

**STATEMENT OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LAW ORGANIZATION**

Delivered by Jan Beagle, Director-General, IDLO

**United Nations High-Level Forum on the Culture of Peace convened by the President of the
74th Session of the UN General Assembly
“The Culture of Peace: Change our world for the better in the age of COVID-19”
New York, 10 September 2020**

Mr. President,
Excellencies,

As Director-General of the International Development Law Organization - the only global intergovernmental organization exclusively devoted to promoting the rule of law and to advancing a culture of justice to sustain peace and development - I appreciate and welcome this opportunity to contribute to the discussions at this High-level Meeting on furthering progress towards a culture of peace "in the age of COVID 19".

IDLO is working to ensure that justice and the rule of law serve as concrete pathways for a sustainable recovery from the pandemic, charting the way for progress towards the “peaceful, just and inclusive societies” that Agenda 2030 commits all of us to build and sustain.

The pandemic has exacerbated inequalities and fragilities, fueling drivers of instability and conflict, and undermining development gains and public trust in institutions.

The challenges that the world is facing today not only threaten social and economic wellbeing and hard-won progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. They can all too quickly destabilize fragile advances towards peace across the globe.

Working in some of the most conflict threatened areas in the world to strengthen the resilience of institutions and of justice systems, and to help empower people to claim their rights, IDLO is acutely aware of the potential that shocks such as COVID-19, by exposing entrenched injustices and inequalities, and heightening health and food insecurities, possess to ignite violence and renew conflict.

As the Secretary-General has emphasized, it is these inequalities, injustices and insecurities that we must address, in the age of COVID-19 more than even before, if we want a real chance to further a culture of peace.

In a Policy Brief on the Rule of Law and COVID-19 that IDLO issued and circulated to all UN delegations yesterday, we identified actions to be taken on a number of fronts for an effective rule of law-based response to the pandemic and for *building back better*. Among them, the imperative of continued investment in a culture of justice. Through our research, policy advocacy and programming at country level, IDLO is committed to contribute to building this culture.

A key lesson we are learning every day in our work but also in our daily life dominated by COVID-19 is, indeed, that a culture of justice, rooted in the rule of law, is the necessary foundation on which a culture of peace - the change " for the better " that this meeting is calling for - must be built and can only be sustained.