

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2021–2024



## I. INTRODUCTION

1. IDLO developed its Strategic Plan 2021-2024 against the backdrop of the most significant disruption the world has faced since the Second World War. As the only global intergovernmental organization exclusively devoted to promoting the rule of law as an enabler of peace, sustainable development and human rights, our mandate has rarely been more relevant or more needed than in this moment of crisis.
2. The growing recognition of the importance of the rule of law and access to justice in sustaining peace and development was reflected by their inclusion in the global development agenda for the first time in 2015. This was most prominent in the adoption of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions, but equally evident through the incorporation of the principles of equity, equality and non-discrimination across the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
3. Despite widespread acknowledgement of its crucial enabling role, there has been a sharp deterioration in several dimensions of the rule of law since the 2030 Agenda was adopted. This includes an increase in violence and armed conflict, large-scale humanitarian crises, growing authoritarianism, rising inequalities, intolerance and social tensions. There is growing pressure on international norms, standards and attacks on human rights, the independence of the judiciary and civil society.
4. COVID-19 has the potential to aggravate these trends dramatically. The pandemic encountered a deeply divided and unequal world, faced with a set of pre-existing, interrelated challenges including climate change, entrenched conflict and a technological transformation.
5. It has compounded the existing, overlapping layers of social, economic and political inequalities between and within countries. Those already living in conditions of injustice, inequality and insecurity have borne the brunt of the impact. COVID-19 has laid bare the consequences of underinvestment in governance and justice, revealing that no country, rich or poor, is entirely immune to this crisis.
6. At the same time, by bringing our shared fragility into such sharp focus, the pandemic has made our largest challenges impossible to ignore. For this reason, the crisis also presents a unique opportunity to reexamine assumptions, raise ambitions and reorient the world towards a more just, peaceful and sustainable future.
7. Putting justice and the rule of law at the heart of recovery efforts will enable policy makers to act quickly and effectively while respecting and protecting human rights. It will ensure that those in the most vulnerable situations can access essential services and the protection of the law and safeguard hard-won gains on peace and development while laying the foundation for *Building Back Better*.

8. It is in this spirit that IDLO approached the development of its Strategic Plan 2021-2024. The plan is forward-looking and aims to promote people-centered justice and the rule of law to build more peaceful, inclusive and resilient societies. It balances prudence with ambition by building on IDLO's strengths while investing in the Organization's ability to contribute to new areas and capitalize on emerging opportunities. With this overall objective, the Strategic Plan 2021-2024:
- sets out IDLO's overall strategic direction for the next four years;
  - defines our contribution to global efforts to sustain peace and achieve sustainable development in line with our mandate and comparative advantages; and
  - identifies areas where we need to invest and strengthen the Organization to deliver the change we seek.

## Developing the Plan

To ensure that IDLO had the best evidence base available when assessing its strategic options, we carried out an extensive data collection exercise, including wide-ranging consultations with stakeholders, a review of Strategy 2020 and substantive research and analysis in key thematic areas.

The consultations involved key stakeholders at the global, regional and national levels as presented in the figure below.



The process included over 90 interviews and some 20 focus groups with key leaders and stakeholders in Rome, Geneva, New York, The Hague and through our Country Offices in Honduras, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Mexico, Mali, Mongolia, Myanmar, Tunisia and Uganda. We also organized an online survey for our full range of stakeholders.

The consultations engaged our governing bodies and Member Parties, as well as a wide range of current and prospective partners including senior government representatives; parliamentarians; donors; the political and peacebuilding, peacekeeping, development, humanitarian and human rights entities in the UN system in Rome, New York, Geneva and Vienna; civil society; academia; women's organizations and youth. We also consulted extensively within IDLO, engaging colleagues through consultations, focus groups and surveys conducted across our offices.

A learning review of Strategy 2020 based on selected evaluations, supplemented by additional internal data and information, was also conducted. It allowed us to identify the main achievements and key challenges from the previous strategic cycle and draw lessons and recommendations moving forward. IDLO also commissioned independent analyses of some key thematic areas, including scoping studies on climate change and migration, to identify where the Organization can add value in line with our mandate and comparative advantages.

## II. OUR STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

9. IDLO's Strategic Plan 2021-2024 is informed by an analysis of key external trends and lessons from our previous strategic cycles as well as an assessment of IDLO's comparative advantages:

### A. External Trends

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10. IDLO's strategic environment over the course of the next strategic cycle will be shaped to a large extent by COVID-19, which has grown rapidly from a public health emergency to a global political, social, economic and humanitarian crisis.
11. The pandemic's impact on global development efforts has been devastating, reversing progress across many different dimensions. 2020 will be the first year that the aggregate level of human development is set to decline since the Human Development Index started measuring it in 1990.
12. COVID-19 has affected every country in the world in different ways, exacerbated existing problems, and is rewriting aspects of political, social, economic and legal life at an accelerated pace. Its impact will be felt for a long time to come. Within this fast-evolving environment, our consultations identified the following key trends:

#### Widening justice gap

13. Even before COVID-19, approximately two-thirds of the world's population lacked the ability to meaningfully access justice. While the business case for investing in justice is clear and compelling, justice sector allocations have declined in both national and development assistance budgets. Justice systems have been hard hit by the pandemic, as new restrictions on physical access to courts and tribunals have coincided with a sharp rise in the need for legal protection and services.
14. Bridging the gap will require sustained political and financial support to the justice sector. It will also need innovation and reforms to make more effective use of existing resources to ensure the peaceful and fair resolution of disputes, uphold the rights of the poorest and most vulnerable members of society, and promote a more peaceful, just and sustainable recovery.

#### Accelerating climate change

15. Climate change has been described as the defining challenge of our time. We have a narrow window to act to avoid severe and irreversible effects that will threaten global

ecosystems, disrupt economic development and jeopardize the livelihoods and security of entire regions.

16. Fair, effective and equitable legal frameworks can help protect the environment, while promoting carbon resilient development. A rule of law-based approach to climate justice can enable concerted action at national and international levels and empower communities affected by climate change to claim their rights and participate in development.

### **Technological revolution**

17. Many predicted an imminent “fourth industrial revolution” driven by increased automation and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence. COVID-19 has accelerated the pace of technological change and is transforming the way we live and work. Digital innovation can be a great equalizer and has tremendous potential for socio-economic improvement. However, it also poses a tangible risk of abuse and could give rise to new forms of discrimination.
18. Inclusive, human rights-based and non-discriminatory approaches to digital innovation, particularly in the justice sector, can empower people and groups who traditionally lack access to electronic platforms to claim their rights and help narrow a growing digital divide.

### **Economic upheaval**

19. The pandemic is causing the most severe economic downturn since the Great Depression, shutting down entire economic sectors and reshaping global trade and commerce. It has resulted in historic levels of unemployment with a disproportionate impact on those already living in poverty, workers in the informal sector and people performing jobs at risk of digitization or automation.
20. The rule of law can help ensure that economic stimulus benefits intended recipients by preventing corruption and graft and promoting equitable access to public services. By enabling trade and investment, and by empowering people to unlock economic opportunity, it can also promote and sustain inclusive economic recovery.

### **Deepening inequalities**

21. Underlying all 17 goals of the 2030 Agenda is a vision that no person should be left behind, but the gap between rich and poor both within and between nations has only grown. COVID-19 has exposed and is being aggravated by the entrenched injustices and inequalities under which too many people still live. Its impact has been most severe on poor, marginalized and vulnerable people who are least able to mitigate the effects of the crisis and who rely on disrupted public and social services.
22. Rule of law is key to tackling the multiple intersecting and overlapping layers of legal, social and economic discrimination by promoting more equitable laws and policies and prioritizing the needs of those who are at the greatest risk of being left behind.

