

**Statement by the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) at the  
76<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly, 21-30 May, 2023**

**Agenda Item 14 - Public health emergencies: preparedness and response**

Thank you Chair.

IDLO commends the efforts of the Working Group on the IHR amendments and the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body and congratulates WHO for its efforts to design a more effective, more resilient and more equal, global health architecture.

The success of these global reforms, however, will rely on the capacity of countries to implement current and future standards at the national level. We wish to underscore the vital role of the law in addressing public health emergencies and stress the need for enhancing countries' legal preparedness for such crises.

IDLO believes that the rule of law, grounded in a human rights-based approach and people-centred justice, and supported through international solidarity and cooperation, must lead these efforts.

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, IDLO has supported low and middle-income countries on legal preparedness for public health emergencies. This experience permitted us to extract some crucial lessons, notably that countries need to have the following in place: 1) effective legal frameworks for public health emergencies; 2) justice systems focused on people's needs; 3) legal protection for marginalized and vulnerable groups; 4) multisectoral, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches to address public health emergencies; and, finally, 5) sound national legal capacities.

IDLO encourages Member States to place these rule of law components at the centre of the new global health system. All countries must be equipped with the technical and financial support needed to ensure effective implementation of the global framework at the national level.

IDLO remains committed to continue its support to countries and its collaboration with the WHO and partners to this end.

Thank you.