

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LAW ORGANIZATION
STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL, MS JAN BEAGLE

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL TO THE ASSEMBLY OF PARTIES

Tuesday, 24 November 2020

Madam President,
Excellencies,
Friends and colleagues,

I would like to start by expressing my gratitude to H.E. Vice Minister Del Re for her opening remarks, as well as for her steadfast support to IDLO.

It is a great pleasure to address my first meeting of the Assembly, since this body entrusted me with the stewardship of IDLO last November.

Indeed, 2020 has been a year of 'firsts' for us all, the format of this meeting is no exception.

To delegates and friends connecting virtually from around the world, thank you for your participation.

While the current situation prevents us from being together in person today, I am grateful for the ongoing support I have received from IDLO's Member Parties and partners.

I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, for your able leadership and constant commitment to IDLO's mandate, and to thank you personally for your help and encouragement to me during my first year as Director-General.

I also want to express my appreciation to our Vice Chairs – Italy and Mozambique – as well as to the members of the Standing Committee and the Audit and Finance Committee, for their time, and guidance to IDLO.

Finally, I want to thank my IDLO colleagues around the world for their hard work, innovation, and resilience during an incredibly challenging year.

None of the achievements in this report would have been possible without their incredible dedication to IDLO and its mission.

Having spent most of my career as a national diplomat and an international civil servant, what first attracted me to IDLO was its specialised mandate to promote the rule of law, access to justice and human rights – a mandate that can really make a difference.

I firmly believe that IDLO can leverage its country level experience, multi-stakeholder convening power, thought leadership, and flexibility to respond to evolving situations, to make a tangible contribution to the global response to COVID-19, and to the Decade of Action to achieve the SDGs.

Since taking office, my objective has been to orient the Organisation towards these goals, building on the strong foundation laid by my predecessor.

The events of this profoundly disruptive year have only reinforced my determination.

The world was ill prepared for COVID-19, which in a short period of time has transformed life as we know it.

The pandemic has exposed, and in turn been aggravated by, the fragility and inequality to which no country, irrespective of its stage of development, is immune.

In many places it has further narrowed the already-shrinking public space for consultation and inclusive decision-making and contributed to violations of human rights.

And everywhere, the most profound impact has been on the most vulnerable members of society, compounding conditions of poverty, injustice, and insecurity.

As we begin the Decade of Action, we are witnessing the first aggregate decline in human development since 1990, as the pandemic threatens to reverse hard-won advances towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

IDLO firmly believes that a rule of law-based response is critical to successfully managing the crisis:

- By protecting the human rights of the least powerful, and giving them a voice in the debate;
- By enabling decision makers to balance competing interests fairly and transparently; and
- By increasing their ability to act decisively through effective laws and institutions.

It is also key to tackling underlying challenges like conflict, inequality, and lack of trust that have left the world vulnerable to shocks like COVID-19, and to laying the foundations for a just, inclusive and sustainable recovery.

Over the past year, my colleagues and I have devoted much of our attention to IDLO's response to the crisis, focusing on the following central objectives:

- Ensuring mission continuity while protecting the health and well-being of staff;
- Contributing to the global response to the pandemic, and to the Decade of Action, in line with our mandate, resources, and comparative advantages; and
- Developing a forward-looking Strategic Plan for the next four years through a broad consultative process.

Despite an unpredictable and challenging year, we have succeeded in making significant advances on each of these priorities.

As you will see in my report, throughout our work this year I have emphasised the core principles of inclusion, integration, and innovation.

These principles will continue to be central to IDLO's approach in our new strategic cycle.

Ensuring Mission Continuity

Our foremost priority this year was to protect the health and well-being of colleagues, while continuing to carry out IDLO's critical work around the world.

As the scope of COVID-19 became apparent, I acted quickly to establish a Crisis Management Team to ensure situational awareness and timely crisis response.

Business Continuity Plans were developed for all offices and we took precautionary steps, including instituting teleworking and minimising in-person contact.

These measures continue to be adjusted and updated on an ongoing basis in response to new developments.

All offices have developed 'return to office' plans, taking into account local contexts and guidance from host governments.

Gradual returns to offices where conditions allow have been accompanied by constant monitoring, flexibility, and adjustments where needed.

At the same time, colleagues around the world have adapted their work to the current context and continue to deliver on IDLO's mandate in some of the most complex and challenging working environments, challenges which have only expanded with the spread of the pandemic.

Contributing to the Global Response to COVID-19

Despite restrictions in almost all countries of operation, IDLO responded quickly to emerging needs by leveraging programmatic and policy expertise, and drawing on our ability to mobilise multi-stakeholder coalitions.

This could not have been accomplished without our longstanding international and in-country networks, and relationships of trust with key national partners.

IDLO's contribution to the global response to COVID-19 has focused on three strategic areas essential for a rule of law-based response to the pandemic:

- Promoting enabling legal and policy frameworks;
- Mitigating the impact of the crisis on justice systems and justice seekers; and
- Advocating for continued investment in a culture of justice.

Promoting enabling legal and policy frameworks

IDLO has supported governments through policy advice and implementation support.

