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Public Hearing on Good governance and the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 16 - Tuesday, 29 November 2016

Scope and genesis of Sustainable Development Goal 16
Dr. Sarah Lister, Director, Oslo Governance Centre

Thank you for the invitation today. I am Sarah Lister, Director of UNDP's Oslo Governance Centre, which is a global policy centre working on applied research and dialogue on governance in transitions. We work with other colleagues in UNDP and across the UN system on Goal 16, and we have a particular focus in Oslo on measurement aspects of the Goal.

I have been asked to speak on the scope and genesis of SDG16, and I will structure my comments in 3 sections:

- What is the genesis of Goal 16 – where does it come from?
- Why does it matter?
- What progress has been made towards implementation?

The genesis of Goal 16 - where did it come from?

- Before I talk a little about the process of agreeing the Goal, I want to look back some years and note that Goal 16 did not come out of nowhere. The Millennium Declaration had strong language about democratic, participatory and good governance, human rights and freedom from the fear of violence:

“Men and women have the right to live their lives and raise their children in dignity, free from hunger and from the fear of violence, oppression or injustice. Democratic and participatory governance based on the will of the people best assures these rights.

We will spare no effort to promote democracy and strengthen the rule of law, as well as respect for all internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms”

- Although the Declaration contained this language, there was no millennium development goal on governance or democracy, and the story of why is a complex one. But a big part of the reason was not political resistance as is sometimes assumed, but that there was no confidence that it could be measured properly.

- Nonetheless, a number of countries including Mongolia, Albania and Laos developed their own so-called “MDG 9” on governance or security/related issues.
- However, in the period between the establishment of the MDGs and the discussion on the SDGs there were a number of significant shifts that made the ground more fertile for such a goal:
 - There was a recognition that a lack of peace, inclusiveness, and justice hampered sustainable development. This was both because of the multiple effects of conflict, and the lack of effective and accountable institutions which could ensure sustained integrated economic, social, and environmental progress.
 - The Rio +20 declaration in 2012, as well as other international declarations and statements, had recognized this and firmly linked democracy, good governance and rule of law with sustainable development.
 - There was an increasing recognition that peace and development must be understood and dealt with together, rather than in separate silos. In fact, in the original consultation process around the post -2015 agenda these were separate tracks, but they were brought together in recognition of the need to address these issues together.
 - There had been a lot of technical progress and a number of good examples from across the world, including the developing world, of the feasibility of measuring elements of governance.
- The process of negotiating what became Goal 16 was complex and in places difficult.
- But it should also be noted that there was also a very large and important civil society mobilization around a peace and governance goal. In the “My World” survey, “an honest and responsive government” was consistently rated as one of the most important concerns of the millions who participated.

Why does it matter?

- Goal 16 is not only a valuable and important aspiration in its own right, it is also an important ‘enabling goal’ for the entire sustainable development agenda. As the 2030 Agenda itself declares “there can be no sustainable development without peace, and no peace without sustainable development”.
- Furthermore, the inclusive governance envisioned in G16 will be essential for the achievement of the whole Agenda which will require joint efforts and collaboration, between governments, parliaments, the media, CSOs, other decision makers, local businesses and local communities and stakeholders, placing the citizens in the middle of national policies.
- One of the key features of SDG16 is that it is now firmly part of a universal agenda developed by Member States, and so “owned” by the international community in a way that was not the case before – previously (eg. Washington Consensus, etc?)

“governance” was seen as something experts in the developed world did to developing countries. SDG16 has fundamentally changed that dynamic, and all countries share a responsibility to act.

