

**PROCEEDINGS**  
**MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY OF PARTIES 2017**  
**November 28-29, 2017**

The 2017 Annual Meeting of the Assembly of Parties (the Assembly) of the International Development Law Organization (IDLO), was held in the “Sala delle Conferenze Internazionali”, at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in Rome, on November 28-29, 2017 [The list of participants and the full meeting documents are available online at [this link](#)].

**DAY 1**

**AGENDA ITEM 1: OPENING**

The President of the Assembly, Mr. Nawaf Al-Mahamel, Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED), representing Kuwait, welcomed Member Party representatives and thanked the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the Government of Italy for hosting the Assembly. Before moving to the business of the day, the President asked delegates to observe a minute’s silence in memory of the victims of the recent terrorist attack on a mosque in Egypt.

Referring to the Partnership Forum which would be inaugurated during the afternoon session, he recalled that the Forum was a new feature of the annual meetings of the Assembly of Parties, introduced in 2016 with the aim of engaging Member Parties and other partners, including governments, international policy thinkers and development practitioners, in an interactive dialogue on key issues related to the rule of law. This year’s Forum would focus, he noted, on the contribution of the rule of law to sustaining peace and sustainable development.

The President then invited H.E. Benedetto Della Vedova, Undersecretary of State in the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, to deliver his opening remarks.

H.E. Benedetto Della Vedova said he was honored to open IDLO’s Assembly of Parties and that the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation was pleased to host the event.

The Undersecretary of State referred to the growing pressure and threats to the rule of law globally, which made, he observed, IDLO’s unique mandate all the more valuable.

He echoed the position of the UN Secretary-General on the importance of investing in sustaining peace by building more effective and accountable institutions and protecting human rights, recalling that human rights, together with peace and development, are the three pillars on which the international system was built in 1945 and enshrined in the UN

Charter. With the adoption of Agenda 2030, he noted, the international community had strongly reaffirmed that these three pillars are intrinsically interlinked and mutually reinforcing.

Describing the rule of law as a pre-condition for stable and prosperous societies, he underlined the key role of the rule of law in upholding human dignity and addressing inequalities. He emphasized that Italy was committed to an increased engagement in the international community's efforts to advance the rule of law as a fundamental component of sustainable development.

Recalling the pivotal importance that Italy attaches to the meaningful participation of women and girls in all areas of society and to the respect and promotion of their rights, the Undersecretary of State welcomed IDLO's decision to devote a session of the Partnership Forum to gender equality and women's access to justice.

He referred with appreciation to the ongoing collaboration between Italy and IDLO and the resulting consolidation of IDLO's role as one of the key actors of Rome's International Organizations hub.

The Undersecretary of State welcomed IDLO's governance reform and commended the Organization on its 2018 Management Plan submitted to the Assembly for approval.

He welcomed the accession of Mali, Sweden and Montenegro to IDLO's membership, noting that Montenegro would soon complete its procedure for ratification and observed that the growth of IDLO's membership was sound evidence of its success.

H.E. Della Vedova praised IDLO for translating the rule of law from an abstract principle into concrete actions aimed at improving people's lives. He highlighted IDLO's work in fragile and post-conflict countries, particularly in Africa.

Stressing the importance of IDLO receiving enhanced financial and political support to fully implement its Strategic Plan, he ended by conveying to the Assembly Italy's intention to confirm its substantial financial contribution to IDLO and expressed the hope that all Members of the Organization would actively support IDLO's core mandate and work.

**PRESIDENT:** The President of the Assembly thanked H.E. Della Vedova for his inspiring remarks and proceeded to the adoption by consensus of the meeting's Agenda. The President pointed out that the 2017 Assembly marked the end of Kuwait's term as President of IDLO. He noted that the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, the official representative of the State of Kuwait on development matters, had a long history of engagement with IDLO. He said he was honored to have been personally involved in the work of the Organization and to have witnessed its growth over the years in a changing international landscape, as the international community transitioned from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Describing the inclusion of SDG 16 in the 2030 Agenda as a "watershed moment", he noted that all projects considered for funding by the Kuwait Fund now had to demonstrate

linkages to the SDGs. The President said he was honored to have been involved in the process leading to the adoption of IDLO's Strategic Plan 2017-2020 which clearly enshrined the principles of SDG 16 as core components of IDLO's work.

Recalling IDLO's over-arching goal to promote the rule of law as a driver of sustainable development, he observed that IDLO today was a stronger, more relevant and innovative Organization, making a real difference in people's lives. He noted that IDLO was now operating in 31 countries, compared to just 14 at the end of 2014, and had made significant progress in balancing its program portfolio geographically. During the past three years, seven new Member Parties - Honduras, Mongolia, Pakistan, Vietnam, Mali, Sweden and Montenegro - had also joined IDLO.

He remarked that at the international level, IDLO was now recognized as a key actor on rule of law and access to justice issues, with an active presence in the UN and other international fora. This growth in IDLO's external profile had been matched, he said, by significant efforts to improve the effectiveness, transparency and accountability of the Organization and most importantly, its capacity to impact people's lives.

In closing, the President stressed that although Kuwait was ending its term as President, its commitment to IDLO remained firm and expressed the hope that all Members would continue to provide their support to the Organization.

## **AGENDA ITEM 2: DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S REPORT (AP/2017/2.1)**

The Director-General (DG) welcomed the delegates, particularly those who had traveled long distances to attend.

The DG expressed her gratitude to Italy for hosting the Assembly and to Undersecretary of State Della Vedova for inaugurating the event. She reiterated her appreciation to Italy for its long-standing and consistent support as IDLO's host country and *ex-officio* Vice President.

The DG congratulated Mali and Sweden on becoming new Members of IDLO, and Montenegro as the latest signatory of the Establishment Agreement and soon to become new Member, adding that she saw IDLO's membership growth as recognition of the relevance of IDLO's mandate, at a time when people were demanding clean government, effective institutions, access to justice and respect for human rights.

Noting that the Assembly was taking place during the week marking the fourth anniversary of the popular uprising in Ukraine, the DG recalled that IDLO had been working in Ukraine since 2015, mainly in the area of anti-corruption. She informed the Assembly about a recent visit to the country, where she had had the opportunity to meet the authorities and observe IDLO's work firsthand. She then introduced a short video on IDLO's work in Ukraine and expressed the hope that the Assembly would be encouraged, as she was, by what had been achieved in such a short time, with the support of the government and local partners.

Turning from Ukraine to the global environment, the DG remarked that problems of injustice, inequality, exclusion and deprivation were at the root of popular discontent. Unprecedented numbers of people were being displaced, she noted, and the international system of laws and rules, human rights and humanitarian principles was under growing pressure.

She said IDLO was encouraged by recent UN Resolutions acknowledging the importance of the rule of law in preventing conflict and sustaining peace as well as advancing sustainable development, adding that the notion that peace cannot be sustained, nor development made sustainable without investment in the rule of law, was something that lies at the heart of IDLO's mandate and Strategic Plan 2017-2020.

Summarizing some of the key highlights from the past year, the DG said she was pleased to report that IDLO's program portfolio and program pipeline were both in a healthy condition; independent evaluations of programs had produced positive results and lessons learned for the Organization; IDLO's advocacy and visibility had continued to grow, with important new partnerships being forged; and significant organizational and governance reforms had been implemented, though she clarified that some reforms had been deferred due to a lack of sufficient funding.

She paid tribute to the hard work and commitment of IDLO's staff, in the field, other offices, and at headquarters. She noted that a key challenge for IDLO remained resource mobilization and, in particular, broadening IDLO's donor base.

Moving to the main body of her report, the DG indicated that it was focused on results, reforms, and resources.

The DG recalled the two main Impact Goals of IDLO's Strategy 2020, namely: empowering people to access justice and rights, and building effective and accountable institutions, which were in turn underpinned by six Action Goals (thematic areas), and said that these goals had guided IDLO's programs, research and advocacy during 2017.

Referring to the growing geographic diversity of IDLO programs, the DG cited two new programs starting up in Mexico and Uganda, noted that programming in Africa would soon surpass that of Asia and that IDLO was expanding operations in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), leading to enhanced operational stability and greater strategic relevance.