At a time when policymakers are faced with an unprecedented and daunting set of policy choices and trade-offs, IDLO's Policy Brief on *Rule of Law and COVID-19* identifies eight specific actions to mitigate the current crisis, protect those most vulnerable, and promote a just, inclusive and sustainable recovery.

We have developed two innovative projects that build on IDLO's expertise and comparative advantages to help countries strengthen their response to COVID-19.

The first, implemented in collaboration with FAO, seeks to enhance food security by assessing the impact of emergency measures on access to food, especially for vulnerable groups, and to help identify policy and legal solutions.

This approach is currently being piloted in Honduras and Uganda and is an important step in strengthening the partnership between IDLO and FAO and in advancing IDLO's growing relationship with fellow Rome-based Agencies.

The second project, developed in partnership with WHO, supports countries to strengthen their legal and policy frameworks to manage public health emergencies such as COVID-19, through a participatory, nationally owned approach.

It builds on IDLO's longstanding expertise and thought leadership at the intersection of the rule of law, public health, and sustainable development, including our recent work to support developing countries to adopt fiscal and regulatory measures to tackle non-communicable diseases.

As part of our efforts to contribute this expertise to the global response, IDLO has joined the COVID-19 Law Lab along with WHO, UNDP, UNAIDS, the IPU, and the O'Neill Institute of National and Global Health Law.

We are currently in discussions to provide legal advice and support to help advance equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines in low- and middle-income countries when, hopefully, they become available next year.

We will hear more from Dr. Tedros, on the link between the rule of law and public health, during the thematic discussion this afternoon.

Promoting inclusive economic development

IDLO's work to promote inclusive economic development has acquired renewed relevance and urgency in the context of the massive economic crisis created by COVID-19.

Working in partnership with the European Union, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, and the United Nations High Representative for Least Developed Countries, we have supported governments to address the economic fallout from the crisis.

Over the past year, we have worked in Armenia, the Bahamas, Jordan, Kenya, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Tunisia, Ukraine and the West Bank and Gaza to strengthen legal capacity on commercial and economic law.

Our efforts focused on legal aspects of issues such as insolvency, antitrust, public procurement, and dispute resolution, that are especially relevant in the context of COVID-19.

We also prioritised support to least developed countries, whose economies have been particularly hard hit by the pandemic.

Our Investment Support Programme provides advice and capacity-building support to Least Developed Countries on investment-related matters at no cost to beneficiaries.

Under the programme, IDLO-supported experts recently assisted the Government of The Gambia in negotiating a favourable settlement in an international arbitration case related to off-shore petroleum licensing.

We are developing new initiatives under the programme in Malawi, Ethiopia, and Liberia.

Mitigating the Impact of the Crisis on Justice Systems and Justice Seekers

Our second strategic priority is mitigating the impact of the crisis on justice systems and justice seekers.

Promoting access to justice for those most at risk

We are working to ensure that the most vulnerable members of society are aware of their rights and remedies, at a time when the ability to access services and the fair distribution of public resources can make a difference between life and death.

In Afghanistan, for example, we have been monitoring the impact of the pandemic on prisoners and working to ensure that those eligible under the Government's early release scheme receive legal aid.

We have also been assisting the Afghanistan Shelter Network to help women who need safe spaces.

In Honduras, IDLO is working to address challenges arising from COVID-19 in prisons, and to protect children's and adolescents' rights, with an emphasis on preventing infection of at-risk street children.

IDLO has continued its work to help Liberia improve its response to trafficking in persons, by enhancing the capacity of police and other law enforcement agencies.

Recognising recent progress, the US State Department's annual Trafficking in Persons Report upgraded Liberia one tier this year.

We have also made innovative use of social media to promote legal awareness. A good example is Myanmar where many rely on Facebook as their primary source of information.

IDLO used the broad reach of the Rule of Law Centres Facebook page to launch several social media campaigns with a special focus on rights and remedies available during lockdown.

Following the conclusion of our Host Country Agreement with Uganda, we started implementation of a Community Justice Programme, to increase grassroots access to legal aid, information, and justice services, with an emphasis on access to digital platforms.

Combatting gender-based violence

Restrictions on movement, increased stress, the disruption of protective networks, and decreased access to services as a result of the pandemic have all contributed to a rise in the number of cases of violence against women and girls over the past year.

In response, IDLO has adapted its programming on combatting gender-based violence to address the increased demand for support and services.

Our work aims to enhance the gender sensitivity of justice institutions to GBV response and recovery efforts; support survivors in seeking legal redress; and promote GBV prevention and elimination in legal and policy frameworks enacted in the context of COVID-19.

In Mongolia, we are providing Personal Protective Equipment to enable shelters and one-stop service centres to remain operational at this critical time and have developed handbooks for service providers on legal advice and assistance to survivors of domestic violence.

In Somalia, IDLO is working with Attorney-General Offices in several Federal States to deliver a support package for logistical and operational capacity development in response to the country's recent increase in reported GBV cases.

In Tunisia, IDLO is helping to empower women to access justice at the local level and is improving the capacity of justice institutions to provide assistance.

