



## ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS: STRATEGIES, PATHWAYS AND GOOD PRACTICE

*Side event organized by the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) with the support of Australia, Italy and Philippines, and in partnership with the American Bar Association and the International Association of Women Judges on the occasion of the 70<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women*

**Monday, 16 March 2026**

**3:00 - 4:15 p.m.**

**Conference Room 11, United Nations Headquarters, New York**

**[UN Web TV live stream](#)**

Access to justice for women and girls is essential to gender equality, human rights, and sustainable development, and to peaceful, just, and inclusive societies. Yet in many countries, women and girls continue to face persistent and systemic barriers to justice. In some contexts, laws and policies remain discriminatory. In others, even where legal protections exist, women are unable to claim and enforce their rights due to justice systems that are ineffective, difficult to access, or not responsive to their needs.

These barriers have significant and far-reaching consequences. Without access to justice, women and girls are often unable to own or inherit property, access credit or financial services, secure decent work, or seek protection from violence and discrimination. These barriers exclude women from economic and social life and limit the impact of broader development efforts. Investments in growth, infrastructure, and service delivery are unlikely to achieve sustainable results if half of the population cannot access and benefit from them.

At a time of shrinking development aid and competing global priorities, the justice sector – particularly justice for women and girls – remains under-resourced and deprioritized. Yet, effective access to justice is a critical enabler of inclusive development. Justice systems that are fair, accountable, and responsive to women’s needs strengthen trust in institutions, support social cohesion, and enable women to contribute fully to economic and social development. Investments in growth, infrastructure, and service delivery will not deliver their full impact if women – who make up half of the population – are unable to access justice or protect their rights. Addressing these challenges ABA requires implementing Agenda 2030 in a way that recognizes the interdependent and mutually reinforcing nature of SDGs 5 on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.

This high-level event will examine the key challenges, effective approaches, and political and financial investments needed to advance access to justice for all women and girls.

## Agenda

### Moderator

**Jan Beagle**, Director-General, IDLO

### Special Remarks

- **Hon. Majken Anika S. Gran-Ong**, Undersecretary of the Department of Justice, Government of Philippines
- **Padma Raman**, Executive Director of the Office for Women, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Australia
- **Representative**, Italy

### Panel Discussion:

- **Justice Maria Filomena Singh**, Supreme Court of the Philippines and President-Elect of the International Association of Women Judges
- **Nahla Haidar**, Chair, CEDAW Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
- **Doreen Kyazze**, Regional Director for Sub-Saharan Africa, Penal Reform International
- **Michelle A. Behnke**, President, American Bar Association

### Interactive Discussion