

Ambassador David Lane's Remarks
to the IDLO Assembly of Parties
Interactive Debate "The Rule of Law and the 2030 Agenda: The Road Ahead"
November 24, 2015, Rome, Italy at 1000h

It is my pleasure to join you today to discuss rule of law and justice as they relate to this year's leading development topic – the 2030 Agenda's Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs. The United States cannot stress enough the importance of justice sector development and the promotion of the rule of law as necessary prerequisites for achieving these goals.

The Sustainable Development Goals are truly universal and all inclusive and the United States views the 2030 Agenda's goals not as a menu from which we can select at random. Rather, these 17 goals frame our whole challenge and we must collectively support all of them.

Aside from the crosscutting importance of justice and rule of law, the United States is very pleased that a standalone goal, Goal 16, was included in the final 2030 Agenda. In working together toward achieving this goal and finding ways to ensure that effective governments are serious about its implementation, we mustn't forget the resistance we faced in advocating for a goal on advancing peace and good governance and the ambivalence and opposition that some governments still show toward these crucial concepts.

Having just finalized negotiations on the 2030 Agenda two months ago, the United States, like many other stakeholders, is still very much in the early stages of determining how to implement this wide-ranging agenda.

The United States' commitment to achieving Goal 16 is evident in our sustained support for IDLO's technical programs aimed at strengthening rule of law and justice. As we mentioned yesterday, we currently support IDLO's projects in Asia, East and West Africa, Central Asia, Eastern Europe and Central America. Afghanistan. This investment is a testament to our commitment to achieving Goal 16 and our belief that IDLO has a key role to play in how we get there.

In a September event leading up to the SDG summit, the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Power, spoke of the overwhelming evidence linking peace, justice, and good

governance with sustainable development. She noted that while studies show that conflict, violence, and impunity exacerbate poverty, democracies are less likely to go to war and are less corrupt.

As DG Khan so eloquently stated shortly thereafter at the Global Summit, “Without access to justice and the rule of law, development cannot flourish, investment will not take root, the planet cannot survive, the poor cannot overcome poverty, and women cannot fight discrimination.”

I will close with several questions that I think will be helpful to keep in mind as we continue our discussions today.

The first is how we can best integrate rule of law as a cross cutting issue? In many ways, the justice sector, and expanding access to it for the poor and marginalized, is an important foundation for sustainable development. No goal should be pursued single-mindedly and in isolation.

Permanently ending extreme poverty will require inclusive economic growth; promoting peaceful societies and accountable institutions; empowering women and girls; ensuring environmental sustainability; and harnessing the power of science, technology, innovation, and data. There are all areas where IDLO can make a difference.

The second is the concept of inclusivity. The multiyear effort to craft the 2030 Agenda was unprecedented in its inclusivity, including more than a hundred in-country dialogues that engaged citizens and civil society. As IDLO moves forward in its role in implementing Goal 16 we would like to know its plan for reaching out to important stakeholders, including those in government, civil society, and the often-overlooked private sector.