

Interparliamentary Union's 148th Assembly
Statement by Mark Cassayre, Permanent Observer of the International Development Law
Organization (IDLO) to the United Nations in Geneva
General Debate
March 2024

Debate Theme: Parliamentary diplomacy: Building bridges for peace and understanding

Thank you, Madame President.

As this is the first time that the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) has participated as an observer at the IPU Assembly, let me extend our thanks to the IPU and its members for welcoming us to these discussions.

For those not familiar with IDLO, we are the only global intergovernmental organization devoted exclusively to promoting the rule of law to advance peace and sustainable development.

For the 40 years of its existence, and through work in over 90 countries, IDLO has seen the benefits of investing in the institutions of governance and of putting people and their needs at the centre of justice.

Every day, we witness the rise of authoritarianism, human rights violations, and the deepening of social and economic inequalities. Coupled with challenges such as climate change, health emergencies, and food insecurity, these conditions are increasingly driving communities into disputes.

Rule of law solutions, such as eliminating discriminatory laws and policies, strengthening institutions, improving access to justice, and empowering citizens to claim their rights, can play a key role in addressing the root causes of existing conflicts and preventing new ones.

While IDLO works top-down with governments and bottom-up with communities, we are particularly keen to enhance our relationships with parliaments as critical actors bridging these two approaches.

There are many areas of IDLO's work that can contribute to building peace and understanding, and for which we believe partnerships with parliaments would greatly benefit. Let me cite just a few.



First, overcoming the justice gap for women and girls is critical if we are to overcome current global challenges. IDLO supports governments to conduct comprehensive legal assessments identifying discriminatory laws and practices. We would welcome engagement with parliaments to improve legal frameworks that allow women and girls to fully contribute to development outcomes, governance, and meeting communities' needs.

Second is the improvement of justice delivery. IDLO's programmes help strengthen judiciaries, such as through anti-corruption and capacity building initiatives, and create pathways for people to resolve disputes before they become violent conflicts, be it through formal or customary and informal justice mechanisms.

Parliamentarians have close connections with communities and community leaders that can help improve people's access to and experience with justice and governance institutions. We welcome partnerships to achieve that goal.

Third, sustainable development requires the right national legal frameworks to promote investment, improve food security, or implement health regulations. IDLO welcomes expanding our existing partnerships in these areas.

I have offered just a sampling of the many ways we can collaborate to advance sustainable development, peace and understanding. We look forward to working with all of you to that end.

Thank you.