In collaboration with the Tunisian Ministry of Social Affairs and civil society organisations, we supported the establishment of a legal aid centre for survivors and developed a procedural manual for women's shelters.

The manual was recently adopted by the Ministry of Women's Affairs to serve as an official guide for women's shelters around the country and will improve the quality of services and support nationwide.

Supporting justice institutions to deliver essential services

In addition to working to protect and empower those most at risk, IDLO is helping to enable justice institutions to carry out key functions remotely, at a time when restrictions on movement and assembly have limited physical access to courts.

For instance, IDLO supported the development and delivery of e-justice tools in Kenya, including transcription programmes, archive systems, and payment modules, to increase efficiency and ensure the continued provision of court services throughout the lockdown period.

Following successful pilots, we provided legal and technical support for their integration and adoption across the judiciary, including by the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals.

IDLO has also supported a wide range of e-justice initiatives in Kyrgyzstan, including improvements in court information systems and remote participation capacity in judicial proceedings.

In October, IDLO received the inaugural USAID Digital Project Award in recognition of this work.

We are similarly working with justice institutions in many partner countries, including Afghanistan, Indonesia, Mexico, the Philippines, Rwanda, and Yemen, to enable them to deliver essential justice services and uphold the rights of individuals.

As I noted in my remarks at the Meeting of Special Envoys for the Sahel organised by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the EU's Special Envoy for the Sahel last week, many root causes and drivers of conflict in the region, such as impunity, corruption, and human rights violations, stem from, or are exacerbated by, an absence of the rule of law.

In 2020, despite the operational challenges posed by the pandemic, IDLO successfully launched a major new programme in the Sahel.

Working with partners in the border area between Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, the programme aims to strengthen criminal justice chains, making them more transparent, accountable, and respectful of the rights of justice seekers.

Engaging customary and informal justice and alternative dispute resolution systems

At a time when justice systems are struggling to cope with increasing backlogs and limited access, customary and informal justice systems can play an important role.

But while they offer many advantages, these systems may also favour entrenched power inequalities and patriarchal values, and result in discriminatory outcomes for women and girls and young people.

IDLO's engagement seeks to ensure greater respect for the rights of individuals and consistency with internationally agreed human rights norms and standards.

In Somalia, for example, IDLO is supporting six Alternative Dispute Resolution centres, where community leaders can help resolve disputes through the customary *Xeer* system in line with national laws and international standards.

We have also continued to support the government to reintegrate low-risk former combatants back into their communities through rehabilitation, trainings, and traditional 'forgiveness ceremonies'.

IDLO is also implementing programmes to advance access to justice through Customary and Informal Justice Systems in Kenya, Uganda, and the Sahel.

IDLO's work at the country level is informed by, and contributes to, our original research in this field.

This year, we launched a brief on *Women and Customary and Informal Justice Systems*. The third publication in our series on engaging with customary and informal systems, the study identifies entry points for engagement and good practices for promoting gender equality in these contexts.

Advocating for Continued Investment and Support for the Rule of Law

Despite growing recognition of the importance of the rule of law to global goals on peace and development, political attention, and financial support for it have declined over recent years.

The pandemic is likely to reinforce this negative trend as governments focus on emergency measures and the toll of COVID-19 on the global economy is reflected in decreases in ODA and public sector budgets.

Advocating for continued support and investment in the rule of law and access to justice was a major priority for IDLO this year.

We intensified engagement using online dialogues, webinars, and other platforms; worked to mobilise multi-stakeholder coalitions to promote the rule of law; and produced several research and knowledge products to inform policy dialogue.

Over the past year, I had the opportunity to represent IDLO in several intergovernmental meetings, most notably the 75th session of the UN General Assembly and associated events.

My interventions in these meetings underlined the continued importance of multilateralism and the rule of law to global efforts to tackle the pandemic and to *Build Back Better*.

Another important priority at a time of growing authoritarianism and rights violations, is the symbiotic relationship between the rule of law and human rights.

I represented IDLO at the High-level Segment of the 43rd session of the Human Rights Council to emphasise the importance of the rule of law as a means to realise the full spectrum of human rights.

A key innovation in our advocacy work was the launch of a Crisis Governance Forum, a series of online dialogues on governance challenges related to COVID-19. It provides a platform to share insights and good practices among policymakers and other stakeholders, and has elicited significant interest.

IDLO's advocacy work on Justice for Women and Girls has also been intensified, highlighting the link between SDGs 5 and 16 as enablers and accelerators of women's empowerment, gender equality and sustainable development.

A key initiative this year was the publication of a report on *Justice for Women Amidst COVID-19*, in partnership with UN Women, UNDP, UNODC, the World Bank, Pathfinders, and The Elders.

The report provides a rapid assessment of major challenges to women's access to justice presented by COVID-19, and offers recommendations for mitigating its disproportionate impact on women and girls.

IDLO also partnered with International IDEA to host a panel discussion on the International Day of Democracy.

The event, co-sponsored by Sweden and Italy, highlighted the critical importance of the mutually reinforcing link between the rule of law, human rights, and democratic governance in tackling global challenges.

We also increased our advocacy engagement in several areas relevant to our next strategic cycle including climate justice, digital innovation, and financing for development.