### **Entrenched gender inequalities**

23. Twenty-five years after the adoption of the Beijing Declaration, progress on gender equality remains slow, uneven and subject to setbacks. Secretary-General Guterres has called gender inequality the “biggest human rights challenge.” As documented in IDLO’s joint report on *Justice for Women Amidst COVID-19*, women and girls have been impacted disproportionately by the pandemic, putting recent progress at risk.
24. Curtailed access to justice institutions, rising intimate partner violence, growing human rights violations of women workers – including those on the frontlines of the crisis – and discriminatory laws pose significant and ongoing risks to women’s lives and livelihoods and must be addressed on a priority basis.

### **Intensifying conflict**

25. Conflict and fragility pose one of the most significant challenges to sustainable development. The World Bank projects that by 2030, the share of global poor living in fragile and conflict-affected situations will increase to 46 percent from 17 percent in 2017. COVID-19 is exacerbating existing fault lines in societies and generating grievances that if not addressed could lead to greater fragility, instability and violence.
26. Building more peaceful societies requires addressing the root causes of conflict, many of which are linked to injustice and exclusion. Effective justice systems can be key to preventing disputes and grievances from escalating into conflicts and laying the foundations for peace, reconciliation and economic recovery.

### **Rising authoritarianism**

27. COVID-19 has further narrowed the already-shrinking public space for consultation and inclusive decision-making. While the severity of COVID-19 may justify temporary, narrowly tailored rights restrictions, in some contexts it has been used as a pretext for governments to enact sweeping powers for surveillance and control and to suppress debate and dissent. Blanket restrictions have also often had unintended harmful effects such as increased food insecurity.
28. Effective laws and institutions can enable governments to act quickly and decisively in response to emergencies such as COVID-19, while preventing the arbitrary or excessive use of power and ensuring respect for human rights. Greater transparency, public consultation and offering redress for rights violations can empower people, improve policymaking and generate greater understanding, support and compliance with emergency measures.

### **Declining public trust**

29. National and international institutions are struggling to meet the rising demand for justice and good governance. Frustrations with corruption, inequality and inaction on pressing concerns have undermined trust in governments and helped to fuel and aggravate conflicts and humanitarian crises around the world. The pandemic has further eroded public

confidence as policymakers scramble to address the uniquely difficult set of policy challenges it presents.

30. Demonstrations of popular discontent reflect dissatisfaction with the status quo but often also indicate a desire to contribute to positive change. Governments can engage with people as equal partners in the shared challenge of building more peaceful, just and inclusive societies through greater transparency and integrity, participatory policymaking and meeting priority justice needs. Through such measures, the rule of law can help rebuild public confidence and promote the “whole of society” approaches needed to achieve the transformative vision of the 2030 Agenda.

### **An opportunity for change**

31. In many ways, COVID-19 is a wake-up call. By shining such an unforgiving light on our vulnerability and lack of preparedness for shocks and crises, it has made it impossible to continue ignoring humanity’s most pressing challenges. Urgent action is needed to preserve hard-won development gains and make progress on global goals for peace, development and upholding a rules-based international system.
32. Tackling global problems requires international cooperation, solidarity and respect for international law, including international human rights law. The 2030 Agenda, enabled by the rule of law, can promote renewed multilateralism, provide a framework for the international community to collaborate on shared challenges, build resilience to common threats and chart a course for a more peaceful, just and sustainable future.

## **B. Lessons Learned from Strategy 2020**

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33. During the previous strategic cycle, IDLO made valuable contributions to promoting the rule of law and sustainable development through its programs, research and policy advocacy at the national, regional and global levels.
34. In line with the Impact Goals of Strategy 2020, IDLO helped empower individuals and groups by offering pathways to justice, including providing justice seekers with knowledge, tools and skills to realize their rights. We also promoted fair laws and effective, accountable institutions by supporting institutional capacity and integrity and advancing economic opportunity and sustainability.
35. As a result of investment in program development and diversification over the course of Strategy 2020, IDLO saw significant growth in program revenue, developed a more geographically and thematically diverse portfolio, and established a track record of implementing complex programs in some of the world’s most challenging operational environments.
36. Our policy advocacy efforts, drawn from IDLO’s program experience and supported by quality research, highlighted the contribution of the rule of law to sustainable development, gender equality and human rights. Significant contributions to global dialogues on SDG 16+, Justice for Women and Girls and Customary and Informal Justice helped raise IDLO’s profile as a credible champion of the rule of law and access to justice.



37. IDLO's shift from a project to a program-based implementation model is ongoing and is helping to sharpen our thematic focus and bring greater coherence to our portfolio. We will continue this transition in the next strategic cycle.
38. Measuring and reporting on our impact remains a key area for improvement. We know that rule of law programs often do not yield immediate results and that the impact of interventions can be hard to measure. IDLO also faced challenges in monitoring, aggregating and reporting on institutional-level results.
39. To address these issues, we have introduced new monitoring guidelines to support results-based management for IDLO programs and projects and are currently piloting innovative tools and templates for their operationalization. We will continue to prioritize improvements in our ability to monitor, analyze and report on results, including through the development and implementation of a Strategic Results and Resources Framework.
40. IDLO also invested in its internal capacities and systems over Strategy 2020. Significant achievements included the introduction of International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) compliant financial structures and the production of financial statements in an IPSAS-compliant format for 2019 for the first time.
41. The development of an Enterprise Resource Platform has been a major organizational undertaking. Several of its components have already been implemented, and once fully completed the Platform will allow IDLO to increase the speed and efficiency of business processes, improve standardization and compliance, and generate and analyze data. Other ICT reforms, including the migration of many of our processes to cloud storage, have helped IDLO to continue operations during the pandemic with minimal disruptions, even as the majority of staff shifted to remote working.
42. A new employment model in 2017-2018 sought to bring all IDLO employees under a common framework for the first time in terms of benefits and contractual modalities; its implementation will need to be reviewed and adjusted in light of experience.
43. These reforms contributed to increased transparency and efficiency and ensured quality, especially as the Organization moved its operations increasingly into the field. While there has been significant organizational change, there is a need to consolidate and build on improvements, ensuring that they are fit for a quickly evolving operating environment. Over the next strategic cycle, we will also work to embed reforms by strengthening our change management capacity and investing in staff learning.
44. IDLO's experience also reflected the impact of resource constraints on the Organization's ability to execute multi-year planning and systematic change management. Some reforms, particularly those requiring significant investment, were delayed or implemented in a phased manner due to a lack of sufficient unrestricted or earmarked funds. This underlines the importance for IDLO to broaden its resource base and to secure greater unrestricted funding with more predictability through multi-year agreements in order to make necessary investments in our staffing and systems and to promote innovation.

## C. IDLO's Comparative Advantages

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45. In a crowded development sector with many actors working on similar issues, it is essential to prioritize our resources and focus our engagement where IDLO can bring added value through its mandate, programs, research and advocacy. Our stakeholders have identified the following as IDLO's comparative advantages:

- Specialized mandate on the rule of law and focus on SDG 16 as an enabler of the 2030 Agenda.
- Legal expertise and thought leadership on issues related to justice, rule of law, gender equality and sustainable development.
- Intergovernmental status and ability to contribute to global dialogue through presence in policy hubs including Rome, New York, Geneva and The Hague.
- Field presence and strong in-country networks and relationships of trust with national partners.
- Ability to work both “top-down” with institutions and “bottom-up” on promoting access to justice and legal empowerment.
- Experience working across a variety of legal systems and expertise operating in highly complex, fragile, and transitional environments.
- Convening power to mobilize multi-stakeholder coalitions around key issues of global concern.
- Flexible and agile, offering a good return on investment to national partners and donors.

### III. VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

#### Vision

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A world in which every person lives in dignity and equality under the rule of law.

#### Mission

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We champion people-centered justice and promote the rule of law to advance sustainable development and help build more peaceful, inclusive and resilient societies.

#### Rule of Law

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IDLO's approach to its mandate is driven by our vision of a more just and equal world. We work to enable governments, empower people and strengthen institutions to realize justice, peace and sustainable development.

The rule of law is a principle of governance in which all persons and entities, including the State itself, are accountable to the law.

