



General Assembly Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
19 June 2023

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventy-seventh session
Agenda item 13

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related field

Economic and Social Council
2023 session

Agenda item 10

The role of the United Nations system in the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development into the implementation of and follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Letter dated 14 June 2023 from the Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am honoured to present the key messages of the fourth edition of the Sustainable Development Goal 16 Conference, on the theme “Sustainable Development Goal 16 as a compass for navigating intersecting crises”, held in Rome at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy from 30 May to 1 June (see annex).

The fourth edition of the Conference was hosted by the Government of Italy and co-organized with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the International Development Law Organization, gathering hundreds of officials from Governments, United Nations and international organizations, practitioners, stakeholders, including civil society representatives, women and young leaders and academia. It took stock of the current progress and challenges in implementing Sustainable Development Goal 16 in the context of the wider 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at this critical year of the midpoint in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, with the aim of informing both the high-level political forum on sustainable development under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council and the Sustainable Development Goals Summit under the auspices of the General Assembly.

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 13, and of the Economic and Social Council, under agenda item 10.

(Signed) Maurizio **Massari**
Ambassador



Annex to the letter dated 14 June 2023 from the Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Sustainable Development Goal 16 Conference, 2023

Key messages

1. Sustainable Development Goal 16 is both a stand-alone Goal and an enabler and accelerator of all other Sustainable Development Goals. It is at the heart of what makes the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development transformative, and it can play a vital role in addressing multiple global crises, including conflict, lack of trust in public institutions and climate change. The causes and effects of these crises – and the actions needed to address them – are interconnected and deeply rooted in issues of human rights, justice, equity, inclusion, accountability and good governance.
2. Sustainable Development Goal 16 can help to build a future where violent conflicts are prevented rather than managed, and where resources are invested in development rather than destruction. Participants called for proactive investment in addressing root causes of conflicts such as inequality, injustice and exclusion; ensuring the participation of women, young people, Indigenous Peoples and other excluded groups in peace processes; and promoting multi-stakeholder partnerships for conflict prevention, resolution and reconciliation at the local, national, regional and international levels.
3. Restoring trust in public institutions is a prerequisite for renewed social contracts that underpin inclusive and sustainable societies. Participants emphasized the need to enhance the capacity of public institutions to deliver responsive and inclusive services to all. This requires investing in the public sector, building the capacity and skills of public servants and empowering citizens and communities to exercise their rights.
4. Transparency and accountability are of the utmost importance to ensure that public resources are effectively spent. Participants noted that fiscal transparency has proven positive effects on budget credibility, the capacity of Governments to access finance, the effectiveness of public services and their responsiveness to people's needs.
5. Harnessing the “missing funds” stemming from illicit financial flows will be critical for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. Participants shared that combating corruption at the national and international levels, including by building on existing instruments such as the United Nations Convention Against Corruption, is critical to ensure that public resources are effectively spent, including in the context additional financing for sustainable development.
6. Strengthening the rule of law and access to justice can catalyse progress across the 2030 Agenda. Participants considered that this will require transitioning to people-centred approaches that emphasize better use of data and evidence, innovating service delivery and utilizing diverse pathways to justice with a focus on improved outcomes for the end users. Empowering people and communities to claim their rights and participate in policymaking can generate transformative actions such as strengthening land governance, increasing food security, preventing environmental degradation and climate justice. Fair and effective policies and mechanisms are needed to balance the interests of current and future generations.
7. Women's equality and empowerment is both a human right and a prerequisite for peace and sustainable development. Participants underlined that action at many levels is urgently needed to repeal gender-discriminatory laws; to increase women's

representation in all institutions, from company boards to parliaments and judiciaries, and from higher education to public institutions; to advance women's economic participation and inclusion, through special measures, economic empowerment, access to finance and social protection; and to devote the planning and resources required to stop violence against women.

8. The scale, complexity and interconnectedness of challenges necessitates multidimensional, "whole-of-government" solutions. This requires better use of official and unofficial sources of data and evidence, strengthened future planning and increased policy coordination and coherence across all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Participants observed that national efforts are needed to better monitor all relevant aspects of Sustainable Development Goal 16, from budget credibility to the inclusiveness of public institutions to corruption to access to justice. Efforts to develop future thinking work best if they are embedded in Governments' regular ways of working, as this helps to mobilize political will and increase ownership. While led by the centre of Government, planning should empower all parts of government departments to create ownership and buy-in.

9. The inclusive use of digital technologies can drive transformative change. Participants highlighted that priority must be given to developing digital literacy, building critical digital infrastructure and people-centred digital services, while urgently addressing risks to privacy, freedom of expression, discrimination and human rights. These issues should be considered by the intergovernmental process to elaborate a global digital compact.

10. Changing the trajectory of Sustainable Development Goal 16, and ultimately the 2030 Agenda, requires urgent collective action at a global level. Participants concluded that multi-stakeholder partnerships among Governments, multilateral institutions, the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders are needed to generate political will and financial support and convert it into concrete actions. The inclusion, contribution and leadership of women and young people and rights holders such as Indigenous Peoples are critical and must be supported through dedicated measures. By engaging with diverse stakeholders as partners, Governments can foster "whole-of-society" approaches that prioritize shared goals, collective problem-solving and mutual accountability and help to lay the foundations for a more peaceful, just and sustainable future.
