

**UN ECOSOC HLPF 2023 GENERAL DEBATE:  
“BUILDING MOMENTUM TOWARDS THE SDG SUMMIT”**

**20 July 2023**

**United Nations, Headquarters, New York**

**Statement of the International Development Law Organization**

President, excellencies,

Many speakers have noted that the world is dangerously off track to achieve the 2030 Agenda, as it struggles to cope with multiple intersecting crises.

IDLO’s work to promote the rule of law and access to justice across the world, including in some of the poorest and most conflict affected parts of the world -- which are furthest behind – has shown us the importance of SDG 16 on peaceful, just and inclusive societies at such moments.

Allow me to share three ways in which SDG 16 in addition to being a standalone goal, can also be a critical enabler and accelerator for the entire 2030 Agenda.

First, SDG 16 is key to addressing the root causes of conflict, which is one of the chief obstacles to sustainable development, as reaffirmed by the Secretary-General’s New Agenda for Peace.

For instance, investing in measures to address inequality, impunity and breakdowns in the rule of law, which are the most common drivers of violent conflict, can help resolve disputes before they can escalate into full-blown crises.

This also makes financial sense when one considers the cost of violence to the global economy.

The Institute for Economics and Peace estimates a global peace dividend of 3.6 trillion dollars over the current decade if all countries were to reduce violence at the level of the most peaceful countries.

Second, SDG 16, with the rule of law at its core, is a cross cutting enabler of all other SDGs.

It advances the type of institutional mechanisms and fair, rule-based processes needed to promote the integrated “whole-of-society” approaches required for sustainable development.

The rule of law can encourage inclusive growth by providing stability and certainty and helping countries develop the capacity to attract and sustainably manage investment.

Third and finally, SDG 16 is key to achieving a green, prosperous and inclusive future for all.

It can be a catalyst for the transition to more climate resilient economies, by helping to fairly address the complex challenges and trade-offs required.

Putting people at the centre of this effort will be essential.

The rule of law can help to empower people and communities, particularly traditionally excluded groups such as women and young people, to claim their environmental rights and participate in climate decision-making.

Unlocking climate finance and green growth will also require new laws and strengthened institutional capacity.

Fair and effective mechanisms are also needed to address the international dimensions of climate change, for example, the administration of loss and damage funds.

For these reasons, SDG 16 is at the heart of what makes the 2030 Agenda transformative, and will be key to accelerating implementation of the SDGs.

This is also one of the principal conclusions from this year's SDG 16 Conference, which IDLO co-organized with the Government of Italy and UNDESA.

The key findings of the Conference have been circulated by the Permanent Mission of Italy in the lead up to the HLPF.

Excellencies,

I would like to conclude by emphasizing that it is crucial to keep political and financial support for peaceful, just and inclusive societies, at the forefront of our collective action.

SDG 16 should not only be seen as a goal and targets, but as an essential tool for making progress on the 2030 Agenda and ensuring that development is genuinely inclusive and sustainable.

IDLO is committed to working with all of you to promote a more peaceful, just and sustainable future through the rule of law.

It is the best investment we can make in our collective future.

Thank you.