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MR. LI JUNHUA
UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
AFFAIRS

Closing Remarks
SDG 16 Conference 2025

12 May 2025, 5:30 pm
ECOSOC Chamber

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

As the SDG 16 Conference 2025 concludes, I extend my sincere gratitude for your insightful contributions to our rich discussions.

Our deliberations have powerfully underscored the necessity of collective actions in addressing the interlinked challenges of peace, justice, and strong institutions. The diverse perspectives and experiences shared have deepened our understanding, and reminded us of the scale—and the profound urgency—of the task before us.

A resounding message from today’s Conference is clear: investing in peace, justice and effective institutions yields transformative, long-term dividends, driving inclusive economic growth, strengthening resilience, and fostering social cohesion. Such investments are fundamental to the entire 2030 Agenda. Indeed, sustainable development is impossible without peace, justice, and strong institutions. Therefore, renewing our commitment to invest in the public sector—building inclusive, transparent, and accountable institutions—is not only essential, but critically urgent.

We need public institutions that are responsive to people’s needs and capable of regaining public trust. This demands enhancing public servant capacities for anticipatory planning, evidence-based policy design, and effective, equitable implementation. Technology can be an enabler. However, digital transformation must be rights-based and inclusive, ensuring that innovation serves to bridge divides—and not deepen them.

Equally important is the need to ensure inclusive decision-making within public administration. Representation and participation must reflect the full diversity of our societies, and institutions must be truly accountable to the people they serve. Inclusive decision-making not only enhances the legitimacy of public institutions, but also leads to more effective, relevant and equitable policy outcomes. Non-discriminatory and gender-responsive policies must create meaningful pathways for marginalized and underrepresented groups to engage in public life.

Crucially, we cannot overlook strengthening the rule of law at all levels. It underpins rights, fosters peace and accountability of public institutions, and creates the enabling conditions for inclusive economies and sustainable development.

**Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,**

As we look ahead to the upcoming Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development in Spain, the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and other intergovernmental processes, SDG 16 must be central to all global commitments. Now is the time to act boldly, invest wisely and govern inclusively—to deliver for just, peaceful, and resilient societies.

Let us carry today’s momentum forward with renewed determination and a unified purpose. Together, across all institutions, sectors, and communities, we can, and we will realize the full promise of SDG 16, and with it, advance the overarching vision of the 2030 Agenda.

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Thank you.