IDLO believes that the rule of law encompasses both procedural fairness and fair and just outcomes. It requires clear, prospective laws that are available publicly and adjudicated in a procedurally correct manner by an independent judiciary. It also incorporates the substantive element of justice, which emphasizes equality, fairness, and non-discrimination, and includes a commitment to democratic principles and good governance.

Most importantly, the rule of law is about safeguarding rights. The rule of law protects not only procedural rights through legal supremacy, certainty and due process, but also important substantive rights through an independent and impartial judiciary and through laws consistent with international human rights standards. The rule of law operationalizes human rights through constitutional and legal protections, institutions for effective implementation and accountability, judicial and administrative remedies, and the legal empowerment of people to access justice and claim their rights.

Only through the application of such an understanding of the rule of law can the ambition of the 2030 Agenda to "leave no one behind" be properly realized.

## Values

All of IDLO's work is guided by the following values and principles:

### Sustainability

Sustainability is a key principle of development and crucial for balancing the needs of the present while preserving the rights of future generations. IDLO believes that the rule of law is essential to equitably balance the complex interests that lie at the heart of sustainable development and to promote its economic, social and environmental dimensions. IDLO works to ensure that the gains of peace and development can be sustained over the long-term by seeking to achieve lasting impact for our partners at individual, institutional and ultimately societal levels.



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### People-centered

Putting people and their needs and human rights at the center of justice systems is essential to IDLO's approach. Whether we work with governments, justice institutions, civil society or customary and informal systems, the end goal is ensuring that the law and the institutions that help administer it work to protect, empower and enable people to enjoy their human rights and live their lives with dignity and equality.



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### Gender equality

Gender equality, including the ability of women and girls to enjoy the full range of their human rights and meaningfully participate in all aspects of society, is a key aspect of human rights and a necessary condition for progress towards the entire 2030 Agenda. Given its critical importance, IDLO promotes gender equality by pursuing it as a stand-alone goal as well as by mainstreaming it throughout our work.



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### Local ownership

Rule of law entails fundamental and politically sensitive choices about justice, human rights and principles and helps define the relationship between individual and state and the distribution of power and resources within society. These decisions are best made by those to whom they will apply. If legal reforms are to be sustainable, they cannot be dictated by outsiders but must be locally driven and nationally owned in the broadest possible sense.



## Human rights

Human rights constrain the arbitrary exercise of power and enable people to hold governments accountable. They help provide the essential substantive content of the law and give meaning to the rule of law as distinct from rule by law. IDLO situates its work in a system of rights and corresponding obligations established by international law and guided by principles of equality, non-discrimination, participation, transparency and accountability.



## Legal pluralism

IDLO appreciates that countries have diverse legal traditions and people resolve their disputes through many different means. We are committed to engaging with the plurality of legal systems in ways that increase peoples' ability to access justice and realize their rights, consistent with international standards.



## Transparency and accountability

IDLO is committed to maintaining the highest standards of transparency and accountability. We recognize the importance of being held accountable for our results and the responsible use of our resources and will continue to ensure transparency and accountability for our partners, beneficiaries, governing bodies and stakeholders.



## Partnership

Our most pressing problems transcend borders and can only be tackled effectively through international cooperation and solidarity. Progress towards more peaceful, just and inclusive societies requires “whole of society” efforts. IDLO places a high value on working collaboratively with a wide range of actors at the international, regional and national levels to pool expertise and resources, strengthen our convening power and maximize our impact.



## IV. STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2024

46. During a time of extraordinary disruption and upheaval, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development represents both humanity's highest aspirations and the best global blueprint to tackle our shared challenges.
47. It places a strong emphasis on justice and the rule of law and the principles of equity, equality and non-discrimination that are most prominent in SDG 16 and interwoven throughout all 17 SDGs. It provides a universally accepted framework to promote collective action on shared challenges, build resilience to future threats and achieve global goals towards peace and development. The 2030 Agenda's targets and indicators draw on human rights standards and emphasize "the responsibilities of all States ... to respect, protect and fulfill human rights and fundamental freedoms for all." Its implementation must remain consistent with international human rights law.
48. The SDG Summit in 2019 warned that the world was not on track to achieve the 2030 Agenda. COVID-19 and its impact threaten not just to put progress on the SDGs on hold but also jeopardize the hard-won gains across many different aspects of the social, economic and environmental pillars of sustainable development.
49. Justice systems can help tackle inequalities by constraining the arbitrary and unfair exercise of power and ensuring everyone is able to enjoy their human rights, including persons in marginalized or vulnerable situations. They are also essential for upholding democratic principles, and challenging the discriminatory laws, policies, social norms and stereotypes that hold people back from realizing their development potential.
50. Rule of law can play a key role in sustaining peace by helping to address the root causes of conflict and insecurity, which often lie in issues such as discrimination and marginalization, lack of respect for human rights, unequal distribution of public goods and services, corruption, impunity and lack of accountability.
51. IDLO advocated for the inclusion of SDG 16 in the 2030 Agenda and has worked to advance the essential contribution of the rule of law to building and sustaining both peace and development. SDG 16 is an essential driver of the 2030 Agenda and embodies the interdependent and mutually reinforcing relationship between human rights, democratic governance and the rule of law.
52. The Strategic Plan 2021-2024 is anchored in the 2030 Agenda. It sets out the vision and mission of the Organization.
53. The Plan has two Strategic Goals and six Strategic Objectives that are interconnected and reflect our understanding of the rule of law as both an outcome and enabler of peace and sustainable development as well as our commitment to maximizing the rule of law's contribution to a more peaceful, just and equitable future. IDLO has also identified four organizational Enablers to strengthen key aspects of our operations to achieve our Strategic Goals and deliver the high-quality results our partners expect.

54. The Strategic Plan is structured as follows:

## Strategic Goals and Objectives

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- **Strategic Goal 1: Justice systems are more effective and responsive to people's needs.** We will promote justice systems that are more effective and responsive to people's needs through:
  - **Strategic Objective 1: Empowering justice seekers:** empowering people to access justice and claim their human rights through formal and informal pathways, including digital platforms, and promoting participatory decision-making at the grassroots level that is inclusive of civil society;
  - **Strategic Objective 2: Making laws and institutions work for people:** promoting smart legal reform, enabling the delivery of essential justice services, strengthening criminal justice chains, combatting corruption and increasing accountability and enabling equitable digital innovation; and
  - **Strategic Objective 3: Reducing the justice gap for women and girls:** complementing gender mainstreaming with focused interventions to support the full enjoyment by women and girls of their human rights, including through the elimination of gender discriminatory laws, promoting women's participation in the justice sector and combatting gender-based violence.
- **Strategic Goal 2: Rule of law drives peace and sustainable development.** Through the lens of SDGs 16 and 5, IDLO will promote the rule of law's contribution to realizing human rights and different dimensions of peace and sustainable development in line with our mandate, resources and comparative advantage in the following areas:
  - **Strategic Objective 4: Inclusive economic development:** promoting enabling legal frameworks, strengthening governmental capacities to enforce commercial and economic laws, negotiating and implementing investment agreements and resolving disputes, and supporting the economic empowerment of women and girls;
  - **Strategic Objective 5: Climate justice and sustainable use of natural resources:** supporting the realization of environmental rights and climate justice, promoting climate-resilient development and increased access to land and natural resources, and strengthening food security for marginalized and vulnerable groups; and
  - **Strategic Objective 6: Healthy lives and well-being for all:** promoting greater access to health services, supporting pandemic preparedness and strengthening regulatory and fiscal capacity to prevent and manage non-communicable diseases.

