

Seventy-second session of the UNHCR Executive Committee
4 -8 October, Geneva, Switzerland

**Statement by the International Development Law Organization (IDLO)
Permanent Observer to the United Nations, Mark Cassayre**

Check Against Delivery

Thank you, Vice-Chairperson.

As the only global intergovernmental organization solely dedicated to promoting the rule of law and access to justice to advance peace and sustainable development, the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) firmly believes in the importance of using justice mechanisms to address the needs of the most vulnerable, which includes refugees, internally displaced persons, migrants, and the stateless.

Weak rule of law, poor governance, conflict, and human rights abuses are all drivers of displacement. Climate change is also an increasing push factor. IDLO's work around the world, including in many of the poorest and most conflict affected areas, shows us that promoting strong institutions and equal access to justice can help prevent displacement.

For example, in cooperation with Honduran institutions and civil society, IDLO is helping to reduce social insecurity and rebuild trust in public institutions. The program has contributed to increased access to justice for vulnerable groups, as well as enhanced legal awareness in targeted communities. By working to reduce violence, by reforming the correctional system and by enhancing the capacity of judicial actors, IDLO is contributing to the efforts of the Government of Honduras to decrease the incidence of violence and thereby the impetus to migrate.

When people are displaced, they are particularly vulnerable. Yet, in many instances, legislative frameworks, government policies, and public institutions are not equipped to respond to their needs. IDLO works top-down to strengthen justice institutions and bottom up to empower people to benefit from better access to justice, fair legal frameworks, and effective protection of their human rights.

In Somalia for example, IDLO works with the government and civil society to support the voluntary return, reintegration and protection of Somalis into stable regions of Somalia. This includes reviewing existing legislation and policies concerning IDPs and refugees, giving special attention to the concerns of women and youth, and training to strengthen the capacity of the federal and state governments to implement policies once they have been developed.

IDLO also works extensively with customary and informal justice systems. Globally, more than 80% of legal disputes are resolved outside of the formal courts through customary and informal justice systems. The vast majority of these justice seekers are women, poor people, minority groups, and marginalized communities. At the same time, customary and informal justice systems are deeply rooted in cultural, traditional or religious norms that are not always in line with international standards of human rights and some national constitutions. They are often left out of discussions held at the international level.

In 2019, IDLO launched global consultations on customary and informal justice with the aim of advancing a policy dialogue and distilling lessons from programming and research to make justice accessible for all. In the Sahel, IDLO works closely with the governments, formal justice providers, customary and traditional authorities, and civil society to strengthen the criminal justice systems in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger and improve access to justice for vulnerable groups through community-based platforms.

Strengthening access to care and access to justice for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence in fragile and conflict-affected states is another key component of IDLO's work. Moreover, we undertake legal reviews that are key to eliminating discriminatory laws and policies that undercut women's rights.

There is a need for the expansion of rule of law and justice program interventions in countries affected by significant displacement, along migration routes, in transit countries, and in destination countries, along with effective advocacy at both national and international levels. This is essential for ensuring protection of migrants as well as tackling the root causes of migration itself.

This is why IDLO believes strongly in its partnership with UNHCR. IDLO entered a formal inter-organizational agreement with UNHCR in 2018 to cooperate on a wide range of rule of law and justice-related activities. IDLO is also an active member in the Global Protection Cluster's Task Team on IDP Law and Policy. We look forward to exploring additional areas to partner with UNHCR and member states in support of efforts to ensure that the justice sector can respond effectively to and support the needs of refugees, migrants, IDPs, and stateless persons.

Thank you.