Background

In broad terms governance data suggests good governance – of which law and justice services are key components - is linked with positive general development outcomes, and more particularly provides a strong *prima facie* case that good government is linked with eradication of extreme poverty and promotion of shared prosperity. (Stephenson, Matthew, ‘Good Governance as a Means to Fight Extreme Poverty and Promote Shared Prosperity: A Synopsis of Key Research Findings’, 2015). Law and justice services have a strong role in making these governance contributions effective. The World Bank’s World Development Report 2000/2001 recommended action to address poverty in three key areas: promoting opportunity; facilitating empowerment; and enhancing security. Law and justice services, when developed and implemented effectively, can support progress in achieving the twin goals. However, law and justice services, when developed and implemented poorly, can also block progress.

Law provides frameworks for promoting economic growth and job creation. It supports the expansion of economic opportunities for poor persons by governing the accumulation and use of assets (eg. land, bank accounts and loans). By governing institutions and service delivery, law is an instrument for implementation of policy and facilitates empowerment by ensuring state institutions are accountable and responsive to the poor. It also enhances security by governing provision of basic services that benefit the poor, such as health, education and social safety nets. Law can promote inclusive growth by establishing legal protections against social and economic exclusion, for example discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, gender or economic status.

Justice services also have a role to play in alleviating poverty. Services within the justice sector provide tools for the poor to challenge legal frameworks that obstruct economic, social and political participation, or that allow for inadequate service delivery. They also provide avenues for the poor to hold government entities accountable for weak delivery of services, for example challenging the gaps in implementation of laws. As such, these services support the poor in accessing basic services and opportunities that are key to human, social and economic development (eg. health, education and employment). Targeting of justice services needs to ensure the needs of the poor and vulnerable are met given their propensities to suffer more legal problems, be impacted by different types of legal problems than those with more financial means, and lack resources to seek redress.
Session Objective

The overall objective of the session is to facilitate a discussion on the roles of law and justice sector services in achieving the World Bank's twin goals of alleviating extreme poverty and ensuring inclusive growth.

More specifically, the discussions will be focused around the following themes:

- How law and justice can promote or obstruct progress towards the twin goals through institutions and service delivery

- How justice sector services targeted to the poor and vulnerable can contribute to poverty alleviation and mitigate social and economic exclusion

- The role and comparative advantages of the World Bank in promoting cooperation on law and justice services as a means to achieve the twin goals

- Advancing the agenda within the World Bank – promoting good policies through operations, research and knowledge-sharing