## Enablers

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- **Organizational Enablers:** IDLO has identified four organizational Enablers to strengthen our ability to deliver on our Strategic Goals as follows:
  - **Enabler 1: Enhancing innovation, integration, and impact** by strengthening the quality of interventions, fostering innovative and multi-sectoral approaches, developing an evidence base for policy and decision-making and improving our ability to capture and report on results;

- **Enabler 2: Investing in people** through a strategic approach to human resources management, including enhancements in recruitment, workforce planning, performance management, learning and professional development;
  - **Enabler 3: Improving systems and processes** by adopting smarter, greener and more flexible ways of working; leveraging technology and digital innovation; enhancing transparency and accountability; and promoting greater internal communication; and
  - **Enabler 4: Implementing a strategic approach to partnerships** with clear, prioritized and mutually reinforcing efforts to enhance outreach and communications, advocate for the rule of law, and diversify and strengthen political and financial support.
- IDLO will adopt a Gender Action Plan to promote gender equality and mainstream a gender focus throughout our work.

IDLO's approach also emphasizes three cross-cutting elements:

**55. Inclusion:** At a time of extreme inequality and rising discrimination, the principles of “leaving no one behind” and “reaching the furthest behind first” are central to where and how IDLO will engage. While the crisis has shown that no country is immune to fragility, its severest impact has been on the poor, marginalized and vulnerable.

IDLO will focus its efforts on those living in conditions of injustice and inequality and subject to overlapping and intersecting layers of discrimination, including women and girls, people living in conflict and insecurity, youth and children, and refugees and migrants. While IDLO's mandate and operations are global and we will continue working with countries across the development spectrum, we will prioritize efforts in fragile and conflict-affected settings, including countries undergoing democratic transition and in least-developed and developing countries.

**56. Integration:** Independent reviews, as well as IDLO's experience, show that integrated, multidisciplinary interventions are more effective in tackling complex, interconnected challenges such as climate change, conflict and gender inequality.

We will work to promote more holistic, tailor-made approaches that best address specific justice and development challenges and meet the needs of justice seekers. Such an approach is observable, for example, in IDLO's victim-centered mode of combatting gender-based violence, which includes coordinated interventions along legal, medical and social service pathways that help prevent violence, increase accountability and support survivors.

We will also strengthen the linkages among different aspects of our own work, ensuring that our programs continue to benefit from and inform our policy, research and advocacy.

**57. Innovation:** A rapidly changing external environment requires us not just to take on new and evolving challenges but also to reflect, renew and adapt how we work. Over the course of the strategic cycle, IDLO will prioritize innovation by being more evidence-driven, encouraging and investing in new ideas and areas, and strengthening our ability to learn from both our successes and mistakes.



58. An overview of the plan is shown in the Strategic Framework below:

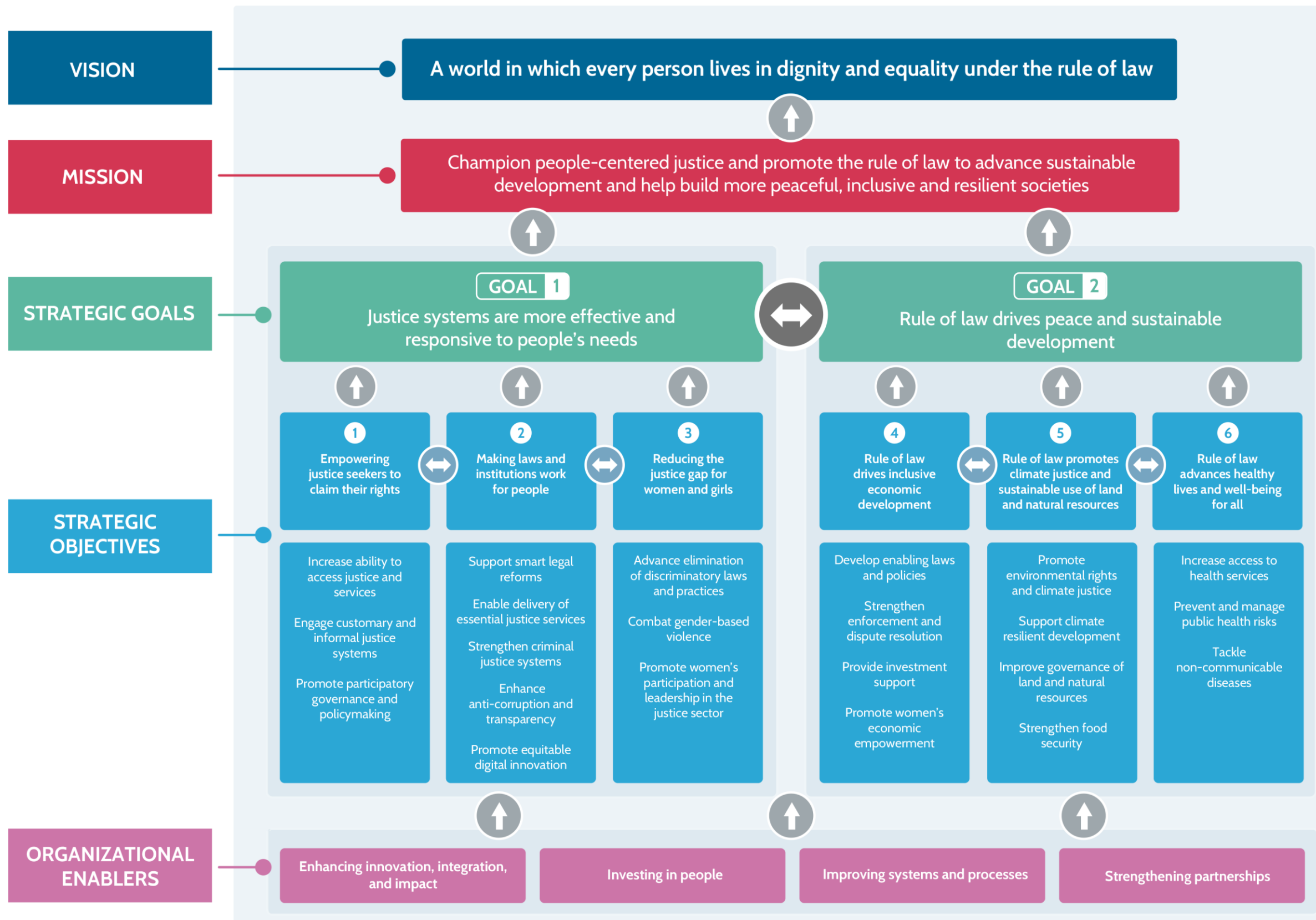


Diagram 1: IDLO's Strategic Framework 2021-2024

## Goal 1: Justice systems are more effective and responsive to people’s needs



Diagram 2: IDLO’s approach to people-centered justice

59. Justice only becomes a lived reality when people can access it. Yet for the majority of the world’s population, justice is unattainable; because people don’t have the money or means to reach a court; because they are unaware of their rights or are not able to enjoy them; because the law excludes them; because procedures are too complicated; because cases drag on for years; because communities have no one to advocate for them; because they remain forgotten.

60. IDLO's Strategic Plan 2021-2024 is based on the concept of 'people-centered justice.' It is guided by the understanding that people around the world use diverse pathways to seek redress for wrongs and resolve their disputes. It seeks to empower justice seekers and emphasizes that justice systems must be built around a better understanding of people's needs and their human rights. People-centered justice prioritizes reforms and innovations that will lead to greater access and inclusion and produce fairer and more satisfactory outcomes for the rights-holder.
61. The ability to resolve disputes, seek redress for human rights violations and access critical public services is particularly important in crisis and emergency contexts. This is especially true for people who already live in conditions of poverty, inequality and insecurity, who most need the support and protection of the law.
62. In this context, closing the justice gap and promoting a just, sustainable and equitable recovery from COVID-19 will require investment, innovation and refocusing justice systems around the most pressing challenges.
63. IDLO is committed to promoting more effective and responsive justice systems through the following Strategic Objectives:

### **Strategic Objective 1: Empowering justice seekers to claim their rights**

64. Legal empowerment is a 'bottom-up' approach to support justice seekers, particularly people living in overlapping and intersecting conditions of poverty, inequality and marginalization. It seeks to arm them with the knowledge and tools to engage with laws and institutions that affect their daily lives, from formal and informal justice actors to local government and social service providers.
65. Empowered citizens are also better able to participate in decision-making processes at the grassroots level, helping build greater trust and confidence in the justice system and public institutions, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected situations.
66. IDLO works both directly and in partnership with civil society to promote rights awareness, legal literacy, legal aid and other assistance and advisory services. We are a recognized leader in the area of alternative and pluralistic justice and have a demonstrated track record in helping communities engage with decisionmakers.
67. In line with our commitment to reach those furthest behind first, IDLO will prioritize the needs and human rights of the marginalized and vulnerable, and those experiencing inequality or discrimination. Our work will place a special emphasis on the empowerment of women and girls, youth, refugees and migrants and those who might be in marginalized or vulnerable situations to ensure they can fully enjoy their human rights, as enshrined in international human rights law, as well as in regional and national human rights instruments including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Through this approach we will seek to empower individuals to claim their human rights, to participate as equal members of society fully and meaningfully and to fight any legal and other forms of discrimination.

