
**STATEMENT DELIVERED TO THE 18TH ASSEMBLY OF STATE PARTIES
TO THE ROME STATUTE**

December 3, 2019

Mr President of the Assembly,

Mr President of the International Criminal Court,

Madam Prosecutor of the ICC,

Mr Registrar,

Honourable Ministers,

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Esteemed Representatives of the Civil Society,

The International Development Law Organization – IDLO appreciates this opportunity to address this eighteenth session of the Assembly of State Parties to the Rome Statute.

IDLO is the only intergovernmental organization exclusively devoted to promoting the rule of law. With our programs, research and policy advocacy IDLO enables governments and empowers people to reform laws and strengthen institutions to promote peace, justice, sustainable development and economic opportunity.

At IDLO we believe that peace cannot be achieved and development cannot be sustained without the rule of law and access to justice. In close cooperation with local institutions and civil society, we work in over thirty countries to ensure that laws are fair, institutions are responsive and people have effective access to justice and remedies.

Our interventions are people-focused, targeting those most at risk of being left behind: people living in fragile and conflict affected situations, women and girls who are victims of violence, poor and marginalized people who experience multiple layers of discrimination. Legal empowerment underpins our work: when justice seekers are empowered, justice institutions become more effective and accountable.

A great part of our work concentrates on combatting sexual and gender-based violence. In countries as varied as Afghanistan, Kenya, Honduras, Liberia, Mongolia, and Myanmar we are working with a wide range of actors across the justice chain - judges, prosecutors, lawyers, women's groups, community leaders and service providers - to

help prevent sexual and gender based violence, strengthen women's access to justice and support the survivors of violence.

And while we are proud of what has been achieved, we are also acutely aware of the magnitude of the challenge and the persistent gaps worldwide.

In strengthening domestic criminal justice chains, we work closely with in-country partner institutions such as the Supreme Court, the Office of the Attorney General, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Justice. One of our key objectives is to increase people's confidence in the justice system through enhancing capacity and accountability of justice institutions and raise legal awareness in often remote communities.

For example, in northern and central Mali, partnering with the UN Mission, MINUSMA, IDLO has adopted an innovative, grassroots based consultative approach to promote inclusion and local ownership in strengthening the criminal justice chain. Drawing on the lessons from Mali, we have recently developed a program to address cross-border criminality in the Sahel, a major source of insecurity and instability in the region. This multi-year, multi-country initiative will seek to strengthen national criminal justice chains and promote sub-regional cooperation.

Mr President, IDLO is an intergovernmental organization exclusively devoted to promoting the rule of law and justice globally. We believe that IDLO's expertise and capacity-building activities in numerous countries, could contribute to the important work of the ICC in combating impunity and building the capacity of local justice institutions to tackle major crimes, as enshrined in the principle of complementarity of the Rome Statute.

We value the opportunity to participate as an observer, in the Hague Working Group on Complementarity and at the eighteenth Assembly.

We commit to capitalize on our experience to expand cooperation with other institutions engaged in promoting access to justice and ending impunity.

Thank you for your attention.