

STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LAW ORGANIZATION

ROUNDTABLE 3: SPECIAL EVENT IN 2013 TO FOLLOW-UP EFFORTS MADE TOWARDS
ACHIEVING THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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As Director-General of the International Development Law Organization, the only inter-governmental organization exclusively devoted to advancing the rule of law, I greatly appreciate the opportunity to participate in this Special Event convened by the President of the UN General Assembly to review progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and to chart the post-2015 path.

The report of the Secretary-General acknowledges the enormous progress that has been made, but also gives a clear message: this is not a moment for complacency but for honesty. In that spirit of honest appraisal I would like put forward three points:

First, we need to recognize that inequality is a major factor behind the uneven and inadequate progress. The MDGs have generally ignored the issue of equality. That silence has had a huge human cost: pregnant women who cannot access life-saving health care, children who drop out of school, people who are condemned to live in dire poverty in countries that have made remarkable economic progress. Inequality is a social problem, moral concern, and also a political issue. Grossly unequal societies are often unstable societies. Gross disparities are morally reprehensible, legally untenable and politically, economically and socially dangerous.

Therefore in this final sprint to the target date of the MDGs, IDLO hopes the international community will prioritize not only those MDGs that are most off-track, or countries that are being left behind, but communities that are excluded, marginalized, most disadvantaged, and women who continue to suffer multiple forms of discrimination and violence.

Secondly, we in IDLO strongly believe that the post-2015 Development Agenda must give prominence and priority to the reduction of inequality, as a stand-alone goal, as has been strongly advocated by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as a cross-cutting theme. Fighting disparity and discrimination are fundamental to eradicating poverty, ending hunger and promoting an inclusive and sustainable framework for development. In practice, this means translating equality and non-discrimination into good laws, policy and regulations, and enhancing people's participation in decision-making processes that affect their lives and livelihoods.

And this brings me to my third point. The new development framework must be based on a clear commitment to human rights and the rule of law. We cannot fight poverty or

promote sustainable development or inclusive economies when justice and accountability systems do not properly function; when poor people are not able to participate freely in decisions that affect their lives and livelihoods; when the law itself discriminates against women and minorities; when opportunities are only open to a few based on wealth and privilege, and when corruption and bribery distort access to justice and basic services.

Without respect for the rule of law and human rights, we will fail, not only to make development work equally for everyone, but will also fail to prioritize those who are the most vulnerable, the most marginalized and most in need.

IDLO knows from its work around the world that the rule of law can play a crucial role in closing the gap between the promise of development and the reality of deprivation and discrimination. Good laws and regulations, fairly administered by responsive and accountable institutions, can transform societies, especially when such measures are accompanied by the legal empowerment of citizens and full participation of civil society.

Bringing the law closer to people is key to promoting sustainable and inclusive development. Furthering a culture of justice, based on the rule of law, is essential for a safer, fairer world.

The International Development Law Organization (IDLO) enables governments and empowers people to reform laws and strengthen institutions to promote peace, justice, sustainable development and economic opportunity. IDLO works along the spectrum from peace and institution-building to economic recovery in countries emerging from conflict and striving towards democracy. It supports emerging economies and middle-income countries to strengthen their legal capacity and rule of law framework for sustainable development and economic opportunity.