68. We will work to:

- **Increase people’s ability to access justice and services:** IDLO will work to enhance justice seekers’ ability to access courts, tribunals and other judicial and quasi-judicial mechanisms to seek remedies and engage effectively with law-enforcement and other service providers to claim their human rights. As public services increasingly migrate to digital platforms, we will also work to promote the ability of women and girls and marginalized and vulnerable groups to access them equitably.
- **Engage customary and informal justice (CIJ) systems:** Most disputes around the world are resolved through CIJ systems. Informal mechanisms are often faster, cheaper and more accessible and can play an important role in reducing the burden on formal justice systems. However, they often do not recognize the full rights of women, children and vulnerable groups, who tend to use such systems the most. IDLO’s engagement will help enhance access to justice for users of CIJ systems and promote reforms to advance greater respect for, and the full enjoyment of, human rights for all, including women and girls as well as justice seekers from vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.
- **Promote participation in grassroots governance and policymaking:** As an intergovernmental organization that both provides legal and institutional support to governments and works at the grassroots level, IDLO is well placed to support civil society and communities as they engage with decisionmakers. We will promote participatory and inclusive processes, particularly at the local government level to help build mutual trust and confidence and ensure greater accountability.

## Strategic Objective 2: Making laws and institutions work for people

69. Well-functioning institutions safeguard the gains of development by building resilience to shocks and crises like COVID-19. They uphold human rights, deliver essential services, prevent insecurity, sustain peace and lay the foundations for recovery.

70. Making justice institutions more effective, accessible, transparent, and accountable is a significant challenge for national actors and international development partners alike, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

71. Lack of political will, chronic underinvestment and often outdated laws and procedures mean that justice institutions manage large caseloads with limited capacities and insufficient resources. They now also face the daunting task of dealing with increasing human rights violations, disputes and legal and policy challenges generated by COVID-19, even as their ability to operate is limited by public health restrictions. In order to meet these challenges, effectively fulfil their mandates and contribute to peace and sustainable development, justice systems will need to adapt, innovate and address the most pressing justice needs.

72. Helping enable justice institutions to deliver essential services, particularly in countries experiencing or emerging from conflict and fragility, is the largest component of IDLO operations. Successful institutional reform occurs at multiple levels and requires strong national leadership, public support and sustained international engagement. IDLO seeks to provide support that advances national priorities and is grounded in an understanding of the social, cultural and political contexts where we work.

73. We will work to:

- **Support smart legal reforms:** We will help to empower partners, including justice institutions, executive bodies and parliaments, to develop laws and policies through inclusive, participatory processes. IDLO will promote evidence-based legal reforms, informed by a thorough understanding of justice needs and insights from social and behavioral science, to encourage prevention, avoid the escalation of disputes, promote fairer outcomes and reduce the burden on justice systems.
- **Enable delivery of essential justice services:** We will work with justice institutions, including courts, prosecutors, public defenders, complaint and oversight bodies, anti-corruption agencies, ministries of justice, and national human rights institutions in line with our mandate and comparative advantages to increase their ability to deliver essential justice services. IDLO will assist our justice partners in:
  - developing institutional mechanisms, including data collection and analysis and case management systems, to better understand justice needs and allocate resources.
  - implementing politically-informed and nationally-owned and -led sectoral and institutional reforms, particularly in fragile, transitional and conflict-affected contexts.
  - building and applying increased capacities to exercise institutional core functions and mandates in line with international human rights and rule of law standards and commitments.
  - resolving justice challenges created by COVID-19 including enabling triage of cases, providing increased protection for justice seekers with special needs, and expediting redress for rights violations and fast-track resolution of small claims and disputes.
- **Strengthen criminal justice systems:** Effective, fair and humane criminal justice systems play an important role in sustaining peace and promoting post-conflict recovery by tackling impunity and incentivizing peaceful collaboration. IDLO will work to strengthen capacities and coordination across the criminal justice chain to promote accountability in investigation, prosecution, adjudication and post-trial responses. We will support greater respect for victims' rights, the reintegration and rehabilitation of prisoners, including through innovative restorative justice approaches, and the incorporation of gender equality in the criminal justice system.
- **Enhance anti-corruption and transparency:** We will help to empower our partners in combatting corruption and to promote greater transparency, accountability and integrity in public institutions, particularly in the justice sector. Promoting the independence and integrity of the judiciary will remain a central priority. IDLO's approach to anti-corruption is aligned to the United Nations Convention against Corruption and includes support for preventive measures, criminalization and law enforcement, international cooperation, asset recovery, technical assistance and information exchange.
- **Promote equitable digital innovation:** Digital platforms are an increasingly important component of justice systems and public administration and can increase efficiency, speed and transparency. Digital platforms will become even more important following COVID-19. We will support digital innovations, such as e-courts and other e-justice

mechanisms, that improve service delivery and promote fair and equitable access to justice for all, with a special emphasis on the needs of women and girls and poor, marginalized and vulnerable groups.

### Strategic Objective 3: Reducing the justice gap for women and girls

74. Justice for women is first and foremost a human right, reflected in international treaties and commitments including the United Nations Charter, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and numerous other conventions, resolutions and declarations. Gender equality, including women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights, is a key aspect of the 2030 Agenda, including through SDGs 5 and 16.

75. Evidence shows that investing in justice for women also produces high returns in human development, economic growth and peace. However, laws and institutions often discriminate against, or are unresponsive to, the needs of women and girls, and initiatives to promote greater access to justice for women and girls do not attract enough support or investment.

76. COVID-19 has had a disproportionate impact on women and girls, increasing discrimination and human rights violations, putting lives and livelihoods in jeopardy and threatening to reverse fragile progress on gender equality.

77. IDLO will integrate gender equality throughout its work to ensure that women and girls are empowered to claim their rights and that institutions can uphold them and are responsive to the justice needs of women and girls. In addition, to help reduce the gender gap, we will work through targeted interventions to address barriers preventing women and girls from exercising their human rights. IDLO will:

- **Advance elimination of discriminatory laws and practices:** In many contexts, the law works against women and girls, for example by excluding them from positions of public authority, or by limiting their ownership of property or employment in certain sectors. It can also be a powerful means of empowerment by protecting women's full enjoyment of human rights, helping them access essential services and promoting their equality and dignity.

IDLO will work with a wide range of partners, including UN Women, to facilitate the repeal of discriminatory laws and regulatory and policy processes that directly and indirectly impact women and girls.

- **Combat gender-based violence:** The predominant area of IDLO's gender programming is the elimination of gender-based violence (GBV). We will work to tackle the alarming rise in GBV as a result of restrictions on movement put in place following the pandemic and the inability of survivors to access protective and support services.

IDLO will support partners in implementing a multi-dimensional approach to addressing GBV that brings together the justice sector, civil society and medical actors to implement preventive measures, strengthen the investigation, prosecution and adjudication of offenses against women, and provide protection and support to survivors.