During the year, IDLO organised several online events addressing the impact of the pandemic on justice institutions and justice seekers in our countries of operation.

We published a series of 'notes' from our field operations providing perspectives from our country offices on how justice systems have been affected, and their response to the crisis.

Partnerships and Outreach

A major priority for me in my first year has been expanding the scope of the Organisation's partnerships with the aim of positioning IDLO as a leading change agent in the field of rule of law and access to justice.

As an independent, mid-sized intergovernmental organisation, partnerships are a crucial way for IDLO to pool expertise and resources, enhance our convening power, and leverage our impact.

I have strengthened our outreach to Member Parties and partner countries, the United Nations system, parliamentarians, civil society, academia, the private sector, youth, and other partners.

Before COVID-19 made travel and in-person meetings impossible, I made it a priority to meet with as many representatives of IDLO Member Parties as possible, as well as other current and prospective partners.

I travelled to The Hague, Geneva, and New York to meet with key stakeholders in those locations. I intend to resume visits to all of our partners, and to country offices, as soon as circumstances allow.

In New York, I met with the executive heads of many of our United Nations partners including UN Women, UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA, as well as the heads of other United Nations political and peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian, and development entities.

In Geneva, I met with the Directors-General of UNOG, WHO, and WIPO, and the President of the Human Rights Council, among others.

Our Branch Office in The Netherlands allows us to engage with the peace and justice community in the Hague. I envisage it also as a hub for outreach to other partners in Europe, such as the European Union, UNODC and the OECD.

While the crisis has curtailed travel and physical meetings, I am pleased to have been able to hold many remote meetings with key stakeholders in all regions.

I place great value on strengthening our collaboration with regional organisations. In addition to pursuing a strategic partnership with the European Union, we have also developed plans to enhance our collaboration with the African Union and ASEAN.

We have also reinforced our engagement with other Rome-based organisations.

IDLO supports the COVID-19 Food Coalition initiative led by FAO and looks forward to contributing to it in line with our mandate.

We are liaising with IFAD to identify opportunities for collaboration on rural development and exploring partnership opportunities with WFP.

We participated in the UNIDROIT Governing Council and will look for areas of cooperation between our two organisations.

Recognising the importance of broadening and diversifying IDLO's resource base, we have worked to strengthen and expand our relationships with key donors in our sector.

Discussions have been initiated with senior representatives of both current and prospective donors and I hope to be able to visit donor capitals before too long.

IDLO's global network of Alumni can be a significant source of expertise and support for the Organisation and I have prioritised outreach to them. As part of these efforts we launched a new newsletter – "Alumni Voices" – featuring interviews with Alumni from around the world.

In order to introduce a more strategic approach to this aspect of the Organisation's work, I have established a Department of External Relations and Partnerships following a review of IDLO's external relations function. The Department will have responsibility for the planning, coordination, and implementation of IDLO's external relations agenda, including the development of partnerships and communications strategies, resource mobilisation, and support for governance.

This will be accompanied by a new central unit in my office, to assist me in consolidating strategy and policy planning, data and knowledge management, and organisational monitoring and reporting.

Strategic Plan

An important way in which we have engaged with our partners this year has been through the development of IDLO's new Strategic Plan.

The consultation process for the Plan was the broadest ever undertaken by IDLO and was an excellent opportunity to connect with our partners, raise IDLO's profile, and help advance important relationships, including with newer stakeholders like parliamentarians.

I was pleased to co-chair a global consultation of parliamentarians with the Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to seek their views.

Anchored in the 2030 Agenda, the Strategic Plan 2021-2024 is structured around two Strategic Goals and six Strategic Objectives, based on IDLO's commitment to people-centred justice and making the rule of law a driver of sustainable development.

The first Strategic Goal seeks to make justice systems more effective and responsive to people's needs and respectful of their human rights.

It builds on IDLO's traditional expertise in legal empowerment and access to justice, institutional strengthening and reforms, and addressing key justice barriers faced by women and girls.

The second Strategic Goal seeks to link IDLO's work more closely to the 2030 Agenda, through the lens of SDG 16.

Under this goal, IDLO will leverage the contribution of the rule of law to peace and sustainable development to promote inclusive economic development, climate justice, food security and sustainable use of natural resources, and healthy lives and well-being for all.

I will present the Strategic Plan in greater detail under the next agenda item.

Management

Turning to internal management, as we adapted to a new operational environment this year, we sought to achieve the highest standards of accountability and transparency and reinforce our own capacities by simplifying processes, updating and developing new policies, leveraging technology, and creating more innovative workplaces.

I hope that we can build on the lessons of the past year to develop smarter, greener, and more flexible ways of working.

As IDLO acted to enhance the technical capacities of justice institutions and service providers around the world, we also invested in digital innovations within the Organisation to improve communication and integration.

To promote more effective internal communication and greater cohesion, I introduced regular DG Updates for staff and all-staff Town Hall meetings, in which all of IDLO's 21 offices around the world participated.

These gatherings have become especially important given the travel restrictions currently in place in many countries where we operate.

Thanks to the migration of core ICT services to cloud-based platforms, IDLO staff have been able to rely on online services and maintain operations during long periods of teleworking.

