



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

**SDG 16 CONFERENCE  
PEOPLE-CENTRED GOVERNANCE IN A POST-PANDEMIC WORLD  
Closing Remarks  
22 April 2022**

Ambassador Cassese,

Assistant-Secretary General Spatolisano,

Colleagues and Friends,

It is a pleasure to join you again as we come to the end of the Conference.

Over the last two days we have taken stock of progress on SDG 16 and the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead to promote more peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

I would like to share two key takeaways from my perspective.

The first is one of urgency.

The picture that has emerged from our discussions is a grim one.

The consensus from last year's conference was that while COVID-19 posed formidable challenges to peace and sustainable development, it also presented a chance to break from the inequalities and injustices of the past.

We agreed that the world was at a crossroads, and that we faced fundamental choices about the type of future we wanted to build.

Unfortunately, we only have to look around us to see that the better angels of our nature seem to be losing out.

The impact of the pandemic has been devastating, deepening inequalities, exacerbating fragilities and exposing major trust deficits in governance.

Today, on Earth Day, we are also reminded that climate change, if left unaddressed, represents an existential threat.

Conflict and humanitarian crises are affecting more people than ever before, with women and girls bearing the brunt of their impact.

There is insufficient investment in prevention and in addressing the root causes of poverty, inequality and discrimination.

In the words of the Secretary General, and I quote “we are at the edge of an abyss and headed in the wrong direction.”

We have both a moral duty, and an overwhelming self-interest, to reverse these trends.

And some encouraging glimmers of hope emerged over the past two days.

So my second message is one of cautious optimism.

Around the world coalitions of governments, international organizations, and civil society are rallying together, determined to break the nexus between insecurity, injustice and poor governance.

We heard from many of them at the Conference.

Governments shared innovative approaches to crisis response and recovery.

Multilateral institutions highlighted frameworks to prevent conflict and sustain peace, to combat corruption, and to address inequalities.

Civil society showcased good practices at the community level – from resolving disputes to ensuring the integrity of public information.

The renewed Rome Declaration by members of civil society contains many timely messages, and will be a key reference point for all of us.

Young leaders demonstrated the importance of empowering youth networks and ensuring their meaningful participation in policy making and implementation.

It is this energy, enthusiasm and innovation that we must carry forward.

As we have heard, we need to reflect more on how we can more effectively engage young people in our work. I will certainly be thinking about this in IDLO.

I would like to conclude on a note of gratitude.

I want to thank all of you for taking the time to discuss these critical issues.

My thanks to our distinguished speakers, and participants joining in Rome, and around the world online.

I would also like to express my deep appreciation to our host, the Government of Italy, and to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, for their continued partnership with IDLO, and their support for SDG 16.

We now look forward to sharing the insights from the Conference in the deliberations of the High-Level Political Forum.

Beyond HLPF we hope that these insights will be helpful in framing the implementation of the proposals in Our Common Agenda.

Most importantly, all of us need to act together to turn words into action, from local to global levels.

Holistic multistakeholder and multidisciplinary approaches will be essential. It is all about building trust.

Colleagues,

IDLO is proud to join you as part of this growing movement for transformation.

We encourage governments to prioritize expenditures related to the rule of law in their national plans and budgets, to promote more participatory decision making, and to strengthen the capacity of public institutions.

We encourage international development partners to increase assistance for nationally led, human rights-based and people-centred reforms, and to increase financing for the rule of law. The Justice Action Coalition is one such initiative that IDLO is pleased to support.

We appreciate the private sector's strong endorsement of the SDGs, and encourage them to back their rhetoric with concrete actions to eliminate illicit financial flows, prevent corruption, and promote inclusive economic development.

To achieve the peaceful, just and inclusive societies envisaged by SDG16, we must act now - together - to invest in people-centred approaches to governance and the rule of law.