

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

**DELIVERED AT THE FRIENDS OF UN INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE ON THE PREVENTION  
AND CONTROL OF NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES: WORKING WITH MEMBER STATES TO  
DELIVER THE NCD-RELATED SDG TARGETS DURING AND BEYOND COVID-19**

Thursday, 24 September 2020

As IDLO has been a member of the Task Force since its inception, I am very pleased to sponsor this event and to congratulate the Secretariat and donors on the Multi-Party Trust Fund initiative.

As the only global intergovernmental organisation exclusively devoted to promoting the rule of law and to advancing a culture of justice to sustain peace and development, IDLO brings to the Taskforce a distinct perspective on the role of the rule of law in addressing non-communicable diseases.

Now more than ever, 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.

The rule of law must be a central component of the COVID-19 response. IDLO is pleased to be working closely with Dr Tedros, WHO, and others to contribute to our collective efforts to halt the spread of the virus and to help Build Back Better.

Even as it is imperative that we respond more effectively to the COVID-19 emergency, we must not lose focus on NCDs or forget the tens of millions of people who die from NCDs each year, accounting for nearly three-quarters of all global deaths.

We see at least three ways in which the law and justice sector can enable the response to NCDs in the context of COVID-19.

Firstly, effective responses to all health challenges require functioning legal and regulatory frameworks, and national capacity to implement them. We are pleased to be working with WHO in Bangladesh, Kenya, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Uganda to build legal, regulatory and fiscal capacity to respond to NCDs.

This support includes providing information on the experience and practices of other countries in these areas.

Secondly, the rule of law ultimately is about equality before the law and the delivery of just and fair outcomes. The law must protect society's most vulnerable, including people living with NCDs, and ensure access to universal health coverage without discrimination.

This imperative has only been reinforced by the ravages of the current pandemic, as we have seen that people living with NCDs are particularly vulnerable to the severe health impacts of the COVID-19 disease.

Finally, the rule of law provides concrete pathways for an effective governance of the crisis that can lead to a sustainable recovery. Good governance based on principles of equity and protection of human rights inherent in the rule of law, is essential to ensure the continuation of sorely needed services and to support communities' resilience against future crises.

IDLO, in collaboration with other Task Force partners, is committed to strengthening country capacity, including legal and policy frameworks, to prevent and respond to public health emergencies, as well as ongoing and often preventable NCDs.

For example, IDLO's programme in collaboration with FAO, will assess the impact of COVID-19 and emergency regulations on food security for vulnerable groups in Honduras and Uganda.

Let me add that we have chosen "Equitable access to health" - health services as well as health products - as the theme of our online "Crisis Governance Forum" to be held on 2 October 2020. I hope that you will all be able to join and contribute your insights to the discussion.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – particularly Sustainable Development Goal 16 as an enabler of peace, justice and inclusion – should remain at the centre of our efforts, including in response to NCDs in the context of COVID-19.

In keeping with the call for policy integration at the heart of Agenda 2030, we must ensure strategic coherence between our pandemic responses and the policies to be followed to advance the NCDs agenda.

By pursuing them on their own merit, but also in their interrelationships, and at the intersection of the drives to combat poverty, climate change, and ensure sustainable food systems, we will have laid strong foundations on which to "build back better," and to deliver justice now, and for future generations.

*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.*