In relation to IDLO's first Impact Goal on legal empowerment, she said that as IDLO's first female Director-General, she was especially proud of what IDLO had achieved in the last four years, including developing and rolling out the Organization's first ever Gender Strategy, and incorporating gender equality as a principal objective or significant component in at least 21 of IDLO's 62 projects. She noted the signing in April 2017 of a Memorandum of Understanding with UN Women for joint collaboration on the implementation of SDG 5, and said the Organization was now preparing an updated Gender Strategy incorporating lessons learned from the current one.

The DG went on to summarize the three main areas of focus of IDLO's gender programs, namely: promoting gender-responsive laws and policies (citing examples of programs in Kenya and Tunisia); combatting gender-based violence (in Afghanistan, Honduras, Liberia, Mongolia and Ukraine); and empowering women and girls to claim their economic and social rights (providing examples from Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi, as well as the MENA region).

The DG argued that justice for women improves when justice is dispensed by women, hence in 2017 IDLO continued to champion the participation of women in the justice sector, to support regional and international networks of women judges and lawyers, and the GQUAL Campaign for gender parity in international institutions.

Whilst pursuing its activities under this Impact Goal, she noted that IDLO had engaged effectively with civil society and provided examples of countries where IDLO was collaborating with local community groups, including in Honduras (developing policies and mechanisms to reduce homicide and intra-family violence; Uganda (linking community justice actors with the formal justice system); and Myanmar (building trust and confidence in the justice system). In relation to the latter she informed the Assembly that an independent evaluation commissioned by UNDP, IDLO's partner organization in Myanmar, had recommended the expansion of this program to other parts of the country, including the Rakhine State, as part of a long-term approach to promote reconciliation.

Turning to IDLO's second Impact Goal on institution building, the DG reported that in 2017 this had accounted for approximately 60% of IDLO's programs and she went on to highlight some of the key achievements and challenges in this area.

In Afghanistan, where IDLO has been present since 2002, she reported that IDLO's recently concluded Justice Training Transition Program (JTTP) had served as a basis for the development of a lessons learned brief on institutional capacity development and transition.

She cited Somalia, where IDLO is implementing a multi-year, multi-institutional program, with the Ministry of Justice and the Office of the Attorney General. At this point the DG also took the opportunity to welcome the Attorney General of Somalia to the Assembly.

In Mali, the DG reported, IDLO was implementing a five-year program, funded by the Dutch Government, to strengthen the criminal justice chain, while in Kenya IDLO was continuing to provide support to all three branches of government. Stressing that IDLO's work was always demand-driven, collaborative and non-partisan, she reported that a recent independent evaluation of IDLO's work in Kenya had acknowledged that one of IDLO's comparative advantages was its ability to "adapt flexibly and rapidly to requests for assistance".

Moving to emerging program developments for 2018, the DG flagged IDLO's increasing engagement with informal or customary justice systems, citing program examples from

Somalia, Burundi and Uganda and further noted that a policy brief on the subject would be developed in 2018.

She referred to IDLO's emerging work to support refugees and migrants and said IDLO was finalizing a Memorandum of Understanding with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to promote joint cooperation and help delineate IDLO's comparative advantage in this area.

She highlighted IDLO's expanding work on economic development, citing the framework agreement signed in July with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) which had led to increased collaboration on programs in Europe, Central Asia and the MENA region, as well as an agreement with KFAED due to be signed in early 2018 for legal capacity building on commercial and economic law. She also referred to IDLO's new Investment Support Programme for Least Developed Countries (LDCs), developed in cooperation with the UN Office of the High Representative on Least Developed Countries, Landlocked and Small Island States (UN-OHRLS), with support from Italy and for which the EU had pledged significant support. Lastly, she flagged an MOU signed in May 2017 with the Ministry of Commerce of China, noting that IDLO was now developing legal support projects for countries engaged in China's One Belt One Road Initiative, which would deepen IDLO's cooperation with China both as a Member Party and a development partner.

Turning to organizational and management issues, in particular the eight Major Initiatives IDLO had committed to pursuing in its Strategy 2020, the DG reported that, due to reduced unrestricted funding, IDLO had to make some difficult choices on which reforms to prioritize, though she stressed that important progress had been made.

She drew attention to the adoption of a New Employment Model (NEM) and new Employee Rules thanks to which all IDLO employees, regardless of location, would now be subject to the same policies and rules.

On enhancing financial transparency and accountability, she highlighted the preparation of IDLO's first detailed output-based budget for 2018, and the design of a new Results Framework for Strategy 2020, to be rolled out during 2018, adding that these measures would help IDLO to report more comprehensively to its Member Parties and other stakeholders.

Regarding program quality, she said IDLO had developed guidelines and a tool kit to improve program development and project design, drawing on lessons from evaluations and assessments, as well as sectoral best practices.

She reported that IDLO had implemented most of the recommendations of the 2016 Independent Management Review as well as the Continuous Improvement Program (CIP) launched in 2015, though the upgrading of some ICT systems and the Enterprise Resource Platform had been deferred due to funding constraints.

The DG referred to the governance reform process, led by the Standing Committee and facilitated by the US with support from IDLO's Secretariat and the Office of the General Counsel, noting that the reforms would help clarify and rationalize roles and responsibilities of the governing bodies, thereby enhancing oversight, policy guidance and accountability.

The DG expressed gratitude for the generous support IDLO continued to receive from its donors, in particular from Italy, Sweden and the US. She said the Organization was expecting to end the year with a balanced budget but cautioned that there was very little flexibility, as attracting core contributions remained a challenge. She cautioned that without a sufficient level of core funding to complement program revenue, IDLO would not be able to pursue all the necessary investments in innovation, learning and organizational reform.

In an effort to revitalize financial support, she reported that in 2017 IDLO had sought to strengthen its internal resource mobilization capacity and developed a new resource mobilization strategy and plan, with input from the Standing Committee. The Organization had also intensified its engagement with current, new and prospective partners, adding that the 2018 Management Plan set out concrete objectives for diversifying the donor base and seeking additional funding. The DG reaffirmed her commitment, and that of her senior colleagues, to pursuing these efforts with determination. While recalling that there is no financial obligation attached to membership of IDLO, she urged all Members to give positive consideration to making voluntary contributions to the Organization.

Before concluding, the DG paid tribute to the President of the Assembly whose term of office was coming to an end and expressed deep appreciation for his support and wise counsel over the years.

She recalled that 2018 would mark IDLO's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary as an intergovernmental organization, noting that during this 30-year period, IDLO had evolved from a small training institute to a development organization with 20 offices on four continents engaged in peace-building, justice and sustainable development. In a troubled and turbulent world, she concluded, IDLO's mission to create a culture of justice remained as relevant as the day it was born, and the support of IDLO's Member Parties and partners had never been more important.

### **CEREMONY TO MARK ACCESSION OF NEW MEMBER PARTIES, SWEDEN AND MALI, AND SIGNATURE BY MONTENEGRO OF THE AGREEMENT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF IDLO**

**PRESIDENT:** The President extended a warm welcome to Sweden, Mali and Montenegro, and invited their representatives to the podium for the signature of IDLO's Establishment Agreement. He noted that Sweden and Mali, having already deposited their Instruments of Accession, would immediately be seated, following their signature, as Members of the Assembly, while Montenegro would officially join the Assembly upon completion of its domestic procedures, which was expected shortly.

**MALI:** Following the signature ceremony, Ambassador Bruno Maiga expressed his gratitude for Mali's accession to the membership of the Organization and thanked all those who had facilitated the process. He expressed his appreciation, also on behalf of the people of Mali, for the work IDLO had been carrying out in his country, during difficult times even prior to Mali's membership of IDLO.

The Ambassador stressed the importance of Mali's quest for effective peace and security, both vital for sustainable development and the development of the law. He specifically thanked IDLO for the work being done in the central and northern regions of the country, as well as the project on access to justice in Mopti.

**SWEDEN:** Ms. Anna Maj Hultgard, Deputy Head of Department for International Law, Human Rights & Treaty Law, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, said it was an honor to attend the Assembly of Parties, not only as a donor, but now as a Member of IDLO.

She commended the theme of the Partnership Forum as very appropriate, at a time when democratic systems were increasingly being weakened and the three key elements underpinning sustainable development - human rights, democracy, and the rule of law – were under growing stress.

She referred to Sweden's feminist foreign policy and the personal engagement of Sweden's Foreign Minister in promoting gender parity in international justice, including her participation in the global GQUAL campaign. She spoke of the overwhelming evidence showing that gender equality is a precondition for sustainable growth, welfare, peace and security, and that societies where women are not thriving will not prosper.

