



**ECOSOC**

United Nations Economic and Social Council

**TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES**

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

**Retreat on “Synergies among Developing Countries for Achieving  
a World Free of Terrorism and Agenda 2030”**

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I would like to thank you, Ambassador Kairat Umarov and the Permanent Mission of Kazakhstan and Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Vronkov for inviting me to this retreat. It is an honour for me to be here with you today. And an honor to join this distinguished panel of colleagues.

Excellencies, Colleagues,

Despite the multiple efforts by the international community to fight terrorism, terrorist groups continue to plague many parts of the world, bringing unacceptable death and destruction.

While counter-terrorism measures have traditionally focused on the security aspects to prevent and combat terrorism, it is increasingly recognized that security-based measures alone are not sufficient to defeat it. They need to be complemented by systematic preventive measures which address the drivers of terrorism and violent extremism.

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy<sup>1</sup> adopted in 2006, recognizes the need to “address conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism”. The strategy also recognizes the importance of respecting human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis of the fight against terrorism, noting that counter-terrorism measures and the protection of human rights are not conflicting goals but rather complementary and mutually reinforcing.

The Secretary-General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism<sup>2</sup> adopted in 2015, elaborates on the drivers of violent extremism, including: lack of socio-economic opportunities, marginalization and discrimination, poor governance and rule of law, human rights violations and prolonged and unresolved conflicts.

That same year (2015), the international community came together to adopt the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - a document of unprecedented scope and significance to achieve sustainable development for all. The Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can help to address conditions that are conducive to the spread of violent extremism and terrorism.

Ending poverty (SDG 1) and hunger (SDG 2), ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all and promoting lifelong learning (SDG 4), achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls (SDG 5), promoting inclusive sustainable and economic growth and decent work for all (SDG 8), reducing inequality within and among countries (SDG 10), taking action to combat climate change (SDG 13) and combating desertification (SDG15) would contribute to preventing and defeating terrorism.

SDG 16, aimed at promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable institutions at all levels, is particularly relevant. Targets for this goal aim to reduce all forms of violence, promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all. The goal also aims, inter alia, to significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows,

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<sup>1</sup> A/RES/60/288.

<sup>2</sup> A/70/674.

strengthen the recovery of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime, ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels, ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, and strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime.

Let me give you specific examples of interlinkages between SDG 16 and [SDG 4](#) on education. The provision of legal identity is a critical step towards achieving universal access to education for all boys and girls. Strong institutions are critical to the provision of affordable and high-quality education at all levels. Improved access to information enables families to avail themselves of educational opportunities and resources. Fewer conflicts and lower levels of violence mean more children and young adults are in school and safe. Reduced corruption lowers the diversion of resources away from schools. And non-discriminatory laws and policies help to ensure that girls, children with disabilities, migrant, indigenous and other children are not left behind. Moreover, education is a foundation for peaceful societies, as it brings hope, stability and opportunity when crisis and conflict disrupt young lives. It sows the seeds of peace by fostering reconciliation, mutual understanding and social cohesion.

SDG 16 is not only related to all other SDGs. It also embodies one of the key messages of the 2030 Agenda, that there is no peace without development and no development without peace. This is increasingly recognized as the GA and Security Council embraced the concept of “Sustaining Peace” which recognizes that peace cannot be sustained when people’s lives are not improved through sustainable development paths and unless institutions are strengthened.

Yet, it is concerning that, despite advances in a number of goals and targets, progress has been slow in many Goals and the global response has not been ambitious enough. It is cause of great concern, for instance, that extreme poverty is projected to be 6 per cent by 2030, hunger is on the rise for the third consecutive year, greenhouse emissions continue to increase, and institutions are not strong enough to respond adequately to these inter-linked and cross-border challenges. Also, in the context of the Agenda 2030’s principle of “leaving no one behind”, it is worrying that some population groups continue to remain highly marginalized, for instance, globally, youth are three times more likely to be unemployed than adults.

Equally worrying is that the global landscape for SDG implementation has generally deteriorated since 2015 hindering the efforts of many governments and multilateralism – which is key to implementing global agreements – currently under serious threat.

This means that, as the international community gears up for the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) next month as well as the HLPF (SDG Summit) in September –world leaders will have the unique opportunity to review the status of implementation as well as renew their commitment to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

The July HLPF, which will end the first cycle of SDG implementation, will review many of the relevant goals I previously mentioned. SDGs 4 on education, 8 on economic growth, 10 on reducing inequality, 13 on climate change, 16 on peace, justice and robust institutions, and 17 on partnerships.

Forty-seven countries, including several developing countries represented in this room, will present their voluntary national reviews at the HLPF. The official session will be complemented by 146 side events, 36 exhibitions and 8 special events. A number of these events will deal with specifically with peace-building and related issues. I therefore encourage you to participate in many of those events to contribute and benefit from the in-depth discussions. The Forum will offer you the opportunity to share good practices and lessons learnt on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including measures to help create a world free of terrorism. Thank you!