



**STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
LAW ORGANIZATION**

Eleventh session of the UNODC Working Group on Trafficking in Persons

12-13 October, 2021

Vienna (hybrid)

The International Development Law Organization (IDLO) avails itself of this opportunity to thank the Members of the Working Group, and the UNODC as the convening body, for sharing important best practices and challenges in combatting trafficking in persons.

Trafficking in persons is a severe human rights violation that is antithetical to the rule of law. It is also a crime whose impact falls disproportionately on the most vulnerable, including women, children, and the poor.

COVID-19 has exacerbated the inequalities that increase vulnerability to trafficking in persons. It has also created new pathways for criminals to exploit vulnerable populations. As the pandemic has forced many of our lives to shift online, it has presented traffickers with new opportunities to leverage online platforms and technologies to identify and coerce victims. In parallel, technology has played an increasingly important role in the justice sector, as restrictions forced courts to become more agile and move online. IDLO has worked at this intersection of technology and judicial institutions to support the justice sector to use technology in a way that renders it more accessible, cost-effective, transparent, and efficient.

As the only global intergovernmental organization dedicated to promoting the rule of law to achieve sustainable development, IDLO believes that good governance and strong institutions are crucial to the fight against human trafficking.

IDLO continues to help strengthen the capacity of institutions to investigate, prosecute, and adjudicate technology-facilitated trafficking in persons cases. Furthermore, IDLO places particular emphasis on the use of technology to help enhance institutional transparency and streamline case management

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across agencies. We believe these measures are essential to making the justice system more efficient and accessible, by building public trust in institutional responses to trafficking, as well as ensuring lawful investigations and access to justice for survivors.

In Liberia, IDLO is working to support the Government of Liberia in its efforts to counter trafficking in persons. This includes supporting the development of a unified case management system that links law enforcement, prosecutors, the courts and the anti-trafficking task force secretariat.

We will continue to explore how new technologies can render the identification, investigation, and prosecution of trafficking cases more effective, and facilitate cooperation between jurisdictions. In doing so, attention must be paid to ensuring that the use of technology is consistent with human rights obligations, and is harnessed in such a way that minimizes rather than exacerbates digital divides.

IDLO also believes that building institutional integrity and transparency is a key tool in combatting exploitation. Recognizing the inherent linkages between corruption and organized human trafficking, IDLO works to eradicate corruption in the public sector and is committed to strengthening policy and legal frameworks in its countries of operation to identify and prevent the support of forced labor in supply chains.

IDLO looks forward to continuing these conversations to ensure we use every tool available to facilitate the full enjoyment of human rights and access to justice for all, in line with the recommendations adopted at this eleventh session of the Working Group.