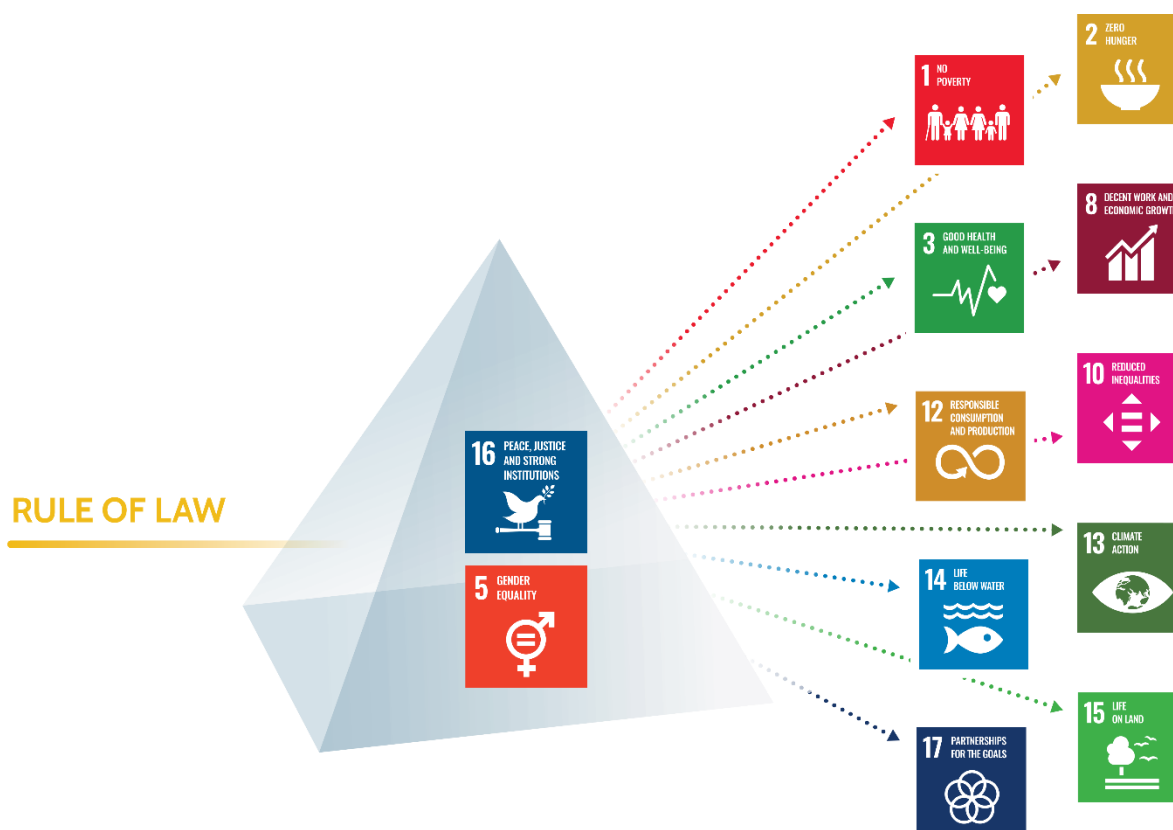
- **Promote women's participation and leadership in the justice sector:** A growing body of research suggests that women justice professionals contribute to improved access to justice for women by supporting their specific justice needs across a range

of issues. IDLO champions the increased participation of women in the justice sector through programs to promote the inclusion and full participation of women as judges, prosecutors, lawyers and police officials.

Over the next strategic cycle, IDLO will continue to support more effective participation of women justice professionals in the justice sector at the national and international levels to ensure that women have an active role in shaping justice systems, not just as justice seekers but also as policymakers, adjudicators and implementers of justice policies.



## Goal 2: Rule of law drives peace and sustainable development



**Diagram 3:** Rule of law as an enabler of the 2030 Agenda

78. The 2030 Agenda – with its comprehensive and universally-applicable set of goals – has been called the “declaration of interdependence.” It recognizes the intrinsic connections among the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development.

79. In addition to the substantial gains towards peace and sustainable development achieved through more effective, people-centered justice systems, the rule of law is key to helping catalyze progress on a broad range of goals and targets across 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.

80. The SDG 16+ framework links progress on the rule of law to 36 targets related to peace, justice and inclusion across the 2030 Agenda. Rule of law is also a cross-cutting enabler for all 17 SDGs as it advances the type of institutional mechanisms and fair, rule-based processes needed to promote the integrated “whole of society” approaches required for sustainable development.

81. IDLO views SDG 16 and SDG 5 as a prism through which the rule of law can accelerate progress across the 2030 Agenda. Over the next strategic cycle, we will promote the rule of law’s contribution to peace and the 2030 Agenda through the essential enabling role played by both goals. In line with our mandate, resources and comparative advantages,



we will focus our efforts on safeguarding and accelerating progress on SDGs related to economic development, climate change, food and nutrition and health through the following Strategic Objectives:

#### **Strategic Objective 4: Rule of law drives inclusive economic development**

82. Clear and effective economic and commercial legal frameworks promote trade, investment and economic growth. They provide stability and certainty, check coercive and predatory behavior and enhance competition. Good laws and regulations are a precondition for leveling the playing field for economic actors, supporting entrepreneurship and innovation and bolstering the capacity of small- and medium-sized enterprises.
83. The economic crisis unleashed by COVID-19 has battered economies, resulted in historic levels of unemployment, particularly for young people, and generated a large number of commercial disputes and bankruptcies around the world. It has also accelerated the re-ordering of global trade and commerce and will give rise to new industries and professions even as it disrupts existing sectors and livelihoods.
84. Supporting developing countries to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth through the rule of law was at the genesis of IDLO and remains a core part of our mission. The magnitude of the crisis has added a renewed sense of urgency and significance to our work on inclusive economic development.
85. With an emphasis on the poor, vulnerable and those most at risk of being left behind, IDLO will support partners to develop effective laws and policies to promote inclusive economic growth. We will help ensure that extraordinary measures such as economic relief and stimulus are equitably applied and that commercial disputes are fairly and efficiently resolved. We will work to:
  - **Develop enabling laws and policies:** We will support our partners to develop laws and policies that promote sustainable and equitable economic recovery and drive inclusive economic growth.
  - **Strengthen enforcement and dispute resolution:** IDLO will help increase national capacities to enforce commercial and economic laws and resolve commercial disputes through courts and tribunals as well as through the use of arbitration, mediation and other Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanisms.
  - **Provide investment support:** We will build on our experience supporting Least Developed Countries to strengthen their capacity to negotiate and implement fair and sustainable trade and investment agreements and resolve investment disputes. IDLO will seek to expand this support to landlocked and other developing countries.
  - **Promote women's economic empowerment:** Women face multiple legal, economic, social and practical barriers to meaningfully exercise their economic and social rights, ranging from discriminatory laws and social practices to lack of access to lawyers and dispute resolution mechanisms. IDLO will work with partners to identify and address systemic barriers to strengthen women's enjoyment of their economic human rights and realize their entrepreneurial potential.