She stressed the importance of the rule of law in preventing and combating corruption and underlined the importance of working together to combat corruption and build norms and institutions to strengthen the rule of law.

Underlining the important role that IDLO is playing as an enabler for governments to continue promoting and strengthening the rule of law, she expressed Sweden's eagerness to further contribute as a Member Party to the work of the Organization.

**MONTENEGRO:** H.E. Ms. Sanja Vlahovic began by saying how honored she was to have been designated to sign the IDLO Establishment Agreement on behalf of her country.

She said Montenegro had benefited from IDLO's expertise for several years and that IDLO was one of the key partner organizations helping to further improvements to Montenegro's national legislative and judicial frameworks. IDLO's mission was, she said, aligned with Montenegro's efforts on its path towards membership of the European Union, adding that the rule of law was at the heart of the Montenegro's integration process and a key pre-requisite for sustainable development and the overall progress of the country.



She acknowledged the support of Montenegro's international partners in helping the country achieve significant and demanding goals in this area, namely the European Commission, the Council of Europe, as well as countries including Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom and the US.

Following years of reforms, she said Montenegro was in a position to not only to implement best practices of other countries but could also share its own experience and insights in advancing the rule of law, adding that Montenegro considered IDLO to be the ideal partner to further this aspiration.

**PRESIDENT:** The President thanked the new Member Parties for their statements and concluded the ceremony.

### **AGENDA ITEM 3: GENERAL DEBATE**

**PRESIDENT:** The President opened the General Debate and invited Member Parties to take the floor.

**ITALY:** Ambassador Pier Francesco Sacco said it was the third year he had the honor to participate in a session of the Assembly of Parties and went on to thank the President for his dedication to IDLO and for his contribution in steering the work of the Standing Committee.

He observed that the current Assembly of Parties was taking place at a particularly significant moment due to a number of factors: the growing convening power of IDLO as demonstrated by the continuing enlargement of its membership; the governance reform process successfully concluded during the year which would serve to enhance IDLO's role in achieving SDG 16; and the impressive program results already achieved by the Organization during the first year of implementation of Strategy 2020.

IDLO's program expansion – he noted - encompassed both the quantity and variety of projects, as well as their geographical diversity. He added that an essential element of IDLO's success was its broad approach to the rule of law, rooted in solid knowledge and experience. He praised the dedication of IDLO's staff, both at Headquarters and in the field, and said Italy was proud to work with the Organization.

Noting that in 2017 the Organization had consolidated ongoing programs while entering into new projects, he made specific references to IDLO's new program in Mexico on capacity development for the police and to the Investment Support Programme for Least Developed Countries (LDCs). He recalled that the LDCs initiative had been supported by Italy since its inception and would be implemented in collaboration with the UN, with support from the European Union. He also expressed Italy's appreciation for the new partnerships IDLO had established with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and with UN Women, and encouraged IDLO to pursue ever closer cooperation with the UN Rome-based agencies - FAO, IFAD, WFP – and in particular the Committee on World Food Security (CFS).

He concluded by expressing appreciation for IDLO's efforts to improve methodologies for program design and evaluation, referring in particular to the design of a Results Framework, which would serve to enhance accountability and the effectiveness of programs in achieving strategic objectives.

EGYPT: Referring to the minute of silence observed at the opening of the Assembly for the victims of the terrorist attack in Egypt, H.E. Mr. Hisham Mohamed Badr thanked IDLO for its solidarity and expressed his gratitude to the Assembly President for his leadership.

Recalling the linkages between peace and sustainable development at the core of Agenda 2030, he highlighted IDLO's role in supporting national efforts to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, while underlining the importance that such programs be implemented in response to the needs and priorities of Member Parties.

Referring to the growing threats arising from indiscriminate terrorism, as well as the global migration crisis, he stressed the importance of collective national, regional and international efforts to deal with such challenges, based on respect for rule of law and the UN Charter. As the only intergovernmental organization dedicated to promoting the rule of law, he said, IDLO was in a unique position to contribute to these efforts.

He recalled the many resolutions on terrorism introduced by his country at the UN, including during its term on the UN Security Council where Egypt had consistently stressed the importance of addressing the root causes of conflict as a condition to achieving and sustaining development at national and international levels.

The Ambassador encouraged IDLO to continue assisting governments to strengthen their national legislative systems, including their legal investment frameworks.

He acknowledged the pivotal role IDLO had played in the negotiations for Agenda 2030 and its ongoing contribution to promoting its implementation, and reiterated Egypt's commitment to supporting international efforts towards achieving the SDGs.

Describing the right to development as the cornerstone of the "Egyptian Sustainable Development Strategy 2030", he reiterated Egypt's call for the international community to support national efforts to achieve the SDGs.

Regarding IDLO's 2018 Management Plan, the Ambassador urged the Organization to focus on enhancing impact in line with national priorities while reducing organizational risks and pursuing organizational reform. He highlighted the importance of revitalizing resource mobilization and took the opportunity to thank IDLO's donors, in particular the host country Italy, for their continued support to IDLO.

The Ambassador welcomed IDLO's new Member Parties, stressed the importance of developing countries participating actively in the governance of the Organization and reaffirmed Egypt's commitment to working together with all the Member Parties to advance IDLO's objectives.

USA: Chargé d’Affaires, Mr. Thomas Duffy, began by thanking IDLO’s staff, at Headquarters and in the field, for the significant results achieved through their project work and for further solidifying the rule of law as an integral element of sustainable development. He reiterated his country’s strong support to IDLO, noting that it was currently working with the Organization in more than 20 countries. He also acknowledged the contribution of the outgoing Standing Committee members, thanked the President for his steady guidance during challenging times, and welcomed IDLO’s new Member Parties.

One of IDLO’s strengths, he continued, was its ability to work in complex environments implementing high quality projects to promote access to justice and strengthen judicial institutions. He said the US viewed the IDLO of 2018 as an even stronger partner thanks to robust management and budget achievements, as well as governance reform. He expressed his country’s appreciation to the DG for the significant progress she and her colleagues had made in implementing the Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) and for keeping the Standing Committee and the Audit and Finance Committee regularly updated on progress.

Mr. Duffy complimented IDLO on the results achieved in the first year of its Strategy 2020 citing: expanded membership; geographic diversification of programs; a robust resource mobilization initiative to broaden the donor base; and a renewed commitment to the Organization’s talent management. He urged IDLO to continue reviewing and updating management processes and policies in order to build on the impressive progress already made.

UKRAINE: H.E. Mr. Yevhen Perelygin thanked the President for his valuable contribution and expressed appreciation for the work of particularly the DG and IDLO’s staff, especially in his own country.

He described the situation in Ukraine as unique with regard to issues of sovereignty and territorial integrity and underlined the broad scope of the internal reforms being pursued, ranging from financial and banking reforms to decentralization. He said the progress achieved was the result of joint efforts by Ukraine and its international partners, including IDLO.

Turning to anti-corruption measures, he cited the recent establishment of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau, the Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor’s Office and the National Agency for Prevention of Corruption and underlined the positive results already being achieved. He said the fight against corruption was not just about criminal prosecution but also, more importantly, about the establishment of an effective prevention system. He highlighted the launch of the Electronic Declaration of Public Servants’ Income, Expenses and Financial Obligations as an effective tool in the fight against corruption and referred to it as perhaps one of the most ambitious governmental initiatives in the world in terms of transparency and accountability.

He said his country's next strategic priorities were to pursue further reforms of the judicial system in accordance with European and international standards and to renew social trust in the justice system. Referring to the restructuring of the Supreme Court and judicial institutions, he highlighted the rigorous open competition that had been introduced, with active participation also by civil society in appointing new judges to the Court.

He stressed the need for all democratic and political forces in Ukraine's society to unite in this effort and work together with international experts, including IDLO, and noted that Ukraine was counting on IDLO to provide further support for the strengthening of its civil society based on principles of democracy and cultural diversity.

**PRESIDENT:** The President thanked Ukraine for its statement and proposed with the Assembly's concurrence to interrupt the general debate and resume it at a later stage after the discussion of item 4 on Governance Reform and the adoption of the relevant Resolution on the item.

