

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LAW ORGANIZATION

STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL, MS JAN BEAGLE

TO BE DELIVERED AT THE HIGH-LEVEL MEETING TO COMMEMORATE THE SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General,
Distinguished representatives of Member States and Observers,
Colleagues and Friends,

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to address the Assembly today, on behalf of the International Development Law Organization (IDLO), the only global inter-governmental organisation with observer status with the United Nations, with the exclusive mandate to advance the rule of law and access to justice to promote peace and sustainable development.

It is a special honour for me, having devoted the majority of my professional career to service in the United Nations, to do so on the occasion of the observance of its seventy-fifth anniversary. A commitment to the values of the UN Charter, multilateralism, and partnership with the United Nations family is central to my approach as Director-General of IDLO.

This anniversary takes place at the time of one of the worst disruptions since the United Nations was founded amidst the ashes of the Second World War. COVID-19 has exposed, and is being aggravated by, the entrenched injustices and inequalities under which too many people still live, and from which no nation can claim to be exempt.

When the Charter was signed in June 1945, the air in San Francisco was clean. Today, those skies reflect the orange haze and smoke of wildfires fanned by the winds of climate change.

In the midst of the pandemic, the Secretary General has called for a determination to “build back better”—to turn challenges into opportunities. The opportunity that such a truly global challenge presents is to revive and renew the spirit of cooperation and solidarity enshrined in the Charter, to build a more peaceful, just and sustainable future.

Today, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development represents both humanity’s highest aspirations, and the best blueprint we have to tackle our common challenges.

The principles of equity, equality and non-discrimination, and the focus on rule of law, good governance and effective institutions, are at the core of SDG 16, and cut across the entire Agenda.

The rule of law, properly understood, is distinct from rule *by* law. It is rooted in the values at the heart of the Charter, and attuned to the needs and lived reality of people, particularly those who are most vulnerable and at risk of being left behind.

It must protect people fleeing conflict; support the essential worker who has contracted the virus and can no longer feed his family; provide shelter to the woman locked into her home with an abusive partner; and offer a remedy to those displaced by a wildfire, hurricane, drought or famine.

The rule of law serves not only as a guarantor of individual rights, but as a vital means to foster the trust of people in governments, to prevent conflict and fragility, to build and maintain peace, and to enable countries to unlock their development potential.

It is the rule of law that, in the end, delivers justice.

IDLO works around world to advance the essential contribution of the rule of law to sustaining both peace and development.

We are heartened by the strong commitment in the Declaration of Heads of State and Government to enhancing “democratic governance and the rule of law by strengthening transparent and accountable governance and independent judicial institutions.”

I submit to you, in the spirit of the UN Charter to which we are recommitting today, that there can be no more vital endeavour for the peoples of this world, or for the future of our common humanity, than to invest in a culture of the rule of law.

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.