These upgrades also facilitated the provision of a new online development programme for staff through webinars and an e-learning system.

Ensuring safety and security for IDLO colleagues has been my highest priority. In addition to the COVID-19 mitigation measures, we continue to closely monitor developments that can have an impact on our staff and operations everywhere we work, particularly in volatile security environments.

We have also placed an emphasis on concluding Host Country Agreements with our countries of operation and made significant progress - signing agreements with Burkina Faso, Mongolia, Niger, and Uganda this year.

A report on our efforts in this area is before the Assembly and will be discussed in detail under Agenda Item 4.

Turning to Financial Results, IDLO started 2020 in a sound financial position with healthy reserves and an Operational Fund, which gives us some confidence in navigating a fast-changing financial environment.

Thanks to organisational reforms, IDLO now has International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) compliant financial structures in place and has produced, for the first time, its 2019 financial statements in an IPSAS format.

To mitigate the impact of the global recession caused by COVID-19, we are actively minimising our financial exposure through prudent management of our low-risk investment portfolio.

The crisis has had an impact on our programme implementation rate and consequently on programme revenue, but thanks to adaptations and the hard work of colleagues around the world, we continue to be on track to meet our revenue targets for 2020, based on the approved budget.

IDLO recognises that we are working in a fast-evolving environment and has taken a conservative, but flexible approach, to the development of the 2021 Operational Budget.

Excellencies,

In conclusion, we are still in a period of profound and unprecedented uncertainty as COVID-19 dominates headlines and re-shapes aspects of daily life around the world.

The pandemic encountered a deeply divided and unequal world, beset by environmental crises, social inequality, conflict, disruptive innovation, and declining public trust.

By shining such an unforgiving light on our vulnerability and lack of preparedness, the pandemic has starkly revealed the need for renewed global solidarity.

As the UN Secretary-General said last weekend in addressing the G20, “to build an inclusive, resilient and sustainable post-COVID world ... we can only get there together, committed to an inclusive multilateralism based in international law and the values of the UN Charter.”

Societies that are more just, peaceful, and inclusive are also more resilient and better able to recover in the face of crises.

IDLO firmly believes that the rule of law is the surest means to build such societies, and everything we do is motivated by that simple truth.

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.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LAW ORGANIZATION

STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL, MS JAN BEAGLE

PRESENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN, MANAGEMENT PLAN, AND OPERATING BUDGET TO THE ASSEMBLY OF PARTIES

Tuesday, 24 November 2020

I am pleased to introduce IDLO's Strategic Plan 2021-2024, as well as our Management Plan for 2021-2022, and the Operating Budget for 2021.

IDLO has developed its Strategic Plan at a time of great disruption and in a fast-changing global environment.

Despite widespread acknowledgement of its crucial enabling role, there has been a sharp deterioration in several dimensions of the rule of law since the 2030 Agenda was adopted.

COVID-19 has the potential to aggravate these trends dramatically.

Putting justice and the rule of law at the heart of recovery efforts will enable policy makers to act quickly and effectively, while respecting rights, in laying the foundation for *Building Back Better*.

IDLO approached the development of its Strategic Plan 2021-2024 with the goal of turning challenges into opportunities. The plan is forward-looking and aims to promote people-centred justice and the rule of law to build more peaceful, inclusive, and resilient societies.

It balances prudence with ambition, by building on IDLO's strengths while investing in the Organisation's ability to contribute to new areas and capitalise on emerging opportunities.

With this overall objective, the Strategic Plan 2021-2024:

- Sets out IDLO's overall strategic direction for the next four years;
- Defines our contribution to global efforts to sustain peace and achieve sustainable development, in line with our mandate and comparative advantages; and
- Identifies areas where we need to invest and strengthen the Organisation.

IDLO has developed a two-year Management Plan for the first time to implement the first half of the Strategic Plan.

The Management Plan lays out efforts to develop a diverse and well-balanced portfolio of programmes, research, policy, and advocacy to maximise our contribution to peace and sustainable development, and the global COVID-19 response.

It also initiates priority reforms identified under the Strategic Plan to enable us to achieve these results.

The 2021 Operating Budget will implement the first year of the new Strategic Plan. It takes a cautious, but ambitious approach, in light of the rapidly evolving environment.

Consultations

The Strategic Plan was developed following the broadest consultation process ever undertaken by IDLO.

This included over 90 interviews and some 20 focus groups with key leaders and stakeholders in all regions. We also organised an online survey for our full range of stakeholders.

The consultations engaged our governing bodies and Member Parties, as well as a wide range of current and prospective partners shown in the slide.

We also consulted extensively within IDLO, through focus groups and surveys conducted with IDLO colleagues around the world.

Listening to our partners and conducting a learning review of our current Strategy allowed us to identify our main achievements and key challenges from the previous cycle and to learn from them.

Key Trends

IDLO's strategic environment over the course of the next strategic cycle will be shaped to a large extent by COVID-19. As we discussed earlier, the pandemic's impact on global development efforts has been devastating, exacerbating existing fragilities and inequalities, and reversing progress across many different dimensions.