**AGENDA ITEM 4: GOVERNANCE REFORM** (AP/2017/4.1, AP/2017/4.2, and AP/2017/4.3)

**PRESIDENT:** Introducing item 4, The President recalled that the initiative to launch a process of Governance Reform had been proposed by the Standing Committee at its July 2016 meeting and had been supported by the Assembly of Parties at its meeting the following November.

At the beginning of 2017, the Standing Committee, in collaboration with the Board of Advisers, had established an Open-Ended Working Group, chaired by the US, with the mandate to deliberate on governance reform ideas and options. The Open-Ended Working Group had met five times during the first half of 2017, with active participation by both Member Parties and the Board of Advisers. Throughout the process, regular updates had been provided to Member Parties, including detailed information on the proposed amendments to the IDLO governance documents being elaborated by the Group with the support of IDLO's General Counsel. On October 3, 2017, eight weeks prior to the meeting of the Assembly of Parties in accordance with relevant provisions of IDLO's Establishment Agreement, the Secretariat had circulated the proposed amendments now being presented to the Assembly for its consideration and adoption.

The President explained that the proposed amendments sought in particular to clarify and better distinguish the respective roles and areas of responsibility of the different governing bodies, especially the Standing Committee and the Board of Advisers.

With regard to the Standing Committee, the amendments intended to further clarify its role and functions, with a focus on exercising oversight of the Organization between sessions of the Assembly, providing guidance to the DG in the exercise of her functions, and reviewing and monitoring implementation of the Organization's plan and budget as well as other relevant decisions of the Assembly. Recalling IDLO's membership growth, he drew special attention to the amendment which would provide for an expansion of the

Standing Committee membership by two additional *ad-hoc* seats, stressing the importance of having a regionally diverse Standing Committee that is representative of the Organization's membership.

Turning to the Board of Advisers, the President noted that the proposed amendments were intended to sharpen the focus of the Board's role as a source of substantive, expert advice on the Organization's strategic directions, drawing on Board Members' knowledge and expertise on broader international trends relating to rule of law and development.

Other proposed amendments were intended to adjust and update a number of provisions in the governance documents, and to ensure that the language used was gender sensitive.

ECUADOR: H.E. Mr. Juan Fernando Holguin Flores began by welcoming Mali, Sweden, and Montenegro and remarking on the progress IDLO had made during the past year, in terms of programs and increased membership.

Stressing the importance of the reforms to make the Organization even more agile and efficient, he recalled Ecuador's early support for a reform process to improve transparency and accountability of IDLO's governance mechanisms, strengthen the participation of Members as well as non-Member Parties, and enhance IDLO's overall efficiency and effectiveness. Turning to the Assembly's decision-making procedures, the Ambassador cautioned against making too frequent a use of the silence procedure for adopting decisions between sessions of the Assembly, which risked affecting the Assembly's role as IDLO's highest governing body. He thus recommended that the procedure be used only on an exceptional basis.

PERU: Ms. Diana Calderon Valle congratulated the US representative, Mr. Robert Mearkle, for his dynamic and productive leadership of the Open-Ended Working Group. She also thanked the representatives of the other Member Parties who had enriched the work of the Group with their ideas and thanked the IDLO Secretariat, in particular the Office of the General Counsel, for the support provided throughout the process. She summed up the three main goals that had guided the Working Group, namely: updating the governance documents to reflect the current state of the Organization; promoting greater efficiency and transparency by clarifying the functions of its governing bodies; and making participation more inclusive and attractive for both Member and non-Member Parties. She expressed particular appreciation for the recognition of the criteria of geographical representation underlying the proposal to expand the membership of the Standing Committee.

ITALY: Ms. Valentina Savastano began by noting Italy's active engagement in the governance reform process. She said Italy was convinced that the progress achieved by IDLO in recent years had to be supported by a stronger and more streamlined statutory configuration. She emphasized that the new proposed set-up would ensure broader participation of the membership in the governance structure and result in a more rational and balanced sharing of responsibilities within that structure. The new proposed composition of the Standing Committee would, she argued, serve to enhance its capacity to steer IDLO's work in the inter-sessional periods, and contribute to stimulating more

active engagement by the membership in the overall governance of the Organization, while other proposed amendments were geared to reinforcing the management and executive role of the DG, and to focusing more sharply the role of the Board of Advisers so as to strengthen its contribution and enable IDLO to draw full benefit from its valued expertise.

PAKISTAN: H.E. Mr. Nadeem Riyaz began by welcoming Sweden, Mali, and Montenegro. He referred to the Organization's evolution over the years and the need to reform IDLO's governance structure to align it to this evolution. He noted that Pakistan had been happy to contribute to the process, both as a member of the Standing Committee and within the Open-Ended Working Group, which, he stressed, had worked in a highly consultative manner, drawing on proposals made by all members. He said he was confident that the changes being proposed would strengthen the Organization and its outreach, and serve to streamline the governance structure, making it more transparent and geographically representative, while ensuring that the governance bodies exercise their respective functions in a more focused and coordinated way.

He congratulated the IDLO Secretariat, in particular the Office of the General Counsel, for its hard work in elaborating the modifications to the governance documents proposed by the Member Parties.

OFID: Dr. Hanno Scheuch thanked the US for its leadership role as Chair of the Open-Ending Working Group. He spoke highly of the fruitful cooperation demonstrated by all involved parties, including Standing Committee members, other Member Parties, the Board of Advisers and IDLO's General Counsel, expressing his confidence that the proposed reforms would be very helpful to the Organization in the future.

JORDAN: Mr. Ali Albsoul congratulated the delegations that had participated in the Open-Ended Working Group, and the Secretariat and General Counsel's Office, for their work. Although Jordan had not been able to take part in the work of the Group, it found that the proposed amendments responded fully to the wishes of the Assembly to introduce reforms in IDLO's governance structure that would reflect IDLO's evolution since the last comprehensive reform in 2008.

He noted that the proposed reforms responded to the need to have efficient, transparent and accountable governing bodies that are better representative of the entire membership, and reflected the expansion of IDLO's operations, geographically and thematically, and its enlarged membership and budget, thus completing IDLO's transition to a fully-fledged inter-governmental organization. In particular, the proposed expansion of the Standing Committee, by making the Committee more geographically representative, would serve to strengthen the Parties' role in steering the work of the Organization. In turn, the envisaged fine-tuning and streamlining of the role and mandate of the Board of Advisers would enable its Members to focus on the substantive themes at the core of IDLO's objectives thereby enhancing the added value that the Board brings to the Organization.

EGYPT: Mr. Khaled El-Taweel recalled that Egypt had actively participated in the Open-Ended Working Group and acknowledged the effective role of the US in guiding the process. He expressed Egypt's confidence that the proposed amendments, clarifying the respective roles of the Standing Committee, Board of Advisers and the DG, would serve to further improve the over-all functioning of the Organization. He suggested that the process be repeated in, say, five years, to ensure that the Organization continues to respond to the evolving needs of developing countries.

Following the above interventions of Member Party representatives, who had all indicated their approval of the proposed amendments, the President turned to Resolution No. 1 on the Governance Reform Amendments (AP/2017/4.2) and declared it adopted by consensus. He then resumed consideration of Agenda item 3 on the General Debate.

### **AGENDA ITEM 3: GENERAL DEBATE (CONTINUED)**

THE NETHERLANDS: H.E. Mr. Josephus Camille Stephan Wijnands began by extending a warm welcome to Sweden, Mali, and Montenegro.

Referring to the DG's Report, he welcomed the growth of IDLO's programs in Africa and referred to a project which the Netherlands had recently launched in Rwanda, in collaboration with IDLO, to train defense lawyers, as well as other projects in African countries such as Mali, Kenya, and Somalia where IDLO and the Netherlands were working together effectively.

He acknowledged the expansion of IDLO's work on informal justice systems, noting that a high number of people resort to such systems in fragile and post-conflict states.

The Ambassador welcomed IDLO's new partnerships with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and UN Women, and also expressed the hope that the conclusion of an MOU with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) would lead to new opportunities for IDLO in the area of refugees and migrants.

He welcomed ongoing organizational changes and said that the newly approved governance reforms, by enhancing diversity in the governing bodies and strengthening the role of the Board of Advisers, would serve to reinforce the Organization. He expressed appreciation for the ongoing work on the establishment of a Results-Based Framework; progress being made to improve project design methodologies, which the Netherlands was supporting through a project grant; and the New Employment Model and Employee Rules which would enable IDLO to strengthen its human resource base, particularly in the field. He also welcomed the progress being made on output-based budgeting and encouraged IDLO to continue working on issues of internal management, transparency, accountability and governance in the future.