## Strategic Objective 5: Rule of law promotes climate justice and sustainable use of land and natural resources

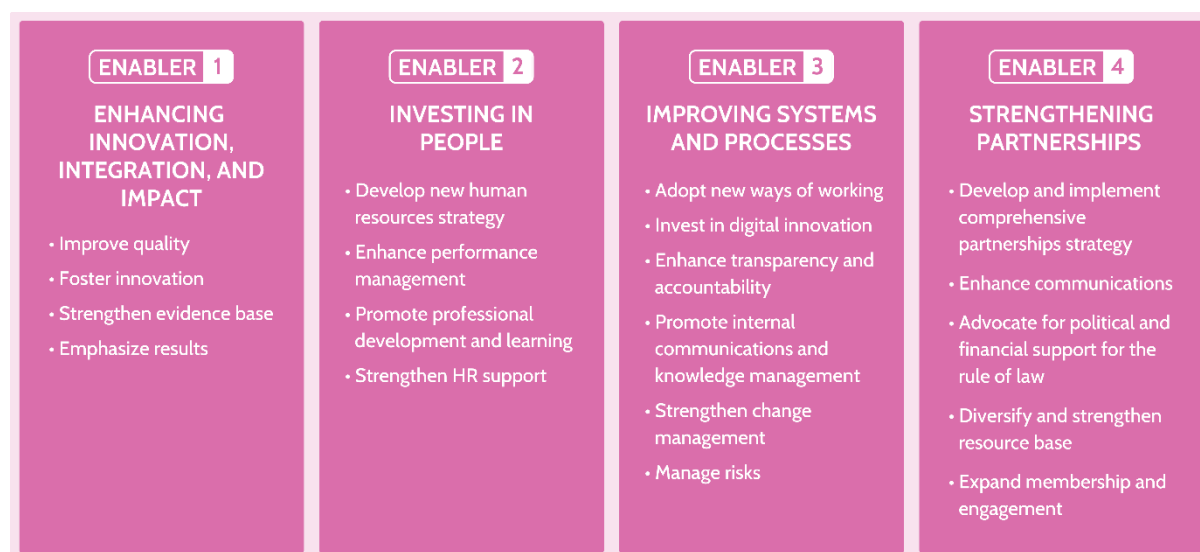
86. Climate change represents the single largest threat to sustainable development and has been identified by many as the most pressing challenge of our time. It is recognized by the 2030 Agenda under SDG 13 (climate action) as a cross-cutting issue with disproportionate effects on vulnerable and marginalized people, particularly youth, living in lower-income countries and fragile states, who have contributed the least to climate change. The impact is also distributed unequally across time, as future generations will cope with the consequences of present-day choices.
87. Climate change is a threat multiplier that disrupts livelihoods, especially in rural areas, increases migration and displacement and undermines state capacity to ensure human security. It drives increased competition over land and natural resources which exacerbates violence and conflict, particularly in fragile contexts.
88. IDLO will draw on its experience to address the rule of law dimension of climate change and the sustainable use of land and natural resources, which remains a relatively underexplored aspect of the global development agenda. We will work at the intersection of the law and climate justice, biodiversity, food security and governance of land and natural resources rights to:
- **Promote environmental rights and climate justice:** We will support the empowerment of communities, especially women, youth, indigenous groups and other marginalized populations, to claim environmental rights and actively participate in decision-making processes.
  - **Support climate resilient development:** IDLO will help strengthen regulatory frameworks and institutional capacity across sectors and engage stakeholders through inclusive, human rights-based approaches, particularly in fragile and developing contexts.
  - **Improve governance of land and other natural resources:** Building on IDLO's established body of work, we will support the ability of people, especially women, youth, indigenous peoples and local communities, to access customary and non-customary rights to land and other natural resources. We will promote the sustainable use and governance of land and natural resources through a combination of legal empowerment and institutional development approaches.
  - **Strengthen food security:** In light of heightened food insecurity as a result of the pandemic, IDLO will work in collaboration with the Food and Agricultural Organization and other partners to support countries to strengthen their regulatory frameworks and institutional capacity to promote food security, especially for marginalized and vulnerable groups and women and girls.

## Strategic Objective 6: Rule of law advances healthy lives and well-being for all

89. Effective public health law frameworks are an important means for the realization of SDG 3 (healthy lives and wellbeing for all). They are essential to enable progress towards universal access to health coverage and the development of well-functioning public health systems.

90. COVID-19 has underlined the importance and challenges of managing, coordinating, and expanding the key building blocks of a well-functioning health system. At both global and local levels, the law is a powerful tool for promoting the right to health. It can also help to ensure the effective prevention and management of public health emergencies consistent with human rights and rule of law principles.
91. Laws and policies to advance public health in countries and communities should be transparent and developed through participatory approaches. They should be publicly disseminated, fairly enforced and, when required, independently adjudicated through courts and tribunals. This is particularly the case during times of emergency like the COVID-19 pandemic.
92. IDLO has extensive experience working at the intersection of health, sustainable development and the rule of law and strengthening the capacity of civil society, public health and justice institutions to address large-scale public health crises. We will work with a range of national and international partners including the World Health Organization (WHO), to:
- **Increase access to health services, including through legal empowerment:** We will work with communities, governments and service providers through a combination of legal empowerment and social accountability approaches to help marginalized and vulnerable groups, and women and girls, combat discrimination and exercise their right to access all health services on an equal basis.
  - **Prevent and manage public health risks, including by developing effective legal frameworks:** Good legal and policy frameworks contribute to the prevention of public health risks, including public health emergencies of international concern (PHEICs), by improving access to vaccinations and by facilitating screening, counselling and education of those at risk of infection. IDLO will work with partners to assist countries to develop effective legal frameworks that can help them in addressing public health challenges, while ensuring respect for human rights, the rule of law and democratic principles, especially during public emergencies such as infectious disease pandemics.
  - **Tackle non-communicable diseases, including by strengthening regulatory and fiscal measures:** Non-communicable diseases account for widespread illness and disability, killing 41 million people worldwide every year. Key risk factors include unhealthy diets and physical inactivity, increasing the risk of life-threatening conditions such as diabetes and heart disease to men, women, girls and boys of all income levels. We will work with governments at the national level to strengthen regulatory and fiscal measures to prevent non-communicable diseases and promote more healthy and active lifestyles.

## Organizational Enablers



**Diagram 4:** Organizational Enablers

93. To Achieve the goals of this Strategic Plan and deliver the high-quality results our partners expect, requires that IDLO’s systems, processes, capacities and resource base must be robust, resilient and fit for purpose. This is even more important in a rapidly changing and increasingly competitive operating environment.

94. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the trends reshaping the development sector and our operating environment and will require us to re-examine and renew our ways of working. We will review our organizational systems and processes, building on the significant improvements over the last strategic cycle and further improving our ability to work in more efficient, innovative and integrated ways.

95. We will work on four key Enablers that are essential to achieving our Strategic Objectives over the course of the next cycle:

### Enabler 1: Enhancing innovation, integration, and impact

96. IDLO’s programs, research, policy and advocacy have consistently been evaluated as relevant and impactful. Over the next strategic cycle, we will build on these strengths by seeking further improvements in quality, integration and innovation of our work. We will prioritize our ongoing transition from a project-based to a program based, evidence-driven approach and place additional emphasis on monitoring and reporting on our results. IDLO will:

- **Improve quality:** We will improve program quality by adopting more innovative, integrated and multisectoral approaches by:

- further strengthening the linkages between programs, research, policy and advocacy and improving our program development, implementation, evaluation and learning processes to ensure quality at each stage of the program cycle;
  - continuing IDLO's transition to a program-based implementation model that builds on the lessons from the previous strategy;
  - developing thematic programs and strengthening our substantive expertise in priority areas;
  - developing strategies that translate the Strategic Plan into context-specific, locally-owned plans of action at the country level; and
  - fully integrating a human rights-based approach into our programming to integrate the norms, standards and principles of international human rights law into the plans, policies and processes of development programmes and projects.
- **Foster innovation:** We will foster a culture of innovation across IDLO by exploring new approaches and modes of delivery and adopting more flexible, iterative and scalable interventions. An organizational innovation hub will be created to act as a platform for generating, incubating and disseminating new ideas from across IDLO, including from younger staff members.
  - **Strengthen evidence base:** We will strengthen our ability to collect and analyze data, from our own work as well as that of others, to develop an evidence base to inform policymaking and advocacy, improve program interventions and contribute to more informed decision-making.
  - **Emphasize results:** We will demonstrate our impact more clearly through enhanced monitoring, evaluation and reporting, and through the Strategic Results and Resources Framework developed for the Strategic Plan 2021-2024.