I will not go over the key trends individually. Collectively they pose a significant threat to peace and sustainable development.

But in many ways, COVID-19 is a wake-up call, exposing global vulnerability and lack of preparedness for shocks and crises.

The 2030 Agenda, enabled by the rule of law, can promote renewed multilateralism and provide a framework for the international community to collaborate on shared challenges, build resilience to common threats, and chart a course for a more peaceful, just and sustainable future.

Our Plan is rooted, therefore, in the 2030 Agenda.

Comparative Advantages

In a crowded development sector with many actors working on similar issues, it is essential to prioritise our resources and focus our engagement where IDLO can bring added value through its mandate, programmes, research, and advocacy.

Our stakeholders identified the following as IDLO's comparative advantages:

- Our specialised mandate, legal expertise and thought leadership;
- IDLO's intergovernmental status and ability to contribute to global dialogue;
- Our extensive field presence and strong in-country networks;
- Our ability to work both "top-down" and "bottom-up";
- IDLO's experience working across different legal systems and operating in highly complex, fragile environments;

- Our convening power and ability to mobilise multi-stakeholder coalitions around key issues of global concern; and
- IDLO's flexibility and agility, offering a good return on investment to partners and donors.

Vision, Mission and Values

The development of the Strategic Plan was also an opportunity to refresh and refocus our vision, mission, and values.

Our vision is of a world in which every person lives in dignity and equality under the rule of law.

We will strive to achieve it by championing people-centred justice and promoting the rule of law to advance sustainable development and help build more peaceful, inclusive, and resilient societies.

Eight core values lie at the heart of our work. A commitment to principles such as human rights, sustainability, gender equality, and local ownership cuts across all that IDLO does.

Strategic Framework

The Strategic Plan 2021-2024 is based on our values and comparative advantages, and is anchored in the 2030 Agenda.

It structures IDLO's substantive work around two Strategic Goals and six Strategic Objectives, based on our commitment to putting people's needs at the centre of justice systems and making the rule of law a driver of sustainable development.

The first Strategic Goal focuses more on the traditional work we carry out on institution-building and strengthening justice systems.

The second Goal is about linking our work more closely to the 2030 Agenda and to new fields.

The Goals will be achieved through six Strategic Objectives.

We have also identified four Organizational Enablers to strengthen key aspects of our operations.

I will go through them in greater detail and highlight how we plan to advance these Strategic Objectives over the next two years, through the activities set out in the Management Plan.

Cross-Cutting Principles

I also want to highlight three cross-cutting principles that underpin all of our work.

Firstly, Inclusion: The principles of 'leaving no one behind' and 'reaching the furthest behind first' are central to where, and how, IDLO will engage.

IDLO will focus its efforts on those living in conditions of poverty, injustice, and inequality.

Our mandate and operations are global, and the Organisation will work with countries across the development spectrum. But we will prioritise efforts in fragile and conflict-affected settings, and in least-developed and developing countries.

Integration: We will work to promote more holistic, tailor-made approaches that best address specific justice, development, and human rights challenges, and meet the needs of justice seekers.

We will also strengthen the linkages among different aspects of our own work, ensuring that our programmes continue to benefit from, and inform, our policy, research, and advocacy.

Innovation: A rapidly-changing external environment requires us not just to take on new and evolving challenges, but also to reflect on, renew, and adapt our ways of working.

Over the course of the next strategic cycle, IDLO will prioritise innovation by being more evidence-driven, investing in new ideas and areas, and strengthening our ability to learn from both our successes and mistakes.

Goal 1: Justice Systems are More Effective and Responsive to People's Needs

Let me turn to the first Goal. The Strategic Plan is based on the concept of 'people-centred justice'. It is guided by the understanding that people around the world use diverse pathways to seek redress for wrongs and to resolve their disputes.

Through the Plan IDLO seeks to empower justice seekers and emphasises that justice systems must be built around a better understanding of people's needs.

People-centred justice prioritises reforms and innovations that will close the justice gap, lead to greater access and inclusion, and produce fairer and more satisfactory outcomes for the end user.

IDLO is committed to promoting more effective and responsive justice systems through three Strategic Objectives.

Strategic Objective 1: Empowering justice seekers

The first Strategic Objective seeks to empower justice seekers to claim their rights.

Legal empowerment is a 'bottom-up' approach to support justice seekers. It seeks to arm them with the knowledge and tools to engage with laws and institutions that affect their daily lives, from formal and informal justice actors to local government and social service providers.

IDLO works both directly and in partnership with civil society to promote rights awareness, legal literacy, legal aid, and other assistance and advisory services.

Under this Strategic Objective, we will work to support people to access justice and claim their rights through formal and informal pathways, including digital platforms.

As indicated in the Management Plan, over the next two years we will:

- Promote legal awareness and literacy and strengthen people's capacity to address priority local justice issues;
- Enhance the capacity of paralegals, civil society organisations, legal aid organisations and other service providers to deliver legal aid and services, and to improve the accountability of local government institutions;
- Strengthen the ability of customary and informal justice systems to uphold the human rights of justice seekers, resolve community-level disputes, and promote conflict resolution and social cohesion; and

- Promote inclusive processes to develop and implement policies to protect and support those at most risk, including women, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities.