The Ambassador recalled that in 2018 the Netherlands would succeed Italy in taking up their joint seat in the UN Security Council and said that his government looked forward to working with IDLO and other rule of law partners to use its time on the Council to advance issues of accountability and rule of law. The Netherlands, he added, would

likewise continue to rely on IDLO's expertise in advancing the 2030 Agenda and would pursue a variety of initiatives to give further impulse to SDG 16, ahead of the UN High-level Political Forum in 2019.

He concluded by stressing the Netherlands's conviction that peace and prosperity, and gender equality go hand-in-hand. Citing his country's ongoing efforts to advance gender equality and policies to mainstream gender issues into all development cooperation initiatives, he expressed special appreciation for IDLO's Gender Strategy, the implementation of which the Netherlands was supporting through a project grant.

CHINA: Mr. Xie Wei extended a warm welcome to Sweden, Mali and Montenegro. He noted that since IDLO's establishment, China and IDLO had collaborated on a variety of joint projects, and that IDLO's expertise and experience had made a valuable contribution to advancing the rule of law in many countries, including China.

He highlighted China's Belt and Road Initiative and said that China looked forward to working with IDLO in the context of the Initiative to bring China's collaboration with IDLO to a new level.

He recalled that in May 2017 during the Belt and Road Forum in Beijing, IDLO and China had signed an MOU establishing a framework for cooperation to achieve common objectives and develop joint programs, including the development of legislative frameworks in countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative geared to promoting trade, investment and development. He expressed his appreciation to IDLO staff for developing proposals in this regard and conveyed China's hope that joint programs, aimed at strengthening the rule of law as well as sustainable and inclusive economic development, would soon be implemented.

PERU: Ms. Diana Calderon Valle welcomed Sweden, Mali, and Montenegro and encouraged IDLO to continue its efforts to further increase its membership.

She noted that during the first year since the approval of IDLO's 2017-2020 Strategic Plan IDLO had made considerable advances in expanding and diversifying geographically its programs and commended the Organization for the successful completion of its largest program in Afghanistan, as well as the development of new programs in countries such as Mexico, Somalia, and Tanzania.

Ms. Calderon Valle applauded the development of IDLO's new gender strategy, saying it would serve to give further impetus to projects for women and girls, and to promote the inclusion of a gender perspective in all IDLO programs. She placed on record her country's support for the amendments to the governance documents and congratulated IDLO for its ability to actively pursue the implementation of its diversified program portfolio despite financial challenges caused by the decrease in unrestricted funds.

Expressing appreciation to all of IDLO's donors, she emphasized the importance of core funding and the need for IDLO to diversify sources of funding and broaden its donor base,



also through the creation of new partnerships, building on those recently established with EBRD, UN Women and with China.

**SUDAN:** Mr. Eltayeb Mohammed welcomed Sweden, Mali, and Montenegro and commended the work of the Open-Ended Working Group on governance reform.

He noted that the world was witnessing an increasing number of conflicts, rising numbers of internally displaced persons, refugees and migrants, which were hampering efforts to advance the rule of law and sustain peace and development. To address the situation, he said, there was a need for strong political will, collaboration and engagement on the part of all countries and stakeholders. He described the situation in his own country and the efforts being made by his government to enhance transparency and combat terrorism, money laundering and human trafficking. In this context he mentioned the establishment of a national body to combat terrorism in all its forms and Sudan's accreditation to the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum. He highlighted the President of Sudan's decision to convene a National Comprehensive Political Dialogue open to all political parties, including the opposition and most armed groups, which had led to the adoption of a national document, the creation of a national unity government and the election of a Prime Minister. He said all political parties were now preparing for the General Election to be held in 2020.

Another significant step to achieve peace, he noted, was the campaign to collect illegal weapons in all states in the country, especially Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile, and called on the international community to exercise influence with the armed groups to join the peace process.

He referred to the recent US decision to lift economic sanctions, which would help Sudan in its efforts to promote rule of law, economic growth and sustainable development. He said the decision had come as a result of the progress made by Sudan in achieving peace in conflict areas and improving stability in the region.

He concluded that further steps were needed to strengthen the rule of law in his country and called on all stakeholders to extend their cooperation.

**JORDAN:** Mr. Ali Albsoul thanked the DG and her staff for their efforts in keeping program delivery on target despite financial challenges. He noted with satisfaction the steady progress made during the first year of implementation of IDLO's new Strategic Plan 2017-2020. Noting the progress made in diversifying the geographic spread of IDLO's programs in Africa, he encouraged IDLO to place greater focus on the Middle East region, where conflicts and economic crises were posing severe challenges.

He commended IDLO for having implemented most of the recommendations of the Independent Management Review and the reforms envisaged under the Continuous Improvement Program (CIP). He hoped that the adoption of IDLO's New Employee Rules will serve to further enhance the performance and capacity of the staff and promote healthy staff relations with management.

He welcomed the new partnership agreements with China, EBRD and UN Women, and stressed the great potential that strategic partnerships provide for IDLO, given the cross-sectoral nature of many of its goals. Finally, he welcomed the expansion of IDLO's membership, noting that new members bring about new political support and serve to strengthen the outreach of the Organization and its programs.

Referring to his own country, he noted that Jordan was working to pursue a path of sustainable development, incorporating the SDGs into its national development plans. He cited in this context "Jordan 2025" - the country's new ten-year socio-economic strategy - and ongoing work to develop indicators to track Jordan's progress towards the SDGs.

**TURKEY:** Mr. Mehmet Bulut spoke positively of the highly consultative and transparent nature of the governance reform process and extended his thanks to the IDLO staff for their support to the process. He expressed his belief that the reforms would contribute significantly to strengthen the Organization.

Reiterating his country's appreciation for IDLO's project to provide capacity building support to Syrian refugees in Turkey, he asked that additional information on the initiative be shared with the Assembly.

He concluded by congratulating and welcoming the new Members.

**PRESIDENT:** The President thanked the Member Parties for their statements and declared the first day of the Assembly closed.

(Full texts of Member Party statements shared with the IDLO Secretariat are available online at [this link](#)).

## **DAY 2**

**PRESIDENT:** Before turning to Agenda Item 5 on the Management Plan and Budget for 2018, the President, at the request of the Chair of IDLO's Board of Advisers, invited the Assembly to take up the subitem on the Report of the Board of Advisors (AP/2017/5.3) under Agenda item 6 "Report of the Governing Bodies".

### **AGENDA ITEM 6: REPORT OF THE GOVERNING BODIES**

#### **Report of the Board of Advisers (AP/2017/5.3)**

**CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF ADVISERS:** The Chair began by congratulating the speakers in the general debate for the fruitful and enlightening discussion. He recalled that the Board of Advisers was composed of distinguished individuals with longstanding experience who are committed to IDLO's values. He noted that the Board, in line with the results of the governance reforms adopted by the current session of the Assembly, would be able to more fully exploit its advisory mandate focusing on matters of substance and

strategic vision for the Organization, and working closely with the other governance bodies, the Standing Committee and the Assembly.

The Chair reported that the Board had worked during the year through four Sub-Committees, each led by a Board Member, that were geared to collaborating with the DG and senior staff to provide advice and support to advance the mission of the Organization.

He noted that the Sub-Committee on Governance, chaired by Dr. Hanno Scheuch and supported by Professor Cristiana Carletti, had been instrumental in helping the Board put together a comprehensive review of the governance documents for the benefit of the Open-Ended Working Group on Governance Reform. A second Sub-Committee on Programs, chaired by Mr. Daniel Rowland, had focused on IDLO's *modus operandi*.

A third Sub-Committee on Research and Scholarship, chaired by Professor Patricia Kameri-Mbote, had focused its attention on the role of the Organization as a thought leader in the area of the rule of law. The fourth Sub-Committee, chaired by Ambassador Ertuğrul Apakan, former Chair of the Board, had addressed IDLO's relationships with external actors. In relation to each Sub-Committee he had sought to consult with the DG to clarify how they could to best interact with various departments at IDLO.

The Chair also referred to the annual Board of Advisers meeting convened on June 19-20, 2017, as an opportunity for members to discuss some internal matters as well as issues relating to the Management Plan and IDLO's Gender Strategy, among others.