## Enabler 2: Investing in people

97. As a specialized, knowledge-based organization, IDLO's main asset is our people. A key priority will be the development of a strategic approach to human resources and talent management to ensure that it motivates, empowers and enables employees to deliver on our mandate. We will:

- **Develop a new human resources strategy:** We will develop and implement a comprehensive human resources strategy to align policies and practices with IDLO's values, mission and strategic priorities.
- **Enhance performance management:** We will encourage a performance management culture based on a competency framework that suits IDLO's needs and organizational structure.
- **Promote professional development and learning:** To ensure that staff have the right knowledge and skillsets to grow professionally and excel in their roles, we will develop a more comprehensive approach to learning and professional development. IDLO will also promote greater mobility across the Organization as part of efforts to become a more field-oriented organization.

- **Strengthen human resources support:** We will strengthen the Organization’s human resources management capacity to improve the level of service to colleagues around the world and reinforce IDLO’s ability to attract, develop and retain a diverse, motivated and talented workforce.

### Enabler 3: Improving systems and processes

98. COVID-19 is fundamentally altering the ways in which organizations and offices function worldwide, with restrictions on health and movement accelerating the uptake of technology and flexible working and highlighting the need for more nimble and resilient operating models. While the crisis presents many challenges, it is also an opportunity to *Build Back Better* and adopt smarter, greener and more flexible ways of working.
99. With the goal of ensuring that IDLO is able to deliver the best possible quality and value for our partners, we will:
  - **Adopt new ways of working:** We will review and update our systems and business processes to ensure that our operational modalities are suited to our needs as a medium-sized, increasingly field-oriented organization and provide an optimal balance of efficiency, transparency and accountability.
  - **Invest in digital innovation:** Given the growing importance of technology, we will invest in our ICT capacity and systems and leverage digital innovation as a crosscutting enabler for organizational effectiveness.
  - **Enhance transparency and accountability:** We will build on past improvements to enhance IDLO’s transparency and accountability and secure the trust of current and potential partners. With new systems and the availability of more timely institutional reports and data, we will strengthen results-based management and budgeting. IDLO will continue to implement regular internal audits and to invest in systems and people to build a culture of compliance. We will continue publishing information on our website related to the annual audited financial statements that are now IPSAS compliant and on platforms such as the International Aid and Transparency Initiative (IATI).
  - **Promote internal communications and knowledge management:** We will improve our systems to manage and share knowledge and ensure better use of our accumulated research and experience. To facilitate greater organizational integration, we will encourage more collaboration and interaction among teams and offices.
  - **Strengthen change management:** IDLO will strengthen its capacity for change management and ensure that any new systems and platforms are accompanied by plans for their effective integration and implementation.
  - **Manage risks:** IDLO works in some of the most challenging and complex environments in the world. We will continue to effectively manage the political, security, operational, legal and reputational risks related to our operations through robust risk management frameworks. In light of the growing importance of technology and ICT, we will strengthen our systems to promote digital security and data protection. We will prioritize measures to secure appropriate recognition of



IDLO's legal status in countries where we operate to mitigate political and legal risks and deliver better value for money to donors and national partners.

#### **Enabler 4: Strengthening partnerships**

100. Global challenges like COVID-19 provide a vivid demonstration of our mutual interdependence and the need for renewed multilateralism and global solidarity. Making meaningful progress towards peaceful, just and inclusive societies and tackling shared challenges like the pandemic and climate change will require “whole of society” approaches and greater collaboration at local, national and regional levels.

101. As an independent, mid-sized intergovernmental organization funded entirely by voluntary contributions, IDLO relies on Member Parties and partners for both political and financial support. We also place a high value on partnerships with other organizations and entities, including the UN system, civil society, academia, philanthropic foundations and the private sector to pool expertise and resources, strengthen our convening power and leverage our impact. In the next strategic cycle, we will:

- **Adopt a strategic approach to partnerships:** IDLO enjoys strong relationships and partnerships with stakeholders in government, international and civil society organizations, and academia across the globe. We have also benefitted from leveraging our global operations and presence in international policy hubs including New York, Geneva, Rome and The Hague and by cooperating with likeminded organizations and initiatives with whom our interests and priorities align.

We will consolidate IDLO's external relations capacities, explore innovative modalities of cooperation, and develop a comprehensive partnership strategy to strengthen partnerships with our current stakeholders and engage with new ones, including with parliamentarians, regional organizations and youth, with clear priorities and objectives for engagement.

- **Enhance communications:** We will ensure timely and targeted communications through channels including publications, the IDLO website, multimedia and digital communications to build IDLO's brand and visibility, demonstrate impact, support advocacy and strengthen outreach. We will strengthen our ability to engage with key stakeholders across IDLO locations.
- **Advocate for political and financial support for the rule of law:** The rule of law and access to justice have become increasingly relevant to the international policy and development agenda. At the same time, they are coming under increasing pressure from conflicts, inequality and a growing backlash against the norms of human rights and good governance that underpin them. Official development assistance (ODA) for legal and judicial development saw a decrease of 16 percent between 2015 and 2018. The economic impact of the crisis is likely to reinforce this downward trend and will be reflected in lower social and development spending in national budgets, remittances and ODA on which many of the poorest and most vulnerable depend.

IDLO can contribute to global policy dialogue through our specialized yet cross-cutting mandate and can be a leading voice in key areas. Our priority over the next strategic cycle will be to position the Organization as a thought leader and

recognized voice on SDG 16 and its role as an enabler of all SDGs, and on other priority areas including justice for women and girls, customary and informal justice and the link between human rights and the rule of law. IDLO's advocacy will draw upon and contribute to our policy, research and programming.

We will partner with stakeholders across sectors and regions to promote a global partnership platform for SDG 16 to facilitate new partnerships and share information on challenges, innovations and good practices.

IDLO will work with governments to prioritize justice in their national plans and budgets and assist countries to report on their progress on SDG 16 as part of their Voluntary National Reviews. We will engage with development partners to promote increased investment in nationally led, people-centered justice reforms to reverse the steep decline in investment in recent years.

- **Diversify and strengthen the resource base:** IDLO has grown significantly over the course of the last strategic cycle from an annual revenue of 30.5 million euro in 2016 to 47.1 million euro in 2019. This growth has been largely driven by increases in our program revenue. IDLO continues to be reliant on a small number of donors for both program and unrestricted funding.

In an uncertain funding environment for development assistance, particularly in our sector, we will work to build funding partnerships with traditional and non-traditional funders including governments, private sector organizations, foundations and other actors. Improving the balance and predictability of funding and broadening our donor base will be an important priority. This will help to give us the flexibility we need to respond to opportunities, invest in innovation, quality and organizational capacities and build a sustainable foundation for continued growth.

- **Expand membership and engagement:** As an intergovernmental organization, IDLO relies on the active engagement and political support of its Member Parties for its governance, policy engagement and multilateral partnerships. We will adopt a strategic approach to membership enlargement to promote a balanced and representative growth in our membership, with a priority on countries with an active interest in our mandate and programming.



## V. CONCLUSION

102. Five years after the 2030 Agenda was adopted, progress towards all seventeen Sustainable Development Goals has been slow and uneven against the headwinds of deteriorating social, economic and political conditions.
103. This is particularly true of SDG 16. National and international institutions are struggling to meet the rising demand for justice. Frustrations with corruption, inequality and inaction on pressing concerns have undermined trust in government and helped fuel and aggravate conflicts and humanitarian crises. They have also contributed to a broader backlash against international norms, authoritarianism and democratic backsliding.
104. The global crisis prompted by COVID-19 represents both a profound challenge to our shared aspirations for peace and sustainable development as well as an opportunity to lay the foundations for a more just, prosperous and inclusive future for all. IDLO is committed to putting justice and the rule of law at the heart of global efforts to *Build Back Better*.
105. Our new strategy seeks to leverage IDLO's programs, research, policy and advocacy and reinforce our capacities with the goal of promoting people-centered justice and the rule of law's contribution to peace and sustainable development, in line with our mandate, resources and comparative advantages. Building a culture of justice requires time, effort and sustained commitment. It is the best investment we can make in our collective future.

/ENDS