



January 2024, the SDG Action Segment of the ECOSOC Partnership Forum had a dedicated session on SDG 16, held in this very room.

Hence, many messages that we heard today are not new. Yet, there is much more we can do to operationalize them.

Ladies and gentlemen,

SDG 16 can help build a future where violent conflicts are prevented rather than managed, and where resources are invested in development rather than destruction. We need to invest in prevention and peacebuilding, with a focus on social cohesion and the protection of vulnerable groups.

Restoring trust in public institutions is a prerequisite for renewed social contracts that underpin inclusive and sustainable societies. We 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.

The scale, complexity and interconnectedness of the challenges we face necessitate “whole of government” and “whole of society” solutions. This requires prioritizing coherent policy-making across government and public administration and investing in participation and co-creation. By engaging with diverse stakeholders as partners, governments can foster approaches that prioritize shared goals, collective problem-solving, and mutual accountability. Securing access to information is a key building block of enhanced participation. Transparency and accountability are of the utmost importance to ensure that public resources are effectively spent.

The inclusive use of digital technologies can drive transformative change. Priority must be given to developing digital literacy, building critical digital infrastructure and people-centered digital services, while urgently addressing risks to privacy, freedom of expression, discrimination and human rights.

Strengthening the rule of law and access to justice can catalyze progress across the 2030 Agenda. It is urgent to bring justice closer to people. Closing the justice gap, particularly

for women and girls, will require transitioning to people-centred approaches that emphasize better use of data and evidence 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, including in terms of preventing and combatting corruption and organized crime.

The fight against corruption needs to be stepped up. It is important to implement and build upon instruments such as the UN Convention Against Corruption, and leverage existing tools and opportunities at national and international levels, including for better transparency and oversight of public spending.

Dear participants,

Achieving inclusive societies will require greater efforts to prioritize those left behind. Investing in social protection systems is essential to effectively combatting inequalities, protecting human rights and addressing poverty in a systemic way.

Achieving sustainable development requires engaging all sectors of society, to build a sense of ownership and increase public trust in government.

In particular, we need to elevate the visibility and agency of women in all stages of decision-making, including as related to prevention, peacebuilding and justice. Efforts should also focus on providing youth with the space to exercise their agency and empower them to participate in development processes, formally and informally.

Finally, efforts are needed to better monitor all relevant aspects of SDG 16, from budget credibility to the inclusiveness of public institutions to corruption to access to justice. This requires better use of official and unofficial sources of data and evidence and innovative measurement tools.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Across the whole spectrum of Goal 16, we need to change gears. As with other goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda, working in silos cannot deliver society-wide change. We need to carefully consider the interlinkages across the various dimensions of SDG 16 that

matter for effective policy-making. We need comprehensive, holistic approaches that encompass legal reforms, effective enforcement, and collaboration across multiple institutions and multiple levels of government. We need to work at the level of societal norms to promote integrity, transparency and accountability. And we need to engage with all components of society, including women, the youth, and civil society.

To move this agenda forward, it is important that your deliberations feed into intergovernmental processes. On 11 July, the High-level Political Forum will conduct its thematic review of SDG 16 and its interlinkages with other Goals. I invite you to contribute to this review. I also hope that the points you made today will inform the finalization of the ministerial declaration of the HLPF, a key milestone for progressing on SDG 16 and the other goals under review this year.

Thank you.