



INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LAW ORGANIZATION

STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL, MS. JAN BEAGLE

**UNITED NATIONS, General Assembly, 79th Session,
Sixth Committee Debate on the rule of law at the national and international levels:
*The full, equal and equitable participation at all levels in the international legal system***

18 October 2024

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished delegates,

As the only global intergovernmental organization dedicated to promoting the rule of law to advance peace and sustainable development, the International Development Law Organization appreciates the opportunity to contribute to this timely discussion.

Ensuring full, equal and equitable participation at all levels in the international legal system is critical in an environment where the rule of law is under tremendous pressure at both national and international levels.

Major violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, and especially failure to protect civilians, are becoming a shockingly regular feature of modern conflict.

The World Justice Project's Rule of Law Index has charted an extended, global rule of law recession characterized by rising authoritarianism, attacks on the independence of the judiciary, and closing of civic space.

This should be a matter of grave concern for us all.

The vital contribution of the rule of law as an enabler of peace and sustainable development has been acknowledged in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 2030 Agenda, and most recently the Pact for the Future.

The rule of law at the international level, as enshrined in the UN Charter, guarantees the sovereign equality of Member States and is the bedrock of the multilateral system.

At the national level, the rule of law serves as the guarantor of rights, promoting peace and prosperity, and helping countries realize their development potential.

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Reversing the decline in the rule of law by rebuilding trust at both national and international levels will be critical.

Drawing on IDLO's 40 years of experience partnering with people and governments in all regions, allow me to share three ways in which we can begin to do so:

The first is by ensuring equal application of the law.

This fundamental principle is often overlooked at a time of rising geopolitical tensions, which have contributed to inaction and the prioritization of narrow political interests.

A prominent example is the way the international community has responded to armed conflicts, which are at their highest level since World War II.

The differences in the international response to these crises - the level of support provided, the creation of investigatory bodies and tribunals, and respect for the judgements of international judicial bodies - has generated critiques on the selective application of international law, and undermined faith in the multilateral system.

It is important that countries walk the talk when it comes to respect for international law.

My second point is that we must promote equal participation in international legal systems.

It is essential that all nations—especially developing countries—have a meaningful voice in international legal forums.

Ensuring equal participation will promote dialogue, engage diverse perspectives, and strengthen confidence in the international legal system, making it more responsive to the unique challenges that different countries and communities face.

The inclusion of the perspectives of young people and other historically excluded groups, is essential for the whole of society approaches needed.

And the full participation of women is crucial in decision-making at all levels, including in the international legal system.

While progress has been made, achieving gender equality in international legal systems remains an ongoing challenge that requires continued attention, and action

IDLO promotes women's leadership in the justice sector through legal and institutional reform, capacity-building support, and supporting professional associations of women professionals in justice and law enforcement.

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Third and finally, we must promote equitable legal solutions to shared global challenges.

The international legal system encompasses the conduct of war, international and transnational crimes, displacement, migration, and the regulation of the international commons – issues that are at the heart of global challenges, and which no country can solve alone.

The rule of law offers a framework for collective action based on shared principles of justice, sovereign equality, respect for human rights, and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Shared concerns like climate change, or the regulation of frontier technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, require fair and efficient mechanisms that incentivize concerted global action, while balancing the needs of the present with the interests of future generations.

On climate change, for instance, there is need to ensure that the costs and benefits of climate mitigation and adaptation are distributed fairly, and that the most climate-vulnerable people are not left behind.

The creation of a global loss and damage fund is an important step towards climate justice, but it needs adequate financing and transparent governance.

By promoting equal application of the law, equal participation, and equitable solutions to common global challenges, we can rebuild trust in the international legal system and ensure that it upholds the values of the Charter.

Achieving this goal will require time, effort and resources, but it is one of the soundest investments we can make in our collective future.

As the International Development Law Organization enters its fifth decade, we pledge our continued partnership and support in ensuring that the rule of law, at the national, regional and international levels, contributes to a more peaceful, just and sustainable future for all.