
149TH ASSEMBLY OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION (IPU)

GENERAL DEBATE

“HARNESSING SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION (STI) FOR A MORE PEACEFUL AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE”

13-17 October 2024

Statement by Mark Cassayre, Permanent Observer of the International
Development Law Organization

Thank you, Chair.

It is my pleasure to address you on behalf of the International Development Law Organization (IDLO), and to convey the greetings of our Director General, Jan Beagle, who regrets that she cannot be with you today.

IDLO is the only global intergovernmental organization devoted exclusively to promoting the rule of law to advance peace and sustainable development.

At IDLO, we recognize the transformative potential of technology and innovation in shaping a more just, peaceful, and equitable world. By working top-down with institutions, and bottom-up with civil society, we have witnessed firsthand how new technologies can empower justice seekers, strengthen good governance, and transform institutions to better serve people.

Allow me to share four key insights from IDLO’s experience.

First, digital innovation can help make institutions more efficient, effective, and responsive to the needs of communities. Initiatives such as electronic case management and court information systems enhance the effectiveness of justice institutions, combat corruption, and promote transparency, thereby rebuilding trust in governance.

Second, technology can empower citizens to claim their rights. By making legal resources and support more accessible and affordable through interventions such as mobile courts and translation services, technology bridges the justice gap and facilitates access to justice.

Third, digital technologies can promote transparency and integrity by providing real-time access to information and improving accountability. Tools like open data platforms and e-

governance systems enable greater visibility into decision-making processes, allowing citizens to monitor actions, ensure fairness, and hold institutions accountable.

Fourth, technology can help foster a data culture in critical sectors like education and health. As highlighted at the recent IPU Global Conference in Armenia, which IDLO had the pleasure to attend, there is a need to create conditions where digital technologies can enhance education, and develop the skills required to use them in fostering a culture of peace.

However, while new technologies offer immense opportunities, they also present significant risks. The digital world remains largely unregulated.

The design, development and deployment of such technologies must be grounded in the rule of law, a human rights-based approach and an unwavering focus on people's needs. These technologies must empower justice seekers across gender, class, race and community.

To achieve this, clear legal and policy frameworks are essential. They should govern the responsible use of technology, promote digital literacy and access, especially for marginalized populations, set guardrails for the unlawful use of technology, and encourage multidisciplinary approaches to data governance.

Parliaments play a central role in shaping these frameworks. As representatives of the people, parliaments are uniquely positioned to harness technology for the benefit of all, while mitigating its risks. By working together, we can ensure that emerging technologies are used ethically and that fundamental rights are protected.

IDLO remains committed to collaborating with states, national parliaments and partners to strengthen legal frameworks that protect human rights and promote peace in the digital age. Together, we can ensure that digital innovation is harnessed to promote the rule of law and advance justice for all, helping societies fully benefit from these technologies.

Thank you.