The Chair concluded by expressing gratitude, on behalf of the Board, to the President for his work during his term of office.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 5. MANAGEMENT PLAN AND BUDGET FOR 2018** (AP/2017/3.1, AP/2017/3.2 and AP/2017/3.3)

**PRESIDENT:** The President drew the Assembly's attention to the Draft Management Plan for 2018 and the Proposed Operating Budget. Noting that the Proposed Budget for 2018 had been endorsed by both the Audit and Finance Committee and the Standing Committee, he invited the DG to present the Management Plan and Budget for 2018.

**DG:** The DG began by highlighting the relevance of IDLO's Management Plan for 2018 to the challenges and opportunities for the rule of law in sustaining peace and development, noting that these issues would also be discussed that afternoon at the Partnership Forum.

She said the first key objective of the Plan was to consolidate IDLO's activities and programs in line with Strategy 2020, entering its second year in 2018.

The second objective, she said, was to complete the next phase of organizational reforms at IDLO, noting that some new initiatives would be launched, while other reforms would be carried over from 2017 for completion in 2018.

A third key objective, she added, was to revitalize resources, since IDLO's work is dependent on the availability of funds. The DG underlined that the budget being presented was a balanced one, adding that additional financial support would allow IDLO to expand the range and scope of its work.

The DG showed the Assembly a slide representing the geographic spread of IDLO's work for 2018 compared to 2016. She noted that for the first time in IDLO's history, in 2018 IDLO's programs in Africa would account for over half of the work of the Organization, whereas Afghanistan had previously occupied a larger share of program portfolio. This diversity would also serve to enhance IDLO's operational stability, she said.

She drew the Assembly's attention to a breakdown of the budgeted program expenditure by the Action Goals set in Strategy 2020 and highlighted some of the programs relevant to Action Goals 1-3 (empowerment of women and marginalized groups; partnering with civil society; working with informal justice), namely the continuation of programs to address sexual and gender-based violence in Afghanistan, Liberia, Mali, Mongolia and Somalia; community level justice programs in Honduras and Mali; and a new program on community justice in Uganda which IDLO was embarking on with support from Sida. She also referred to the DREAMS Initiative, a public-private partnership project focusing on legal and social accountability for young women and adolescent girls in Uganda and Tanzania, expressing the hope that this initiative would open up possibilities for IDLO to do similar work in other parts of the world.

The DG described a new program on informal justice being launched in Somalia with support from the European Commission, noting that IDLO's work on informal justice systems was expected to grow in 2018 and that a policy paper to provide further orientation for this work would be prepared during the year with inputs from the Standing Committee and the Board of Advisers.

On the subject of judicial and legal institution building (Action Goal 4), the DG noted that this area would account for 58% of IDLO's work in 2018. She drew attention to new programming in Afghanistan which would build on the work carried out under the Justice Transition Training Program (JTTP) and to a Lessons Learned Brief on capacity building in Afghanistan that would be published soon on IDLO's website.

She highlighted a new program in Mexico on capacity development for the police, a new area of work for IDLO, both geographically and thematically, as well as ongoing anti-corruption work in Ukraine and the Philippines, which was also expected to grow in 2018.

She spoke of migration as an emerging programmatic opportunity, citing a program to support Syrian refugees in Turkey, supported by KFAED and another on internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees in Somalia, supported by the European Commission. She noted that IDLO was finalizing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Geneva and was seeking observer status at the International Organization of Migration (IOM). Both initiatives, she said, would enable IDLO to further define its comparative advantage and potential contribution in this area.

Turning to Action Goal 5, the DG observed that legal support for economic development was another priority area for expansion, thanks to several new partnership opportunities, referencing the Framework Agreement signed with EBRD and another due to be signed soon with KFAED. She also mentioned the Investment Support Programme for LDCs, expressing appreciation for the support pledged by the European Commission and flagged the Memorandum of Understanding IDLO had signed with the Ministry of Commerce of China, which envisaged potential programming opportunities for capacity development in countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative.

On championing the rule of law to mobilize political will (Action Goal 6) the DG noted that IDLO had identified four main focus areas, namely: support for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular contributing to initiatives in the run up to the 2019 session of the High-level Political Forum in New York when progress on SDG 16 would be reviewed; gender equality and women's access to justice; independence and integrity of the judiciary including in the context of the UN Human Rights Council; and engagement with informal justice systems.

Moving to organizational focus, the DG outlined plans for the eight Major Initiatives included in IDLO's Strategic Plan 2020.

On Initiatives one and two (program quality, and research & learning respectively) she highlighted three key areas of focus, namely: to develop and roll out a Results Monitoring Framework to monitor and measure IDLO activities more effectively; measures to improve program design, implementation and management, including a new Programs Manual for IDLO program staff in both Headquarters and field offices; and efforts to further strengthen program evaluation and promote internal and external learning, including through Lessons Learned Briefs.

On Major Initiative 3 (transparency and accountability), in addition to the development of an output-based budget for 2018, she highlighted improvements in results monitoring which in turn should lead to improved reporting to donors; the creation of an internal audit and compliance position within the Organization and the subsequent roll out of a program of internal audits.

Regarding Major Initiatives 4 & 5 (resource mobilization and communications), the DG emphasized the close links between these two initiatives and outlined areas of focus for 2018, including broadening the donor base and strengthening donor engagement, starting with the donor consultation which would be convened immediately following the Assembly session. She noted with satisfaction IDLO's increased cooperation with KFAED and the European Commission and indicated that the Organization was also looking at ways to increase engagement with the private sector, especially foundations.

She referred to the thematic programs which IDLO was designing, in line with Strategy 2020, in the areas of gender, economic development and peacebuilding, and expressed the hope that these would attract increased donor interest.

The DG further noted that IDLO would be re-evaluating its project budget methodology, in consultation with IDLO partners as well as the Audit and Finance Committee, and referred to plans to establish policies and processes to facilitate in-kind contributions, noting the many offers of pro-bono services that IDLO had received in the context of the Investment Support Programme.

The DG recalled that in 2018 IDLO would celebrate its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as an intergovernmental organization and said IDLO hoped to use this opportunity to enhance support for the Organization and to recognize those who had contributed to IDLO over the past thirty years.

In relation to Major Initiative 6 and governance and membership, the DG referred to the Resolution on Governance Reform which the Assembly had adopted the previous day, which would serve, she noted, to strengthen and clarify the roles of the respective governing bodies.

She concluded that enhancing the Organization's engagement with its Member Parties remained a key objective and encouraged Member Parties to share their inputs and ideas on how this could best be achieved.

Referring to Major Initiatives 7 & 8 (people and processes), the DG paid tribute to IDLO's staff, which she called the Organization's most valuable asset. She described the adoption of IDLO's new Employment Model and Employee Rules as a major achievement, adding that they would be rolled out in a phased manner in 2018, as funding became available. She also highlighted the importance of capacity development for staff, and the focus on strengthening the field offices which are at the forefront of IDLO's work. In this context she referenced the ICT and systems upgrades being introduced to enhance accountability and enable further delegation of authority to the field, noting that some ICT improvements had to be postponed to 2018 due to financial constraints.

The DG stressed the importance of IDLO enjoying proper legal status in its countries of operation, noting that negotiations for Host Country Agreements were currently ongoing with a number of program countries and she welcomed the support of Member Parties for such processes. The DG acknowledged with appreciation the revised Host Country Agreement that had been signed with Italy in 2017, which would grant IDLO similar conditions to the other Rome-based Agencies, and which was now awaiting parliamentary approval.

The DG then introduced Haroun Atallah, IDLO's Director for Finance and Support Services, to present the 2018 Budget and commended IDLO's finance colleagues for their work in producing a balanced budget, stressing that this was not an easy process for an Organization entirely dependent on voluntary contributions.

She noted that as the document had been prepared some time in advance for review by the AFC and Standing Committee, the current revenue figures were actually more positive than those available at the time of preparation, further evidence, she argued, of the Secretariat's cautious approach in preparing the budget.

**IDLO DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND SUPPORT SERVICES:** Mr. Haroun Atallah gave a brief overview of the 2018 proposed budget, reiterating that it was a balanced one. He said that unrestricted revenue was expected to remain similar to that of 2017, a slight drop was forecast for restricted program income, and an increase in earmarked income was forecast, due to an earmarked contribution from the Government of the Netherlands.