- Additionally, the SDGs, especially G16, offer us an implementation framework to work more effectively across the humanitarian, development, human rights, and peacebuilding spheres.
- But it is also important to mention that there are a number of principles relevant to the topic today encapsulated in SDG16, but which are present ACROSS the whole agenda, which must be treated as a universal, integrated and indivisible agenda. Indeed, many targets across the Agenda are directly related to violence, justice or inclusivity. For example, target 4.7 talks about “promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity”, target 5.2 of women’s participation and leadership.
- The targets of Goal 16 cover a wide range of issues related which have been consistently shown to impact on sustainable development. They cover: violence, abuse of children, rule of law, illicit financial and arms flows, corruption, effective, accountable and transparent institutions, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making, fundamental freedoms and so on.
- Parliaments are important in the achievement of G16 because they are one of the mechanisms for ensuring inclusive and accountable governance. Oversight bodies have a particular responsibility to ensure inclusion – not just through data disaggregation, but also through ensuring that disaggregated data is used for effective policy to improve people’s lives.
- There are certainly some challenges with measurement of the Goal. Some indicators are relatively straightforward and there are existing datasets that can be used. Some indicators are very complex and there is neither data nor established methodologies for measuring them. There is a process within the international statistical system for working on these issues and work is ongoing, including through the Praia City Group on Governance Statistics, which is actively supported by UNDP.

What progress has already been made towards implementation?

- There has been a lot of activity across different levels and in different domains towards support to the achievement of SDG16.
- While implementation at the national level is the responsibility of national stakeholders, UNDP as part of the UN system, and with a presence across some 170 countries, is committed to supporting the Goal and working hard with partners for its implementation at all levels – global, regional, national and subnational.
- At the country level we are supporting the mainstreaming of Goal 16 into national plans. UNDP, in partnership with the Open Governance Partnership and the

Community of Democracies, supports National Level Monitoring of SDG 16 in Georgia, Indonesia, Tunisia, El Salvador, Uruguay and South Africa. These countries are seeking to understand what type of arrangements work best for national stakeholders to ensure efficient reporting across multiple commitments. This includes the development of a national scorecard or similar, drawing on indicators from national, regional and global level.

- At country level we also continue to support programming which addresses aspects of the goal. For example:
 - UNDP undertakes efforts to reform political institutions to ensure more women are employed and are promoted into decision-making positions. For example, in Armenia we implemented a capacity-development programme which supported the election of women to local councils.
 - In Papua New Guinea, UNDP collaborated with a telecom provider to prototype an SMS reporting system that sends warnings of corruption to a government watchdog. The initial pilot resulted in 6000 reports from over 1500 users, the investigation of 251 cases and the arrest of two public officials for funds mismanagement for over \$2 million.
 - We are also, for example, working on rule of law in Tunisia, supporting the Ministry of the Interior to introduce a new policing model based on public service and respect for citizens' rights. We have also supported the creation of local security committees to bring together civil society, local authorities, and national police representatives to discuss security issues.
- At the subnational level we are supporting the “localization of the SDGs”, including SDG16, recognizing that the SDGs can be reached only if local actors fully participate not only in the implementation, but also in the agenda-setting process, monitoring. In practice this means we support local actors by presenting providing practical instruments, guidelines and tools.
- At the regional level, we are supporting the sharing of experiences and the pooling of knowledge, including through regional groupings. The week after next, for example, there will be a meeting of those working in Latin America and the Caribbean, supported by the Government of Spain and facilitated by UNDP. Colleagues will gather to discuss progress and challenges with supporting Goal 16.
- At the global level, UNDP is working alongside other UN agencies and a range of other stakeholders, other multilateral and bilateral development organisations, civil society, academia, and the private sector. We are seeking to share knowledge, good practice and innovation.
- We are also supporting the Global Alliance for Reporting Progress on Promoting Peaceful, Just, and Inclusive Societies – a multistakeholder network for effective and participatory reporting on SDG 16 – which was launched on the margins of the General Assembly. Among other activities, the Alliance will support Member States to report to the High Level Political Forum – including through national voluntary reporting, as

well as to the 2019 Forum, focused on focused empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality.

- UNDP, through the work led by OGC is also actively supporting the further development and operationalization of the indicator framework.
- There are many other examples, which maybe we can discuss during the Q&A. I have brought along some material, including a newsletter which we produce monthly and which you are welcome to subscribe to.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to your questions.