovative in the kinds of partnerships we undergo. In also our security and rule of law assistance we ourselves internally developed what we called a theory of change and the theory of change that we have I think is very complementary with Goal 16. We really, conceived of the relationship between citizen and state as a social contract and this lead us to a very citizen based view and perspective of for instance the rule of law. And for this issue we then look at concretely at how can people achieve their rights and in some situations indeed it pushed us to look at for instance giving support to informal justice that could far more accessible to wide ranges of people or individuals than formal justice systems. It also pushed us to do things like perception surveys to measure trust in the judiciary and also a very important element for us all of this is for instance a transitional justice. How do societies come to terms with legacies of human rights violations that continue to send them into cycles or spirals of conflict and these are all priorities for us and I'm sure they are priorities that we share with many of you. So, what could be the role for IDLO and I think obviously IDLO is an organization as was commented by other supportive states such as Italy and the United States. IDLO has a niche. It really has a niche in this area and therefore we do think IDLO will be a thought leader in the development of Goal 16. We see two specific areas. The first is because Goal 16 will require political will on behalf of all states, IDLO can help to build that political will by serving as an institution that sets standards across nations but at the same time also being very context sensitive. Secondly, and I will finish with this, we see really also a role for IDLO in facilitating exchange between states. IDLO itself has a wide experience and we think it's well placed to get states together to talk about best practices and to exchange experiences in these crucial areas, institution building, access to justice, and legal innovation, but in order to achieve this we believe IDLO should be a repository of knowledge. It should build its internal knowledge. It should not act purely as a conduit, but

it itself should be this repository that can help all of us in our achievement towards Goal  
16. Thank you very much.