Strategic Objective 2: Making laws and institutions work for people

Strategic Objective 2 is about making laws and institutions work for people. Assisting justice institutions to deliver essential services and uphold the human rights of justice seekers, particularly in countries experiencing or emerging from conflict and fragility, is the largest component of IDLO operations.

IDLO seeks to provide support that advances national priorities and is grounded in an understanding of the social, cultural, and political contexts where we work.

Over the next two years we will provide technical assistance to legislative, executive, and judicial bodies for legal and policy reforms.

We will work with justice institutions to help enable them to protect rights and deliver essential services, particularly in the context of justice challenges generated by COVID-19.

IDLO will collaborate with actors across the criminal justice chain to strengthen capacities and coordination and improve the administration of criminal justice.

A key priority will be measures to combat corruption, and to ensure greater transparency and integrity.

As the role of technology in the justice sector increases, we will work to promote more equitable digital innovation to increase efficiency and effectiveness, while keeping in mind the digital divide and promoting equitable access for those who would otherwise be at risk of being left behind.

Strategic Objective 3: Reducing the justice gap for women and girls

Justice for women is first and foremost a human right, reflected in international treaties and conventions.

Evidence also shows that investing in justice for women produces high returns in human development, economic growth, and peace.

IDLO will integrate gender equality throughout its work, complementing gender mainstreaming with focused interventions to address key justice challenges faced by women and girls.

We will support the repeal or reform of discriminatory laws and policies; strengthen the capacities to adopt gender-responsive legal and policy frameworks; and support the implementation of gender equality provisions of constitutions, laws and policies.

We will promote survivor-centric approaches to tackling gender-based violence (GBV) by strengthening coordination among service providers and improving the capacity and effectiveness of justice institutions to investigate, prosecute, and adjudicate offenses.

IDLO will address barriers to women's participation in the justice sector, including by engaging with international and national associations of women judges, providing technical support and capacity building programmes, and conducting national-level assessments on barriers and pathways.

We will also advocate for reducing the justice gap for women and girls at local, national, and international levels — including at the UN in New York and Geneva — with the support of our research.

Goal 2: Rule of Law Drives Peace and Sustainable Development

Turning to Goal 2, IDLO views SDG 16 and SDG 5 as a prism through which the rule of law can help drive and accelerate progress across the 2030 Agenda.

Many SDGs implicitly draw on the principles of inclusivity, equity, and non-discrimination, and require the creation of new regulatory and legal frameworks and institutional capacity for their implementation.

A relatively new element in IDLO's Strategic Plan 2021-2024 is the emphasis on the broader contribution of the rule of law to different dimensions of peace and sustainable development.

Our work under Strategic Goal 2 promotes this catalysing role in line with our mandate, resources, and comparative advantages.

We will focus on three priority areas where IDLO has relevant expertise and has identified entry points where it can add value.

Strategic Objective 4: Inclusive economic development

Firstly, inclusive economic development.

Clear and effective economic and commercial legal frameworks promote trade, investment, and economic growth. They provide stability and certainty, check coercive and predatory behaviour, and enhance competition.

The magnitude of the crisis has added a renewed sense of urgency and significance to our work on inclusive economic development.

We will:

- Support the development of laws and policies to promote inclusive economic recovery from COVID-19;
- Build judicial and legal capacity to enforce economic laws and resolve commercial disputes, including through alternative dispute resolution mechanisms such as mediation and arbitration;
- Enhance institutional capacity in developing, landlocked, and least developed countries (LDCs), including through support for LDCs to negotiate, implement and monitor international investment agreements; and
- Help to increase women and girls' ability to exercise their economic rights by identifying systemic barriers to access faced by women.

Strategic Objective 5: Climate justice and sustainable use of natural resources

Turning to Strategic Objective 5, climate change represents the single largest threat to sustainable development and has been identified by many as the most pressing challenge of our time.

It is recognised by the 2030 Agenda under SDG 13 (Climate Action) as a cross-cutting issue with disproportionate effects on vulnerable and marginalised people.

Climate change is a threat multiplier that disrupts livelihoods, especially in rural areas. It increases migration and displacement, and undermines state capacity to ensure human security.

It drives increased competition over land and natural resources, which exacerbates violence and conflict, particularly in fragile contexts.

IDLO will draw on its experience to address the rule of law dimension of climate change to:

- Develop a comprehensive strategy on climate justice;
- Support the development of policy and legal frameworks for environmental protection, adaptation, and mitigation measures related to climate change;
- Develop thematic programming on climate justice, food security, sustainable use of land and natural resources governance; and
- Support increased awareness of rural communities about land rights, especially for women and girls, and enhance delivery of legal services in rural areas.

Strategic Objective 6: Healthy lives and well-being for all

Strategic Objective 6 is about the contribution of the rule of law in promoting SDG 3.

At both global and local levels, the law is a powerful tool for advancing the right to health, including in the prevention and management of public health emergencies.

IDLO works at the intersection of health, sustainable development, and the rule of law.

