

Remarks by Professor Ibrahim A. Gambari to the High-Level Event

Achieving Peaceful, Just, and Inclusive Societies for Sustainable Development: Converting words into action

Date: 22 September 2016

Time: 9:30 am- 12:00 pm

Place: UN Secretariat, Conference Room 7

Co-Sponsors: Cape Verde, Sierra Leone, State of Qatar, Tunisia, Norway

Background Note for panelists

Introduction

The Global Alliance for reporting on progress promoting peaceful, just and inclusive societies has been established to support Member States in their own ambitions to report progress on this integral part of the overall 2030 Agenda. The background and rationale for the Alliance is summarised in the attached Terms of Reference.

After two initial partners meetings in May and July 2016 respectively, and the formation of the inaugural Steering Committee for the Alliance, the 22 September 2016 launch event represents the first opportunity for Member States publicly to discuss the objectives and ambitions for the Alliance. The latest draft programme for 22 September is attached.

I. Introduction

Your Excellencies, the UN Member State co-sponsors of this High-Level Event on Goal #16, Mr. Thompson, Ms. Clark, Ms. Robinson, and Ms. Cliffe, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, it is a great honor to address this high-level gathering on Goal #16 reporting.

II. Why SDG #16 is of critical importance and how reporting – regularly and authoritatively – can advance progress toward its 10 associated targets.

From the perspective of the Commission on Global Security, Justice & Governance, for which I was privileged to co-chair with Madeleine Albright, Goal #16 provides the foundations for achieving all sixteen of the other SDGs. For without peace and good

democratic governance based on the rule of law in place, societies of all shapes and sizes cannot achieve broad-based and sustainable development.

This is why our Commission examined the root causes of protracted violent conflict and advocated innovative approaches to international peacekeeping and peacebuilding that place a premium on early warning and early action. Indeed, in my time here with the United Nations, I pursued similar kinds of innovations when, for example, the UN-African Union hybrid mission for Darfur that I oversaw diverted staff and material resources and considerable high-level political attention to finding better and more equitable ways to manage the critical and scarce resource of water, very much at the heart of the conflict.

I am delighted to see that we are marking today the standing-up of a new Global Alliance to regularly assess progress toward advancing implementation on Goal 16's 10 targets. As I witnessed first-hand in international efforts to facilitate peace processes in Angola, Myanmar, and elsewhere, without *concrete, time-bound, and measurable benchmarks or targets* that are assessed through associated qualitative and, where possible, quantitative indicators, key actors essential to building durable peace and effective governance cannot be held to account. Equally important is how reporting on Goal 16's targets will soon reveal the comparative, positive advantages of myriad actors in their specific contributions toward sustainable peace and justice.

III. How the Commission on Global Security, Justice & Governance has sought to contribute to Goal #16's implementation through the building of "smart coalitions" for global change between now and the 75th anniversary of the UN in 2020.

To advance a progressive global reform agenda that is consistent with the aims of Goal #16, the Commission on Global Security, Justice & Governance advocates the creation of "smart coalitions" of like-minded state and non-state actors, including from within civil

society and the private sector. Learning from such campaigns in recent years as the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and the Coalition for the International Criminal Court, single-issue or single institution-focused campaigns acknowledge that different kind of multilateral reform ideas will require different kinds of multilateral negotiating forums and will proceed at different speeds. As I learned in creating the UN Mediation Support Unit as Undersecretary-General for Political Affairs, innovation can be introduced rapidly when a few forward-leaning Member States, the Secretary-General, and non-governmental partners come together in common cause, with uncommon funding.

A second reform vehicle, and one which I believe has the potential to capture the imagination of world leaders and millions of citizens worldwide, is to organize in the run-up to the United Nations' 75th anniversary a series of formal intergovernmental, yet at the same time truly multi-stakeholder, negotiations leading to the convening, in September 2020, of a **World Summit on Global Security, Justice & Governance**. The 2020 Summit is expected to include a five-year review of progress toward meeting the Sustainable Development Goals, including reporting on Goal 16 through the Global Alliance. A World Summit has the potential to take a step back and contemplate the international system and its institutions, anchored around the United Nations, and to adopt system-wide reforms that seek greater coherence, reduce waste and duplication of effort, and encourage mutually reinforcing linkages between several, interdependent issue areas, including global governance for improved implementation of the SDGs.

IV. One chief reform idea that would help to advance Goal 16: transforming the Peacebuilding Commission into an empowered Peacebuilding Council.

Let me conclude by very briefly sharing one Goal 16 related reform idea that I hope we can discuss during Q&A. With only advisory powers, I believe that the decade old UN Peacebuilding Commission has come up short in its mission to halt fragile states from

sliding back into deadly conflict. As recommended by my Commission, the Security Council and General Assembly should replace the all-but-defunct Trusteeship Council with a newly empowered Peacebuilding Council. At the core of its new mandate should be early warning and early action to prevent the escalation of political violence, freeing the Security Council to focus on major peace operations and international terrorist threats.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this conversation.