Expenses were forecast to remain steady compared to the previous year, though a slight increase in staff costs was expected due to the implementation of the New Employment Model.

Regarding function-specific costs, he recalled that these had been cut sharply in 2016 in order to produce a balanced budget and said a slight increase was being anticipated for 2018.

He drew attention to a reduction in office costs due to savings that had been introduced and noted that expenses related to direct program activities reflected income levels.

Referring to the reserves of the Organization, he stated that IDLO was above the required reserves threshold by about one million euro. He also noted that the income projections had been prepared during the month of August, and said he expected IDLO would exceed the figures budgeted for restricted, and possibly unrestricted revenue in 2018.

**THE PRESIDENT:** The President invited Member Parties to provide comments on the 2018 Management Plan and Budget.

**PAKISTAN:** Ms. Wajiha Khan thanked the DG for a very comprehensive presentation. Noting the political and security environment prevailing in a number of countries where IDLO was engaged, she remarked that such challenges required IDLO to increase its operational capacity; strengthen its planning and impact assessment; invest in human resources; and expand its financial and political support. If 2017 was to be regarded as the year of stabilization for the Organization, in 2018 – she said – IDLO should focus on enhancing the quality and impact of its programs and on prioritizing resource mobilization to consolidate IDLO's transition to Strategy 2020.

Ms. Khan expressed support for IDLO's ambition to expand its program portfolio and explore new openings in Asia, Africa and other regions of the world, noting that such expansion would encourage more states to engage in the work of the Organization.

She also expressed support for the investment in human resources development envisaged through the implementation of the recently adopted New Employment Model and Employee Rules, and the efforts to strengthen IDLO's legal status in countries of operation through the conclusion of Host Country Agreements.

She noted with satisfaction that both restricted and unrestricted revenues were in line with the proposed budget for the 2018, and voiced Pakistan's approval of the proposed Management Plan and Budget for 2018.

**ITALY:** Ambassador Pier Francesco Sacco thanked the DG for her clear and comprehensive presentation, stating that Italy supported and approved the Management Plan and Budget for 2018. He said the Plan would provide an excellent basis for continuity in IDLO's activities for 2018 and would hopefully lead to an expansion of the already excellent results achieved in 2017. He said there was much potential in the focus areas illustrated by the DG and drew particular attention to IDLO's experience and competencies in the area of informal justice systems. He encouraged IDLO to develop specific policy guidelines in this area, also with advice and input from the Board of Advisers.

The Ambassador welcomed the renewed focus on economic development and the programs aimed at strengthening institutions in partner countries.

Underlining the importance of IDLO's resource mobilization strategy and reiterating Italy's willingness to collaborate with the Organization in its implementation, he expressed appreciation for the balanced, prudent approach taken in preparing the budget and concluded by reminding all Members of the importance of contributing to the Organization to help ensure its stable and sustainable growth.

**PERU:** Ms. Diana Calderon Valle noted that in light of emerging global trends, IDLO's Management Plan for 2018 would provide a framework to enable the Organization to increase its operational capacity, reinforce its planning, and improve the impact of its programs, while contributing to the successful achievement of the 2030 Agenda. She noted the clear alignment of the Management Plan's goals and objectives with those established in the Strategic Plan and expressed her support for the Major Initiatives outlined in the Plan. She encouraged IDLO to develop a virtual platform where Member Parties could easily access information on IDLO programs and financial information as a means to enhance transparency and accountability.

Ms. Calderon Valle congratulated IDLO for the geographical expansion of programmatic work, expressing particular satisfaction for the growth in the Latin American portfolio, thanks to programs in Honduras and the upcoming program in Mexico.

She concluded by expressing Peru's approval of the Management Plan and Budget for 2018.

**PHILIPPINES:** H.E. Mr. Domingo Nolasco thanked IDLO for its work in the Philippines supporting the Office of the Ombudsman and the Department of Justice and acknowledged the US State Department's contribution to making this work possible.

He noted with appreciation the plans to further diversify IDLO's presence in South East Asia and said IDLO could count on the full support of the Philippines. Welcoming the continued alignment of IDLO's goals towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, the Ambassador said the Philippines regarded the rule of law as an essential component for inclusive growth and strengthening the social fabric.



Commending IDLO for its efforts to expand its financial and political support as well as strategic partnerships, the Ambassador thanked the donor countries and international organizations for their generosity. He acknowledged the DG's prudent management of IDLO's resources which enabled the organization to operate within its budget and concluded by expressing the Philippines' support for the Management Plan and Budget for 2018.

JORDAN: Mr. Ali Albsoul expressed support for the goals set out in the 2018 Management Plan which were, he said, closely aligned to the Organization's objectives in Strategy 2020.

He expressed satisfaction at the expanded geographic distribution of IDLO's programs, while encouraging IDLO to place greater emphasis on the Middle East region where conflicts and economic crises had created unprecedented challenges and were undermining the socio-economic development and resilience of societies.

Mr. Albsoul applauded IDLO's achievements in the area of gender, noting two new projects in the Middle East and North Africa supporting women judges and access to justice for women entrepreneurs. He also welcomed IDLO's growing interest and engagement on the issue of migration and refugees, noting that the refugee crisis had a severe impact on several countries in the region, including Jordan. He argued that IDLO's comparative advantage could bring significant added value, particularly to support the region's economic development.

Referring to the closure of IDLO's Amman office in April 2017, he emphasized that this should not in any way be interpreted as a lack of interest or commitment on the part of the authorities to the objectives and goals of IDLO. He advised that on that same morning he had provided IDLO's Secretariat with the final draft in Arabic of a Host Country Agreement with Jordan, and said he looked forward to finalizing all the necessary arrangements and measures required in order to arrive at a final text as soon as possible.

UNITED STATES: Mr. Thomas M. Duffy commended IDLO for producing a balanced output-based budget. He encouraged IDLO to continue carrying out its critical programs in difficult and challenging environments, while working within the constraints of a restricted budget.

PRESIDENT: The President recalled that the Standing Committee had discussed the 2018 Management Plan and Budget and endorsed the Resolution recommending the approval of the 2018 Management Plan and Budget.

The Assembly proceeded to adopt the Resolution No. 2/2017 by consensus.

## **AGENDA ITEM 6: REPORTS OF THE GOVERNING BODIES (CONT'D)**

PRESIDENT: The President, in his capacity as Chair of the Standing Committee, introduced the Report of the Standing Committee (AP/2017/5.1) and shared some key highlights.

He informed the Assembly that the Standing Committee had met three times during 2017 and that all Members of the Audit and Finance Committee had also been invited to attend as observers. During these meetings, Standing Committee Members had interacted with the DG on management and administrative issues, with a focus on monitoring implementation of IDLO's 2017-2020 Strategic Plan and had kept under review developments related to the Governance Reform process. The Standing Committee had also followed closely the implementation of the 2017 budget through the DG's reports as well as the reports of the Audit and Finance Committee (AFC), whose Chair and Members had participated in the Committee's meetings.

The President highlighted in particular the active engagement of the Standing Committee in monitoring the work of the Open-Ended Working Group on governance reform. The Working Group had convened five times during 2017, with the support of the Secretariat and IDLO's General Counsel. He expressed satisfaction that the final set of Recommendations on amendments to the governance documents, as endorsed by the Standing Committee, had been adopted by the Assembly the previous day.

In relation to IDLO's new Employment Rules, the Standing Committee, further to the authority delegated to it by the Assembly of Parties, had followed the process closely and had received an extensive briefing on the subject by IDLO Management in March 2017. The new Employee Rules had been approved by the Committee on July 25, 2017, with the understanding that they would be introduced in a phased manner, consistent with the IDLO Budget.

Other key issues addressed by the Committee included the approval of the 2016 Audited Financial Statements and the 2016 External Audit Report; the appointment of a new External Auditor for IDLO; and the preparation of the 2018 Management Plan and proposed Operating Budget.

The President said that 2017 had been a year of transition for IDLO, as the Organization moved from its 2013-2016 Strategic Plan into the first year of implementation of the new Strategy 2020. He praised IDLO for succeeding in balancing its budget, keeping program delivery on target, diversifying programs, and implementing important reforms such as the aforementioned new Employment Model and Employee Rules, despite the financial challenges caused by an unexpected shortfall in unrestricted funding in 2016.

