

MEETING ON HLPF MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

Statement by Mr. Henk-Jan Brinkman, Permanent Observer of the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) to the United Nations in New York

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Thank you Chair, let me start by [echoing] the congratulatory words expressed by others regarding your appointment and that of [Amb Blanco/Amb Fjeld Brattested] as co-facilitators. Let me offer the following observations that I hope will inform the Ministerial Declaration—addressing the questions in your letter.

[1) What are the main current trends, challenges and their impacts on accelerating the implementation of the SDGs?]

Challenges to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda are mounting on all fronts. They include high and in many cases rising social and economic inequalities have made progress on poverty reduction difficult; climate change and the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events; health emergencies; food insecurity; erosion of fundamental rights and freedoms; shrinking civic space; increasing polarization and divisions; and the proliferation of violent conflicts. The foundation for delivering the 2030 Agenda is being eroded by the very conditions that the global development agenda was intended to correct.

This situation is particularly perilous for women and girls and other marginalized groups as the challenges we are facing exacerbate persistent and long-standing inequalities.

[2) What are the priority actions and investment pathways needed to support the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions for reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and accelerating poverty eradication?]

The causes and effects of these crises – and the actions needed to address them – are interconnected and deeply rooted in issues of human rights, justice, equity, inclusion, accountability and good governance. In this regard, SDG16 is at the heart of what makes the 2030 Agenda transformative, both as a standalone goal and an enabler and accelerator of other SDGs, particularly those under review this year. SDG16 is critical for the other SDGs because of its focus on institutions, justice, inclusivity, non-discrimination, legal identity, fighting corruption and illicit flows and on reducing violence. Its constituent targets represent priority actions and a pathway for delivery on the 2030 Agenda capable of playing a vital role in addressing the multiple global crises we are grappling with.

[3) What are the priority actions necessary for achieving Goals 1, 2, 13, 16 and 17?]

Strengthening the rule of law and access to justice in particular – foundational elements that are at the core of SDG 16 – can catalyze progress across the 2030 Agenda. Empowering people and communities to claim their rights and participate in policymaking can generate transformative actions, such as strengthening land governance and food security, preventing environmental degradation.

In this regard, IDLO recommends the following priority actions that are tangible and capable of accelerating progress across the goals under review.

First, develop and strengthen effective people-centred justice systems to reduce the number of people with unresolved justice needs by half by 2030. Inclusive, effective and accountable institutions, as envisaged by SDG16, are key to delivering on the 2030 Agenda, be it implementing social protection systems (SDG1.3); providing basic services (SDG1.4); or developing policies to respond to climate change (SDG13.2). Furthermore, promoting diverse pathways to people-centred justice that are responsive to people's justice needs, particularly women and girls, is also critical to achieve 16.3, the goal of access to justice for all by 2030.

Second, promote a feminist approach to the rule of law, which implies eliminating discriminatory laws, regulations and policies; supporting the adoption of gender transformative legal and policy frameworks at country level; combatting gender-based violence (GBV) through implementation of comprehensive survivor-centred approaches to justice; enhancing women's leadership and participation in the justice sector; promoting environmental and climate justice for women and girls; and realizing equal rights to food, land and other natural resources.

Third, recognize the value of whole-of-society and whole-of-government approaches and collaborations in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Encourage multi-stakeholder partnerships across government at the national level and with civil society and customary informal justice actors to promote the rule of law and access to justice. especially at the local level, which can also mitigate the impact of climate change; facilitate poverty reduction; and strengthen food security.

Fourth, enhance capacities to combat all forms of corruption, strengthen accountability, integrity and promote transparency at global, national and local levels, including of governments and civil society, to repair the social contract, promote inclusive prosperity and address grievances that drive instability and conflict.

[4) What could be key messages regarding the voluntary national reviews?]

IDLO would encourage Member States to prioritize justice in their national budgets and development assistance, and to report on SDG16 in their VNRs, including exploration of the interlinkages between SDG16 and other SDGs to identify how those interlinkages can bolster acceleration of the 2030 Agenda.

Excellencies, colleagues, co-facilitators,

In closing, let me also reference the upcoming SDG16 Conference on Monday 6 May, that IDLO is co-organizing with Italy and UNDESA, which will, for the first time, take place in New York to inform the HLPF. With a view to building partnerships and exchanging lessons learned, it will bring together governments, international organizations, civil society, academia and other key stakeholders to explore how to accelerate action on SDG16 in order to turbocharge progress across the 2030 Agenda. The outcome of the Conference can also inform the Ministerial Declaration.

Thank you.