
**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY
THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE OF ITALY,
BENEDETTO DELLA VEDOVA
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Rome, Italy

Excellencies,

Director-General,

It is a great pleasure for me to address you on behalf of the Italian Government at the opening of this annual Assembly of Parties of the International Development Law Organization. It is a privilege indeed to participate in this opening along with such distinguished and inspiring high level representatives of diplomatic missions.

IDLO is today the only intergovernmental organization wholly devoted to advancing the rule of law worldwide, a topic of growing importance if we really want to give every person a chance to live in inclusive, pluralistic societies where all are enabled to contribute to progress and can equally share its benefits.

That is why Italy is proud to be the host country and a longtime supporter of an Organization whose mandate aims at addressing the root causes that can thwart social inclusion, justice, human rights and rule of law, peace, security, education and health (at a much lower cost than curing the negative effects!). All these issues prove that development is not just economic growth or improved statistics, but it concerns the protection of the most vulnerable against violence and discrimination. Not only must we “leave no one behind”: we have to work and guarantee the wellbeing and the quality of life of “those most at risk”. I mean disadvantaged people as the unemployed youth, the migrants, women and children in context of crisis and the disabled, since equity and equal chances are key components of an authentic progress.

I applaud the renewed emphasis that IDLO’s strategic plan places on human rights, on the rights of women and minorities, on access to justice and on legal empowerment as an integral part of its mission to advance the rule of law. As a matter of fact, by assisting countries emerging from conflicts to rebuild or reform their justice systems or in advising governments on regulations to enhance economic opportunities and to guarantee a more equitable access to land for women and indigenous people, IDLO shares one of the main priorities of the Italian approach to the post-2015 Agenda.

Of course, the promotion of good governance is part of the global effort to allow more equitable societies by “creating a culture of justice”, that indeed we all, individually and collectively, as governments and as citizens, should seek to advance.

The rule of law needs to have universal coverage, recognizing national ownership and common responsibilities: it is of utmost importance that at the end of the post 2015 negotiating process we can have a new UN agenda that contains all the key elements to properly guide the International community towards attaining a sustainable development: Italy believes that the rule of law is a natural component of this future agenda. Though knowing that views vary in New York, Italy has already voiced this idea during the ongoing discussions. We continue to believe that the possibility of a specific goal on “good governance and rule of law” would be an important value added.

We are also strongly convinced that gender equality and the elimination of violence against women and of domestic violence are crucial, as expressed in the Istanbul Convention.

In this context, the work of IDLO is necessary to build the confidence of people in the laws and in the state institutions that are meant to protect them and serve their needs. This is a long term process that requires dedication, a careful examination with the sharing of best practices and of success stories and the engagement of all.

One component of life which relates to confidence building towards domestic Institutions is the freedom of religion or belief. As you all know, Italy is thoroughly committed to guarantee this human right. That is why the Government of Italy has totally financed IDLO to run a project aiming at generating original knowledge on domestic legal frameworks on freedom of religion and belief, supporting enhanced dialogue on the legal aspects surrounding the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief at the domestic level. Through the publication and launch of a global report on domestic legal frameworks on the right to freedom of religion or belief, IDLO highlighted both good practices and challenges in the domestic legal protection and promotion of the right to freedom of religion or belief, with a view to enhancing dialogue and strengthening religious tolerance.

Just before concluding, I would also like to stress the importance that the Italian Government places on the work that IDLO is committed to accrue in order to strengthen the legal Institutions responsible for managing economic opportunities in their countries, bearing in mind that it will be necessary for the private sector to take accountability and transparency commitments. Businesses need to be re-oriented towards actions that also contribute to eradicating poverty, inequalities, unstable and non-decent employment and ecosystems degradation, also through corporate social responsibilities operations.

Now, I want to close my intervention by reminding that all of us who chose to be Parts of this Assembly are also responsible for contributing to ensure that the Organization is up to this important challenge, not only year by year but in the long haul. Italy will continue to do its part. The out-going President, which I warmly thank for his precious contribution, has been untiring in calling for stronger, flexible support by all members, seeking for multi-year funding agreements (for which I wish I can soon congratulate the Swedish Government), according to the capacity of each Member, in order to enable this organization beyond the specific technical cooperation projects in which it is engaged, to do the analytical and advocacy work and the exploration of good practices and innovative programs that are necessary for IDLO to make a truly distinct contribution to the construction of a new and, so sorely needed, "culture of justice".

Thank you for your attention.

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.