



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

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

Vice Minister Sereni,

Under-Secretary General Liu,

Assistant Secretary General Spatolisano,

Excellencies,

Friends and Colleagues,

On behalf of IDLO, it is a pleasure to welcome you to the 2022 SDG 16 Conference.

I would like to thank the Government of Italy and UNDESA for their continued partnership in this important event.

We are meeting at a critical moment.

Over the past two years, COVID-19 has had a monumental impact on global development, placing decades of hard-won progress under threat.

Millions of people have died and millions more have been pushed into poverty and insecurity.

The most severe impact has fallen on those already living in conditions of vulnerability, exclusion and fragility.

At the same time, there has been a growing global backlash against human rights, multilateralism and democratic governance.

We have seen repeated attempts to undermine the rule of law and the systems that uphold it.

New and emerging conflicts continue to pose a threat to international peace and security, with some of the worst violations of human rights taking place where the rule of law is absent, or has broken down.

The war in Ukraine is the latest in a long list of global crises, and yet another example of the urgent need to act swiftly and robustly to defend SDG 16.

And the past few years have seen a steep decline in financing for rule of law in national budgets and international development assistance, just when it is needed the most.

The world is even further off-track to reach all the SDGs by 2030.

This conference is an opportunity to assess ways in which a people-centred approach to governance can help tackle these challenges.

Allow me to share three important ways in which it can do so, drawing on IDLO's experience.

First, people centred governance can help accelerate progress on SDG 16 which is vital to the realization of all the SDGs.

Goal 16 is broad, containing many seemingly diverse objectives, but it is tied together with the common thread of good governance.

Its three pillars –peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice, and effective, accountable institutions – serve as a crucial foundation for the entire 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.

Rule of law is also a cross-cutting enabler for all 17 SDGs.

It advances the type of institutional mechanisms and fair, rule-based processes needed to promote the integrated “whole of society” approaches required for sustainable peace and development.

This point is made clear in the Secretary- General's “Our Common Agenda”, which calls for a “new vision for the rule of law” to help renew the social contract and tackle global challenges.

Second, a people-centred approach to governance is key to rebuilding trust.

We are witnessing a crisis of confidence in public institutions of unprecedented proportions.

COVID-19 has further eroded already low levels of public trust, creating a social and political crisis alongside a health and economic one.

The rule of law is crucial to restoring this trust and renewing the social contract between citizens and the state.

By empowering justice seekers and promoting participatory governance, the rule of law leads to more open and equitable decisions.

Through strong, transparent, and people-centred institutions, it helps ensure that services and opportunity are distributed in a way that is fair and non-discriminatory.

This is essential to rebuilding trust in governance and renewing the social contract

Third, it can help address the complex and transnational challenges that traditional instruments of statecraft are ill-equipped to handle.

The last two years have highlighted that our most urgent problems – from COVID-19 to climate change- do not stop at borders and are too big and too complex for any of us to solve alone.

We need to innovate and build laws and institutions that will allow countries and peoples to transition to a greener, more climate resilient and equitable development model.

Putting people and their human rights at the centre of this effort will be essential.

This conference presents an opportunity to build momentum and to increase political and financial support for SDG 16 as a central lever for transformation.

I look forward to continued collaboration towards our shared vision of equitable and inclusive societies, and sustainable peace and development for all.