Concluding his report, the President said the Standing Committee would continue to follow closely, on behalf of the Assembly, the implementation of the governance reforms as well as supporting the Organization, with regard to program development and membership expansion.

**CHAIR OF THE AUDIT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE:** The Chair began his statement introducing the Report of the Audit and Finance Committee (AP/2017/5.2) by underlining the continuing constructive dialogue the AFC has had with the IDLO Secretariat and the Standing Committee. He thanked the Secretariat for the advance preparation of the AFC's meetings calendar which had allowed for better coordination

and effective work throughout the year. He also referred to the appointment of IDLO's new external auditors, in line with the established rotation principle.

The Chair commended the Secretariat for the prudent approach adopted in preparing the budget, noting that while the situation with regard to earmarked and restricted resources was satisfactory, the same had not been the case in 2017 for unrestricted contributions. He stressed the importance of adequate and timely unrestricted contributions to enable IDLO to carry out its program of work effectively and called on Member Parties to give the matter all the attention it deserved.

UNITED STATES: Mr. Thomas Duffy thanked the President and Vice-President for their strong and effective leadership and acknowledged the contribution of other Members of the Standing Committee, as well as the work of the Board of Advisers' Chair and Vice Chair, and the supporting work of the Secretariat.

Describing 2017 as a pivotal year, he said he looked forward to the expansion of the Standing Committee in 2018 which would serve to further strengthen Member Parties' engagement in IDLO programs and internal operations. He described the Standing Committee as providing an essential channel of communication between IDLO Members and the Secretariat, fostering a responsible and accountable relationship among donors, members and staff.

With reference to the AFC Report, he thanked the Chair and Members of the Committee, as well as the Secretariat, for a highly productive year. He applauded a number of specific achievements, including the presentation of a balanced output-based budget, plans to phase in Continuous Improvement Program (CIP) targets in line with available resources, and the new financial system which would be rolled out in 2018.

Referring to the US candidacy for the position of President of the Assembly and of the Standing Committee, he said it had been a pleasure to serve the Organization and that the US looked forward to continuing to do so in the period ahead.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 7: ELECTIONS** (AP/2017/6.2, AP/2017/6.3 and AP/2017/6.4)

PRESIDENT: The President announced elections for the following positions: President and Vice President of the Assembly of Parties for a three-year term; three *ad hoc* members of the Standing Committee for a two-year term; and one member of the Audit and Finance Committee for a two-year term. He noted that two of the three vacancies in the Standing Committee were the result of the adoption of the amendment to the Establishment Agreement of IDLO and other Governance Documents just approved by the Assembly which had added two new *ad hoc* member positions to the Committee's membership. He recalled that the results of each election would be formalized via a Resolution.

#### **Election of the President and Vice President of the Assembly of Parties** (AP/2017/6.2)

**PRESIDENT:** The President noted that the term of the current President (Kuwait) and Vice President (US) had ended, and that they were not eligible to stand for re-election but that they could seek election or re-appointment for another vacant position. The President noted that the US had submitted its formal expression of interest in running for the position of President, while Mozambique had submitted a Note Verbale expressing interest in the position of Vice-President.

In the absence of other candidatures, the Assembly proceeded to elect the US as President and Mozambique as Vice President of IDLO's Assembly of Parties for a three-year term of office and adopted, by consensus, Resolution 3 on the "Election of President and Vice-President of the Assembly of Parties".

The newly elected countries took the floor to express appreciation for the votes of confidence and indicated their readiness to actively contribute to the work of the Organization.

### **Election of *ad hoc* Members of the Standing Committee (AP/2017/6.3)**

**PRESIDENT:** The President introduced the election of three *ad hoc* members of the Standing Committee. Since Kuwait, which was ending its term of office as President, had expressed interest in such a position, Italy was asked to conduct the election.

**VICE PRESIDENT:** The Vice-President recalled that one vacancy on the Standing Committee had arisen following the end of the Netherlands' term of office, and that two additional vacancies had resulted from the governance reform approved by the Assembly the previous day. He announced that four countries – Ecuador, Kuwait, Peru and Sudan – had expressed interest in the positions. He then opened the floor for comments.

**ECUADOR:** H.E. Mr. Juan Fernando Holguin congratulated the US and Mozambique on their election as President and Vice President of the Assembly. He noted that Ecuador had been a founding Member of IDLO, but that this was the first time it was running for election to one of its governance bodies. He took the opportunity to recall the proposal submitted by Ecuador to the UN Human Rights Council on the issue of multinational corporations' accountability vis-à-vis human rights.

**PERU:** Ms. Diana Calderon Valle congratulated the US and Mozambique for their election. Expressing satisfaction at the enlargement of IDLO membership, she highlighted Peru's involvement in the governance reform process and underlined the importance of achieving greater geographical representation in the Standing Committee. She advocated for Peru's membership of the Standing Committee by highlighting the increase in IDLO's programmatic work in Latin America and the current lack of representation from the region in the governance structure. She assured the Assembly that Peru would play an active role on the Committee, as it had done in the Working Group on governance reform.

**SUDAN:** Mr. Eltayeb Mohammed congratulated the US and Mozambique on their election to the Presidency of the Assembly and said that Sudan's candidature for

membership of the Standing Committee reflected his country's interest in strengthening collaboration with IDLO of which Sudan had been a Member for decades.

**KUWAIT:** Mr. Nawaf Al-Mahamel recalled that his country was a longstanding partner of IDLO and highlighted the unique nature of IDLO's partnership with Kuwait, which was both a donor to IDLO and a beneficiary country of IDLO's activities.

He further referred to IDLO programs funded by KFAED, which included a project aimed at supporting Syrian refugees in Turkey, and an ongoing program on capacity building in Africa.

**VICE PRESIDENT:** Ambassador Pier Francesco Sacco expressed his appreciation for the interest of several Member Parties to join the Standing Committee and invited the Secretariat to provide guidance on the election process.

A member of the Secretariat explained the election process and proceeded to open the voting session. The session was then briefly suspended to allow the Assembly to count the votes.

**VICE PRESIDENT:** The Vice-President resumed the session and informed the Assembly that the countries that had received the most votes were Ecuador, Kuwait and Peru.

Resuming the Chair, the President expressed appreciation for Kuwait's election and congratulated Ecuador and Peru on becoming Members of the Standing Committee.

The newly elected countries of Ecuador and Peru took the floor to express appreciation to Member Parties for their support leading to other election as members of the Standing Committee and reiterated their readiness to contribute actively to the work of the Organization.

**SUDAN:** Mr. Eltayeb Mohammed congratulated Ecuador, Kuwait, and Peru on their election and assured the Assembly that the Organization could continue to count on his country's full support.

#### **Election of Members of the Audit and Finance Committee (AP/2017/6.4)**

**PRESIDENT:** The President advised that Egypt had completed its first term of office as a member of the AFC but had expressed interest to serve for a second term.

The Assembly elected Egypt by consensus as a member of the AFC for a second two-year term and the result of the election was recorded in Resolution No. 5 on the election of an AFC member (AP/2017/6.4).

**EGYPT:** Mr. Khaled El-Taweel thanked the President and the other Member Parties for electing Egypt and congratulate the newly elected members to the Standing Committee. He reiterated Egypt's commitment to supporting IDLO's work and mission.

## **CLOSING OF THE ASSEMBLY**

**DIRECTOR-GENERAL:** The DG thanked Mr. Nawaf Al-Mahamel for his service as President of the IDLO Assembly for the last three years. As an acknowledgement of his contribution she presented the President, also on behalf of the Standing Committee and the Secretariat, with a Certificate of Appreciation and a small gift.

**PRESIDENT:** The President thanked the DG and recalled that Kuwait had been supporting the work and mission of IDLO since its inception. He informed the Assembly that he had also been an IDLO alumnus and had since witnessed and been part of IDLO's remarkable transition from a small training institute to a full-fledged international organization whose membership, he said, would certainly continue to grow.

The President thanked the Member Parties for their active participation in the Assembly and for their continued commitment to IDLO's programmatic success and financial stability. He also thanked the DG, Management and staff of IDLO for their hard work and dedication to the Organization and its mission, drawing particular attention to the important work being carried out by IDLO in the field. After congratulating once again the newly elected Members of IDLO's governing bodies, the President declared the Assembly closed.

ENDS //