



**High-level breakfast meeting for Permanent Representatives on  
SDG16+ and its preparation for the High-Level Political Forum in July and September 2019  
Tuesday, 29 January 2019 (8:15-9:30)**

**Remarks by  
H.E. Ambassador Inga Rhonda King  
President of the Economic and Social Council**

**Opportunities for SDG16+ at the HLPF**

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to join you at this high-level meeting on SDG16+.

This year, we are at a critical time for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We are gearing up for the HLPF Summit that will review and accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda next September. It will be crucial to give momentum and increase action and commitments on implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We are also preparing the July HLPF which will pave the way for the Summit and review of six critical SDGs.

The inclusion of SDG 16 on *“peaceful and inclusive societies, justice and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions”* in the SDGs, as a self-standing goal on a par with sectoral goals such as education, health, poverty eradication, and others, has been a game-changer. While everybody agrees on the importance of peace, inclusiveness and institutions for development, in previous global development frameworks, these aspects tended to be relegated to the background or the overall enabling environment, with the exception of so-called “means of implementation”.

The very first review of SDG 16 at the July HLPF is a momentous occasion. It will provide a platform to reflect on the adequacy and effectiveness of existing societal and institutional arrangements for supporting the implementation of all the SDGs.

At the same time, reviewing progress on SDG 16 is challenging.

A first challenge is the breadth of the scope covered by the goal. SDG 16 targets cover three dimensions: human rights; peace and security; and effective institutions for development. Peace and security issues, illicit financial flows, corruption, non-discrimination, and other themes addressed in the SDG 16 targets each have their own academic disciplines, communities of practice, and international rules. Within each of these broad themes, work is often fragmented.

A second challenge is that of measurement. SDG 16 addresses a collection of fields where measurement work has developed independently from one another. Global indicators can only cover a limited number of dimensions. In addition, absence of agreed methodology or unavailability of data for most of the global indicators for SDG 16 at present is a constraint to getting a global picture of the related trends. More broadly, when focusing on outcomes and impacts of the changes we observe along the various dimensions of SDG 16, it is difficult to construct a clear global picture in terms of “progress”. There is often a wide gap between the assumed benefits of reforms and their actual impacts. In many fields covered by SDG 16, experts have pointed to a lack of clarity on causal links and the lack of clear models of institutional change. This often results in high expectations that do not materialize.

A third challenge is the importance of local context. The political and institutional environments and prevailing social norms in which SDG 16-related reforms occur vary widely across jurisdictions. Experts underline the importance of context, and the lack of replicability of reform packages across countries.

In many countries, various established institutional processes are at work in areas of relevance to SDG 16 (for example, reforms of the justice system). Many of those countries have developed monitoring systems that track changes, outcomes and sometimes impacts (for example, internal monitoring done by government agencies, audit reports, and reporting under various international treaties). Finding appropriate ways to assemble information coming from those processes would enable reviews that are relevant to national circumstances and can inform SDG implementation and monitoring. Ongoing efforts should be further encouraged and supported by the UN system.

The work of the Pathfinders and others has addressed these difficulties in a ground-breaking way. The Roadmap for peaceful and inclusive societies produced by the Pathfinders has succeeded in exposing the strong connections that exist between SDG 16 and all the other SDGs, in a simple and attractive way. And it has linked SDG 16 with the broad challenges faced by all nations and the international community. The process by which the roadmap has been developed has been exemplary, relying on dialogue and patiently building awareness and support from countries in all regions. Given the political sensitivity that existed in relation to

the inclusion of governance issues in the SDGs, and the highly political nature of many of the targets of SDG 16, this is a tour de force.

I also would like to commend efforts that have been made since 2015 by the Pathfinders, the Global Alliance and other coalitions to foster dialogue at the country and regional levels. The effort to link conversations on peace and security, justice and institutions for development is what is needed to support countries, including those suffering from conflict, to build resilient and sustainable societies.

The Pathfinders have also engaged in a dialogue with the Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA), whose work in recent years has focused on building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. CEPA—a subsidiary body of ECOSOC, has placed the 2030 Agenda at the centre of its work and continues to advise ECOSOC on how public administrations can support the implementation and progress reviews of the SDGs.

At the seventeenth session, the Committee agreed on a set of eleven principles of effective governance for sustainable development, with essential elements of Goal 16 (namely, effectiveness, accountability and inclusiveness) at its core. The principles, endorsed by the Economic and Social Council on 2 July 2018, highlight the need for pragmatic and ongoing improvements in national and local governance capabilities to reach the Sustainable Development Goals. At the eighteenth session, the Committee will continue to identify and review technical guidelines to operationalize the principles.

Expectations from the review of SDG 16 at the HLPF have been building up since the Agenda was adopted. It will be a challenge to reflect the richness of the subject and give a fair exposure to all the initiatives that are taking place under its umbrella. The extremely valuable work of the Pathfinders, SDG 16+, the Global Alliance and others should be reflected in discussions at the HLPF later this year.

I look forward to a fruitful discussion.

\*\*\*\*

### **Next steps and closing remarks (9:15-9:25)**

I would like to thank all the participant for their invaluable contribution to the discussion this morning. You stimulated ideas on advancing SDG16 towards just, peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice and the rule of law.

As I mentioned in my opening remarks, we are at a critical time for the SDGs. While there is continuing momentum for their implementation, progress has been uneven among and

within countries. The interlinkages among the Sustainable Development Goals and the trade-offs involved make the implementation of the Agenda transformative but also challenging.

With its redefined mandate, the ECOSOC Integration Segment will be providing an opportunity to bring in the work of the ECOSOC subsidiary bodies, the UN system and the specialized agencies to contribute to the HLPF reviews of the SDGs, including SDG16, which is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda.

The Economic and Social Council, its various segments and forums, as well as its subsidiary bodies, all contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. I count on your continued engagement in the work of the Economic and Social Council and the High-level Political Forum to mobilize action toward creating a momentum for the SDGs and SDG 16 in particular.

At a time when multilateralism is being questioned, we need coherent global responses to address complex challenges. We need to come resolutely together so that the September HLPF Summit is a success of multilateralism. That is why I made it a priority to have the most successful HLPF to date.

Let us not forget that Member States at the highest level pledged with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda that no one would be left behind and they committed to “endeavour to reach the furthest behind first”. We should be guided by this principle in our pursuit for the world we want.

Thank you.

\*\*\*