



SDG 16 Conference – Advancing Peace, Justice and Institutions for Sustainable Development, 12 May 2025

Malta Statement delivered by Ms Vanessa Frazier, Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, New York

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Thank you to Italy, UN-DESA and the IDLO for convening this valuable discussion. I would like to highlight two issues.

Firstly, SDG 16 calls for an end to violence against children, and the Pact for the Future calls for the implementation of our commitments under the children and armed conflict agenda. In 2023 the UN verified over 30,000 grave violations against children, and UNICEF reports 2024 as being one of the worst years on record for children living in conflict zones, with more than one in six children globally now living in conflict-affected areas. These violations impact children's lives, health, education, and innocence. We echo the words of UNICEF – “We refuse to accept this deadly new normal”.

In the Security Council and beyond, Malta has consistently called for an end to violence and abuses against children, strengthened accountability to end impunity for such violations, building capacity in child protection including in UN peace operations, and embracing a comprehensive approach to addressing children and armed conflict priorities.

Secondly, SDG 16 calls for responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels, while the Pact for the Future calls for the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in policy and decision-making. This strengthens our efforts in sustainable development and enhances trust in institutions and governments. It is imperative to increase women's participation and representation in peacebuilding, justice, and development processes.

Malta will present its second VNR at the 2025 HLPF in July, highlighting the progress we have made in gender equality, by reducing pay gaps, increasing female representation in leadership and politics, and strengthening legal frameworks against gender-based violence.

I thank you.