



STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LAW ORGANIZATION

SECOND INTERSESSIONAL MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION AGAINST CORRUPTION ON THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AGAINST CORRUPTION (UNGASS)

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IDLO welcomes the organization of an inclusive preparatory process for the Special Session of the General Assembly against corruption (UNGASS). As the only global intergovernmental organization exclusively devoted to advancing the rule of law as a catalyst to sustain peace and sustainable development, we greatly appreciate this opportunity, afforded by the Second Intersessional Meeting of the Conference of the States Parties to the UNCAC, to share from the perspective of our programmatic and research experience, key issues, strategies and best practices in the prevention and combating of corruption.

IDLO remains committed to people-centered justice through the rule of law and the promotion of transparency and accountability and will reflect this commitment in its Strategic Plan 2021-2024. Through our programs on the ground, we are working to combat all forms of corruption by helping countries make justice institutions more transparent and responsive, assist public officials in managing conflicts of interest, and enhancing the capacity of justice sector institutions and actors to fight fraud and economic crime.

IDLO's programs have shown that technological innovations are increasingly emerging as important tools for detecting, preventing, and combatting corruption. Digital technologies are addressing corruption risks by decreasing information asymmetries between the government and the public, automating processes, fettering discretion of public officials and reducing red tape and intermediaries.

Utilizing digital technologies in corruption prevention has gained even more relevance in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. Research in Latin America shows that new digital solutions combined with an open data policy hold potential in reducing corruption risks; enhancing integrity of public procurement processes, and leading to the adoption of integrity policies in the short, medium and long-run.

IDLO emphasizes, however, that any anti-corruption measure utilizing digital technologies, including e-justice initiatives, is incomplete without safeguards addressing structural inequalities. Despite their measurable impact in reducing corruption risks, e-justice initiatives can create barriers in access to justice, especially for vulnerable groups. As noted in IDLO's brief on 'E-nabling Sustainable Development: Lessons from E-justice Programming in Kyrgyzstan' persistent digital divides across gender, geography, age and income dimensions within each country might constrain the impact of e-justice efforts on those most at risk of being left behind.

IDLO through its programmatic and research work, is also helping countries strengthen judicial integrity and prevent judicial corruption. To ensure transparency – a fundamental component of judicial independence – IDLO has supported partners in Kyrgyzstan in launching a dedicated website for the publishing of judicial decisions in open access format with a system to anonymize personal data. The website currently hosts 90% of judicial decisions and is being used by the Judiciary, along with civil society and academic institutions, to advance judicial integrity and professionalism, document judicial trends, and develop data-driven tools.

Specialized anti-corruption judicial bodies offer another effective mechanism in the prevention and combatting of corruption. IDLO's experiences in supporting judicial reform show that these specialized institutions offer timely, efficient, and effective resolution of corruption cases through judges and judicial staff with requisite expertise while avoiding the delays and back-logs often plaguing ordinary court systems.

IDLO also highlights the importance of ending impunity for all forms of corruption in the promotion of good governance and sustainable development. This requires, first and foremost, an independent and impartial prosecution service that fulfils its functions of investigation and prosecution in line with international performance standards and in respect of human rights. As a result, IDLO is working to strengthen capacities of prosecutors in many countries. This includes our work with the National Prosecution in the Philippines to improve criminal prosecutions and to build the capacity of the Office of the Ombudsman's prosecutors to better resolve complaints of corruption against public officials, including through interactive training.

IDLO's programs on the ground show the importance of combining national anti-corruption initiatives with legal empowerment of justice seekers. Public perceptions of corruption undermine trust in justice institutions and serve as a key obstacle in access to justice. To challenge these perceptions in Uganda, IDLO is working at the local level to empower grassroots communities in claiming their grievances in an equitable manner, and to obtain effective remedies from both formal and informal justice mechanisms.

Finally, IDLO believes that addressing existing justice gaps through increased national investment and international support to justice sector institutions is integral to the achievement of the promise of equal justice for all under Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16. Injustice is costly. People, communities, and societies suffer significant harm when justice systems fail to protect them from violence or to help them resolve disputes or fulfil their economic potential. The Justice for All: The Report of the Task Force on Justice,

estimates that low income countries need an annual spending of 20 (USD) per person to ensure access to basic justice services for all¹.

In conclusion, IDLO offers its technical assistance and capacity development support to governments, anti-corruption bodies and civil society organizations through our programming, evidence based research and policy support, and reiterates its commitment to support the consultations in preparation of the Special session of the General Assembly against corruption.

The International Development Law Organization (IDLO) enables governments and empowers people to reform laws and strengthen institutions to promote peace, justice, sustainable development and economic opportunity.

¹ The Task Force on Justice. Justice for All: The Report of the Task Force on Justice. April 2019. p. 47. Available at: <https://www.hiil.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Justice-for-All-report-1.pdf>