
STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LAW ORGANIZATION

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY - SIXTH COMMITTEE (LEGAL)
“THE RULE OF LAW AT THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS” [AGENDA ITEM 84]

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Mr. Chairman,

As the only global intergovernmental organization exclusively devoted to advancing the rule of law’s contribution to peace and sustainable development, the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) is pleased to address the Sixth Committee.

The world is facing unprecedented challenges with complex and compounding crises of COVID, conflicts and climate, which have been causing tremendous suffering and inhibiting progress on the SDGs.

In his report on *Our Common Agenda*, the Secretary-General has called for a renewed social contract to address the crisis of trust faced by governments as well as international organizations. He has stressed in this context the need for effective, accountable and inclusive institutions that address problems that people struggle with in their daily lives, such as equitable access to justice and other public services; social, economic, racial and climate injustices and inequalities; and corruption.

These are indeed the objectives that IDLO is continuing to promote by seeking to advance at all levels – global, regional, national and local – a people-centred concept of justice and the rule of law. IDLO pursues in its work integrated approaches that ensure mutual reinforcement between research, policy, advocacy and programming. We currently work in 34 countries, but have experience working in 90. IDLO also endeavours to be responsive to a constantly changing environments, including through innovation and new orientations, while remaining faithful to a vision of the rule of law firmly rooted in human rights, equality and inclusion.

Let me give you a few examples that illustrate areas of IDLO’s engagement in response to current challenges. They complement long-standing programmes, supporting



governments and people, including in conflict-affected countries, in strengthening the justice system and facilitating access to justice.

First, on the theme of this session, the COVID pandemic revealed and exacerbated injustices and inequalities and disproportionately affected women, minorities and vulnerable groups. Mitigation measures limited certain rights, e.g. of assembly and movement. This is permissible under the United Nations *Siracusa Principles*, as long as restrictions respond to pressing needs, pursue a legitimate aim, are proportionate, non-discriminatory and not extended indefinitely and provide adequate safeguards and remedy. Transparency and participation in decision making are important parts of the process. In short, COVID mitigation and recovery policies have to be based on the rule of law and promote a culture of justice and equality.

Over the past two years, IDLO has convened policy makers, practitioners, academics and civil society to discuss these issues. IDLO published a [policy paper on the Rule of Law and COVID-19](#) in 2020 and organized a [Crisis Governance Forum](#) on rule-of-law based policy making for COVID response and recovery. The [SDG16 Conference](#) in April this year, which IDLO co-organizes annually with the Government of Italy and UNDESA, focused on how a people-centred approach to governance can help rebuild trust, accelerate progress towards sustainable development and tackle the challenges facing a post-COVID world. We have also partnered with WHO in reviewing legal and regulatory frameworks for pandemic preparation and response.

Second, global food insecurity is currently one of the most pressing issues, leaving millions around the world hungry because of the compounding impacts of the COVID pandemic, climate disasters, conflict and high food prices. IDLO, together with FAO, has worked on a global legal assessment of national laws, looking at ways in which legislation can support the right to safe, affordable and nutritious food for the most vulnerable.

Third, dramatic climate events have made climate justice a priority for many countries, which was clear from statements at the General Debate in September. From devastating floods in Pakistan and hurricanes in Cuba and Florida to drought in the Horn of Africa, climate change has had a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable populations, especially in LDCs and SIDS, including in countries that have contributed little or

nothing to the emissions that are causing the increase in frequency and severity of extreme weather events.

IDLO has been addressing climate change through the lens of “climate justice”, at the nexus of SDGs 13 and 16. In a policy brief, “Climate Justice: A Rule of Law Approach for Transformative Climate Action,” IDLO outlines seven policy recommendations, including investing in people-centred laws that are conducive to a just energy transition, and engaging with customary and informal justice systems to protect biodiversity and natural resources. This is particularly important for the protection of the rights of indigenous groups, as they are integral to protecting natural resources and are often excluded from decision making processes. In view of the unequally gendered impact of climate change, with structural inequalities and discriminatory laws meaning that women are less able to protect their rights, we are making the case for an explicitly feminist approach to climate justice in our research, advocacy and programming.

More broadly, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls remains crucial for the implementation of all SDGs, but especially for promoting more peaceful, just and inclusive societies, and is mainstreamed throughout IDLO’s work. We focus on addressing specific justice challenges, including elimination of discriminatory laws and policies, combatting gender-based violence, enhancing the participation of women in the justice sector, and empowering women and girls to realize their rights. In Kenya, Mali, the Philippines and Sierra Leone, among others, IDLO, in partnership with UN Women, has undertaken comprehensive gender reviews of the legal system, to identify challenges and propose solutions.

In conclusion, IDLO is committed to working with Member States, the United Nations system and other partners to promote rule of law-based solutions to the global challenges facing us today.

Together we can work to restore trust in institutions, by putting people at the centre of justice systems, and leveraging the rule-of-law framework to build peace and sustain development.

Thank you.