

Maria Fernanda Rodriguez

Vice minister of Justice of Argentina

Thank you very much distinguished vice chair, distinguished members of United Nations, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. It is an honor to be participating in this panel and be shearing such relevant issues with you.

To be able to put specific action into place for access to justice, Argentina first started by recognizing the fact that the world is more complex, with many different regulatory systems where daily problems (which are social, legal and nature), exercise rights and the state of wellbeing in daily life, for some groups of people is something very difficult to achieve.

The problem of access to justice is it a cause or is it an effect of poverty or both? And as the documents of events say so well, justice is selective and it is dominantly give to some groups of people. It is not even distributed. The Ministry of Justice and Human Rights of Argentina sees access to Justice as a catalyst of inclusive development and for that reason there is an entire Under-Secretary dedicated to helping to provide access to justice were three National Directors work with the whole universe of bridging the gap on delivering justice for all.

In order to promote legal empowerment we have 90 Access to Justice Centers. These are centers distributed along the country which are small offices that provide legal services integrated by a staff of 4 professionals with a holistic approach. They provide social and legal services which are early and prevented nature. This work is done in some cases to eliminate the bureaucratic obstacles and difficulties or territorial difficulties they may be face, or to remove obstacles that come from a lack of information or education or the social capital that people may have access to.

When developing this public policy the main priority was to ensure that these services would provide quality services and they will provide immediate relevant information as necessary to people. So, to that end, we developed a computer tool. It's a dynamic software program where all the consultations received in the different centers are categorized by themes and sub themes on real-time.

So, what do we do in order to address some of the problems? In order to provide assistance scale it up, we provided both private and public assistance with colleagues who are lawyers from universities and NGO's to develop systems for free services to be provided.

Given that Argentina has an extensive territory we develop 2 different projects. One for the rural and most remote areas of our country, in the north of the country, the Legal and Sanitary Corridor. This device is design with mobile units that provides medical services to cover primary health care needs. And then, in large urban centers, we created the first Hospital for Rights, where we provide legal services, public and private services coordinated with all the legal services providers in order to discouraged institutional fragmentation.

In addition, under the principle of open justice, we conducted our first survey of legal needs that have not been that, and at this time we are collecting all the information in order to see how we may have our models evolved over time to meet the gaps in the system. We think this is an enormous positive step forward to design systems of work so that we can meet our goal by the year 2030, and keeping with the principles of open justice, citizen participation and accountability. Also, this work encourage us to generate an indicator for this dimension of SDG16, which seeks to include civil (non-criminal in some cases) justice that would make possible to account for the efforts countries made to meet goal 16

At an international level, we co-chair the Task Force on Justice with Sierra Leon, the Netherlands and The Elders among a series of worldwide experts on justice. We work with our colleges on what we need to do what works to provide social justice and bring justice to the people. We also provide special attention for women, and so constituted the High Level Working Group on Women.

Access to justice is always a process. It is an unending process. A working progress. Something we have to work on constantly and an ongoing basis, and that a global level we must commit ourselves to the effort of accelerating the process to achieve SDG16 +.

The purpose of this goal is the most cross cutting. It defines the possibility of being able to achieve all the other goals and for that reason I believe we need to work thoroughly in putting people at the center of the systems of justice. Working on this issue and on this ecosistemic notion means to leave no one behind.