



INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LAW ORGANIZATION
STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL, MS JAN BEAGLE
2021 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FESTIVAL

Italy's Commitment at the International Level for a Sustainable and Resilient Recovery

7 October 2021

Thank you, Ms. Mumba,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Friends and Colleagues.

I would like to thank ASVIS for inviting me to the Festa Dello Sviluppo.

As Director-General of the International Development Law Organization - the only global intergovernmental organisation working exclusively to promote peace and sustainable development through the rule of law - it is a pleasure to join this important discussion.

Multilateralism is in crisis at this extraordinary moment in history.

We are experiencing a backlash against the institutions of international cooperation, and the core values of the UN Charter just when we need them the most.

From COVID-19 to the Climate Crisis - our most urgent problems do not stop at borders and are too big and too complex for any of us to solve alone.

The consequences of putting narrow self-interest over solidarity, and unilateral action over mutual cooperation, at this critical juncture, could be catastrophic.

I was at the high-level meeting of the General Assembly just two weeks ago when the Secretary General warned world leaders that we are "sleepwalking towards disaster."

Against this grim backdrop, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development represents both humanity's highest aspirations and a common framework for international collaboration around shared challenges and interests.

SDG 16 on Peace, Justice and Inclusion, with the rule of law at its core, is key to helping catalyse progress on a broad range of goals across the entire 2030 Agenda.

The principles of equality, and non-discrimination; the focus on effective institutions and participatory decision-making; and the commitment to leaving no one behind - which are at the heart of Goal 16 - are also interwoven across the other SDGs.

It is these common threads, which come together to form a vision of development that is inclusive, just and sustainable, that make the 2030 Agenda truly transformative.

The Secretary General has reiterated the importance of the SDGs as a central part of his ambitious Common Agenda, which seeks to renew multilateralism through a new social contract and a global new deal.

But as young activists rightly reminded us at the Youth4Climate event in Milan, policies and promises need to be accompanied with action.

In that spirit, allow me to offer three concrete ways that the rule of law can advance the 2030 Agenda and multilateralism.

First - the rule of law can help to promote a more inclusive, just and sustainable recovery and accelerate progress across all Sustainable Development Goals.

Data shows that, within 18 months, the pandemic has reversed five years of progress since the SDGs were adopted.

This has affected us all but its impact has been most severe on those already living in conditions of poverty, exclusion and injustice.

The impact on women and girls has been particularly devastating, threatening to roll back decades of hard-won gains on gender equality.

The cruel juxtaposition of vaccination statistics between the developed and developing world, gives a lie to the statement we are all in this together and the promise of leaving no one behind.

This self-interested approach is not only inequitable it is also self-defeating.

As the WHO has warned, vaccine inequity not only slows down the economic recovery, it also increases the risk of newer and more infectious variants that reduce effectiveness of vaccines, and prolong the pandemic for everyone.

The rule of law is critical in effectively managing the crisis and promoting a sustainable recovery.

People centred justice systems can empower the least powerful to participate in public decision-making, helping build trust.

Effective laws and institutions are needed to address the multiple and intersecting layers of discrimination faced by women and girls, and others living in conditions of exclusion.

The rule of law can help decision makers to balance competing interests fairly and transparently.

And it can help ensure that relief efforts benefit intended recipients by preventing corruption.

IDLO has been working with partners around the world to promote such a rule of law-based response to the pandemic, and we are committed to scaling up this support.

Second, the rule of law can help us to transform laws and institutions and make them fit for purpose to tackle current and emerging challenges.

Traditional instruments of governance and policy are ill-suited to handle complex and interrelated issues like climate change, refugees and migration, and extreme inequality.

Emerging technologies and the increased use of electronic platforms hold great promise but also raise the risk of creating new forms of inequality and widening the digital divide.

This often puts individuals and countries at the frontlines of crises not of their making and unfairly carrying the burden of collective problems.

Under its new Strategic Plan, IDLO is committed to promoting effective, fair and transparent rule-based policies and institutions.

For example, a rule of law approach to climate action, in line with Sustainable Development Goals 13 and 16, can help accelerate transformative, sustainable, and low-carbon development.

Fair, effective and equitable legal frameworks can pave the way to resilience and adaptation to climate change.

It can also empower communities to take the lead in climate action, helping that those who are most affected have a voice in setting climate and biodiversity-related policies that help reduce inequalities and eliminate climate-related drivers of conflict.

IDLO was pleased to partner with ASVIS in organising a dialogue to highlight this approach at the All4Climate initiative organised by the Italian Ministry for Ecological Transition.

My third and final point is that the rule of law can help to renew multilateralism by making it more inclusive, fair and people-centred.

Both the Common Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically Goal 17, reflect the importance of building new partnerships and promoting whole of society approaches.

IDLO is proud that Italy – our host country, Vice President and development partner - is a leading supporter of this multi-stakeholder conception of multilateralism.

A good example is the SDG 16 Conference, co-organised by IDLO and the UN's Department of Economic and Social Affairs in partnership with the Government of Italy.

Launched in 2019, the Conference has grown into an important global forum that brings together key actors working on peace, justice and inclusion to share experiences and good practices, form new partnerships, and set the agenda for future cooperation.

This annual forum provides a tangible way to advance the innovative partnerships called for under goal 17 of the 2030 Agenda.

To conclude, it is clear that we are at a critical juncture.

The choices we make now will shape the kind of world we will build for future generations.

Two important tests will be the G20 Leaders' Summit in Rome and the COP 26 in Glasgow in the coming weeks.

With the support of partners like Italy and ASVIS, IDLO will keep pushing for bold and transformative action at these key meetings and beyond.

Working together, as Mr. Stefanini has said, I am confident that we can overcome the challenges of the present moment to renew multilateralism and catalyse progress on the Sustainable Development Goals.

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