

**INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LAW ORGANIZATION (IDLO) STATEMENT**  
**SHORT VERSION FOR INTERPRETERS**  
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Thank you, Mr. Chairman

for this opportunity to address the Committee under its agenda item on the rule of law at the national and international level. It is an opportunity that IDLO appreciates and seizes every year, since we regard sharing with UN Member States how our governing bodies' strategic directions and our operational work seek to support and advance the policy guidance provided by the General Assembly an integral, important part of the responsibilities that devolve on UN observer organizations.

Since we addressed this Committee last year, IDLO's Assembly of Parties last November adopted a new Strategic Plan for the organization for the next 4 years—our "Strategy 2020".

The resolution of our Assembly that mandated the Plan and directed it be geared to maximize the contribution that IDLO, within its mandate, can make to an effective and sustained implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

A large part of the wide-ranging consultations in which we engaged in developing the Plan and seeking advice in this first year of implementation, including the advice of many of the legal advisors represented in this Committee, focused on this basic objective.

The new Strategic Plan is built around two overarching themes: access to justice; and equality and inclusion.

The main thrust of the Plan is to address the underlying factors that make institutions and people vulnerable, impede socio-economic progress and its sustainability and, by perpetuating inequalities, gender violence and discrimination, social exclusion and marginalization, deprive

societies of crucial agents of development. In other words, a vision of the rule of law that seeks to advance the objectives of access to justice and of constructing peaceful, inclusive societies that is at the heart of SDG 16, but also approaches the rule of law as an enabler of progress across all the SDGs.

Policy development in the UN in the past several months—the Secretary General’s focus on prevention, the UN resolutions on sustaining peace—have served to further sharpen our vision, by helping us perceive and project rule of law advances towards empowerment and inclusion also as key agents to leverage the synergies among peace-building, the promotion of human rights, and sustainable development – synergies that are now rightly at the center of policy elaboration and reform efforts within the United Nations.

We are pursuing the new Plan and these policy directions while remaining faithful to the principles that have throughout guided our work: respect for the plurality and equal value of different legal systems; a focus on national implementation of international law and international norms; and capacity building and country ownership as a guiding tenet of our operational work.

Building on the orientations set out in our new Plan, our program portfolio as continued to expand during the year and it is becoming more geographically balanced and increasingly results focused. Currently we have <sup>some 59</sup> ~~over 30~~ projects under implementation and a total portfolio <sup>in 28 countries</sup> of some 100 million euro, allocated in ~~support of countries~~ to countries at different stages of development, but with a continuing focus on the provision of institutional support to countries emerging from conflict.

Meanwhile, IDLO's membership has been steadily growing from 18 Member Parties in 2008 to an anticipated 34 by the end of 2017. Honduras, Mongolia, Pakistan and Viet-Nam have recently joined the Organization and Mali, Montenegro and Sweden will become members next month during the annual meeting of the Assembly of Parties.

Last year we referred in our statement to the Conference that IDLO in cooperation with the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania and with the support of the Government of Italy, convened in Dar es Salam in June last year. This Conference has proved to be instrumental in imparting a new momentum to IDLO's activities in support of sustainable development in Africa, and, even more important, to generate synergy and mutual support among African countries in furthering access to justice and the rule of law in the Continent. An excellent example is the establishment of the African Centre of Excellence for Access to Justice, as part of the outcome of the multi stakeholders Conference held, with IDLO support, in Kigali last August to further collaboration and dialogue between the judiciary and community justice institutions in Africa.

A new initiative across regions, but devoted to addressing the special needs of the least developed countries that I would also like to highlight is the launch, a few days ago here at the UN, of an innovative Investment Support Program, conceived as a genuine public-private partnership of the type that the Deputy Secretary General strongly advocated at the opening of this debate. The Program - developed by the UN Office of the High Representative on Least Developed Countries, Landlocked and Small Island States in cooperation with IDLO and now entrusted to IDLO for implementation was presented last month at an high-level event during the ministerial week of the General Assembly. The program envisages the provision on demand

of legal services to LDCs in relation both to the negotiation of investment contracts or agreement and to investments related dispute resolution, drawing on a roster of legal firms and experts committed to partner with the program on a pro bono or reduced fee basis and provides for complementary training support and a focus on capacity building across all aspects of the program. The initiative was welcomed in the ministerial declaration of the LDCs adopted on the 22 September, the European Union has now pledged an initial 1 million euros in support of the launch of the Program, and a significant number of legal firms and experts world wide have already indicated their readiness to partner with the program.

I should add before concluding that IDLO's engagement with UN bodies in both NY and Geneva has continued to deepen during the year, as has our participation in the organization of many events at the UN. Let me cite an example. At the beginning of the year, IDLO participated in the 61st session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. Subsequently last July, IDLO and its partners presented a Joint Programme which aims to scale up current efforts to support women s access to justice in 16 countries in Asia and Africa.

IDLO also participated in a workshop on "Strengthening the Criminal Justice System in Peacebuilding" organized by the Permanent Mission of Japan to the UN.

The Director – General of IDLO for her part addressed for the first time this year the high level segment of the Human Rights Council in Geneva and was invited to participate in the discussions at the 2017 session of the High level Political Forum that focused on "Leveraging interlinkages for effective implementation of SDGs".

Let me end with three observations:

First, in line with a point I made earlier about the rule of law as a key agent of synergies among peacebuilding, the promotion of human rights and sustainable development, we are currently seeking to further expand our collaboration with the UN, that has so far largely focused on UN development entities, to reach out also to other UN offices and Programs across the three pillars of the UN mandate, while at the same time seeking to deepen our ongoing cooperation in particular with UN Women that does touch on all aspects of this mandate. And I want to place our appreciation for the positive responses we are receiving in this regard.

Secondly, we in IDLO strongly support the measures towards greater effectiveness, coherence and sustainability in international rule of law activities that are outlined in Chapter V of the Secretary General's report and the questions that the report raises in this regard that were highlighted in the Deputy Secretary General's opening statement. The focus that these measures place on the UN system proper is of course understandable, but I want to take this opportunity to emphasize that IDLO for one, although <sup>not</sup> formally part of the United Nations system, is eager to be engaged and contribute actively to this effort.

Thirdly, I hope that the Committee will give serious consideration to the Deputy Secretary General's proposals on the themes that could engage the Committee's consideration of the item on the rule of law in future years, as I believe that they are highly relevant to the current effort to maximize the contribution of the rule of law to peacebuilding and sustainable development.