



Women and Customary and Informal Justice Systems: Engagement and Action

Side Event organized by the International Development Law Organization (IDLO), Landesa, International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), Uganda Women's Network (UWONET) and Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI) on the occasion of the 64th session of the Commission on the Status of Women

Tuesday, 10 March 2020, 4:45 – 6:00 PM
Express Bar, United Nations Headquarters, New York

Around the world, people claim rights and resolve disputes and grievances through a range of justice mechanisms. In many settings, however, it is estimated that 80-90 per cent of disputes are dealt with outside the formal courts. Women, among others, often resort to customary and informal justice systems (CIJs) to resolve their concerns, such as those related to family obligations, inheritance, divorce, property rights, access to land and natural resources, and even protection from violence.

Justice and development actors have been increasingly discussing how to improve engagement with customary and informal justice systems to deliver justice for all. However, despite their perceived advantages, many CIJs often perpetuate patriarchal values, reflect male-dominated structures and produce discriminatory and harmful outcomes for women and girls. These challenges call for better understanding of and engagement with such systems, by placing women's issues and concerns at the center of discussions on policy directions and entry points for engagement.

The event will provide space for an open discussion on challenges and opportunities of engagement with CIJs. Participants will reflect on ways in which to enhance women's justice experiences with CIJ systems, looking at best practices and promising entry points.

Key issues for reflection:

- What can be done to improve strategic engagement with CIJs for the promotion and protection of women's rights?
- What practical entry points and good practices offer concrete pathways for engagement?

The event will be informed by IDLO's research on *Navigating Complex Pathways to Justice: Expanding Women's Access to Justice in CIJ systems* (forthcoming).



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AGENDA

Opening Remarks

Ms. Jan Beagle, Director-General, IDLO

Moderator

Dr. Ilaria Bottigliero, Director, Policy, Research and Learning, IDLO

Panelists:

- Ms. Beth Roberts, Program Manager, Center for Women's Land Rights, Landesa
- Ms. Emerlynne Gil, Senior International Legal Adviser, ICJ
- Ms. Rita Aciro-Lakor, Chief Executive Officer, UWONET
- Dr. Omaira Bolanos, Director, Latin America Program, RRI

Interactive Discussion

Closing Remarks

Dr. Ilaria Bottigliero, Director, Policy, Research and Learning, IDLO