Over the next two years, we will:

- Promote legal empowerment for vulnerable groups on issues related to the right to health, including through combined empowerment and social accountability initiatives to increase access to health services;
- Contribute through policy advocacy to the global commitment to accelerate Universal Health Coverage;
- Scale up efforts to support partner countries in developing national legal and policy frameworks to improve public health emergency preparedness, in line with human rights; and
- Strengthen implementation of the required laws and policy reforms to address non-communicable diseases.

Thematic and Geographic Focus in 2021

Thematically the three objectives of Strategic Goal 1 (legal empowerment, legal and institutional reform, and justice for women and girls) will comprise the majority of IDLO's programme portfolio in 2021.

The new Strategic Plan opens up promising new opportunities under Strategic Goal 2, where IDLO enjoys comparative advantages and has an established track record, but relatively limited programming to date.

Over the course of the next two years, we will invest in building up our work on inclusive economic development, climate justice, sustainable use of land and natural resources, food security, and health law.

In doing so, we will keep in mind our core competencies, expertise, and availability of resources, and draw on strengthened partnerships with the UN system.

Geographically, Africa will continue to be IDLO's largest region of operations, representing just over a third of our programme revenue.

We will continue efforts to diversify our presence globally and build up our operations in MENA where we remain relatively underrepresented.

Engagement with regional organisations such as the African Union, ASEAN, and the European Union will be a key part of our strategy.

Organizational Enablers

Achieving the goals of this Strategic Plan and delivering the high-quality results our partners expect require that IDLO's systems, processes, capacities, and resource base are robust, resilient and fit for purpose.

This is even more important in a rapidly-changing and increasingly competitive operating environment.

The first enabler is enhancing Innovation, Integration, and Impact.

Priorities will include adopting more integrated approaches and strengthening the links between our programmes, research, policy, and advocacy.

We will work to mainstream a human rights-based approach and gender equality.

An increased emphasis on data and improving our ability to monitor and report on results, including through the development of a Strategic Results and Resources Framework, will be a major priority.

As a specialised knowledge-based organisation, IDLO's staff are our most valuable resource.

Under Enabler 2 we will invest in staff development through an overarching human resources management strategy that emphasises organisational learning and aims to attract, develop, and retain a diverse, motivated, and talented workforce.

The third Enabler on improving systems and processes seeks to review and update our operating model in light of experience.

Our goal will be to leverage technology and adopt smarter, greener, and more flexible ways of working to ensure that IDLO is able to deliver the best possible quality and value for our partners.

We aim to streamline business processes, strengthen transparency and accountability, improve internal communications, and strengthen our ability to mitigate and manage risks.

As I mentioned in my report to the Assembly, I consider partnerships and collaboration to be key to IDLO's success.

Enabler 4 seeks to take a strategic approach to external relations by developing and implementing a comprehensive partnership strategy, with clear priorities and objectives for engagement with both current and new stakeholders.

We will work in a coordinated way to strengthen current and prospective partnerships and enhance our advocacy in support of the rule of law.

We will work to build funding partnerships with traditional and non-traditional donors including governments, private sector organisations, foundations, and other actors.

We will adopt a strategic approach to membership expansion to promote a balanced and representative growth in our membership, with a priority on countries with an active interest in our mandate and programming.

Gender Action Plan

IDLO will also adopt a cross-cutting Gender Action Plan, with a focus on achieving gender equality across the Organisation.

The objectives of the Plan will include:

- Promoting gender equality, particularly in senior positions;
- Mainstreaming a gender focus throughout IDLO's work; and
- Promoting increased organisational learning on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

Operating Budget

The 2021 Operating Budget has been prepared in a rapidly-evolving environment. It is a balanced budget.

Cognisant of the potential impact of COVID-19 on our operations, a cautious approach has been adopted when predicting IDLO's 2021 revenue.

Unrestricted revenue is estimated at the same level as 2020 while budgeted programme revenue (earmarked & restricted) reflects a 6% increase compared with the 2020 budget.

IDLO reprioritised the implementation of institutional projects in 2020 to focus on urgent needs resulting from the impact of COVID-19. As a result, and in line with its reserves policy, IDLO will carry forward the unspent funds from its 2020 approved budget for institutional projects to 2021. We are investing in strengthened internal capacities for strategy and policy coherence, adopting a more structured approach to external relations and partnerships, and improving human resources management.

This is reflected in a modest increase in employee costs.

Overall, the budget takes a prudent perspective, but also reflects IDLO's ambition to capitalise on emerging opportunities, respond to partners' needs, and introduce innovation which is geared towards increasing efficiency and effectiveness.

In conclusion, our new Strategy seeks to leverage IDLO's programmes, research, policy, and advocacy and reinforce our capacities with the goal of promoting people-centred justice and the rule of law's contribution to peace and sustainable development.

The Management Plan sets out an approach for the first two years of the new strategic cycle that is ambitious but realistic. It builds on current strengths, while preserving IDLO's ability to respond quickly and innovatively to emerging opportunities.

The 2021 Operating Budget demonstrates IDLO's conservative and flexible approach to budgeting and financial management in a challenging global environment.

Building a culture of justice requires time, effort, and sustained commitment. It is the best investment we can make in our collective future.

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.