

Thank you, Mr. Vice President, //

Distinguished Delegates, //

Colleagues and Friends, //

As Director-General of IDLO, the only global intergovernmental organization devoted to advancing the rule of law's contribution to peace and sustainable development, I am honored to moderate this session on getting on track for building more peaceful, equal and inclusive societies. //

The representation of the SDGs by one unbroken wheel with seventeen spokes reminds us of the holistic nature of the 2030 Agenda, and the interconnectedness of individual goals. //

Yet the four SDGs we are reviewing today: Goal 3 on Good Health and Wellbeing, Goal 10 on Reduced Inequalities, Goal 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions and Goal 17 on Partnerships may, at first glance, appear to have little in common. //

But we only have to look around us to see their linkages playing out to devastating effect. //

For over a year, humanity has been humbled by a microscopic virus. //

What began as a public health emergency has rapidly grown into a political, social and economic crisis of historic proportions. //

It is exacerbating existing inequalities within and among countries, and its brunt has been borne by the poorest and most vulnerable. //

And it is exposing narrow interests preventing a concerted international response to the crisis. //

Even before the pandemic, we were not on track to realize the 2030 Agenda. //

COVID-19 risks to set us back significantly, threatening to turn the decade of action and delivery, into one of recovery. //

For this reason, effectively responding to COVID-19, reducing inequalities and transforming governance at all levels to implement the 2030 Agenda are ultimately one and the same challenge. //

Our response to the crisis must encompass mutually reinforcing actions across all the SDGs under discussion today. //

And it must be people-centered and it should protect the least powerful, giving them a voice in the debate. //

It should enable governments to act quickly and decisively in the face of emergencies like COVID-19, through effective laws and institutions. //

It should help decision makers to balance competing interests fairly and transparently and ensure that relief efforts benefit intended recipients by preventing and prosecuting corruption.//

And it should be rooted in multilateralism and global solidarity.//

These approaches were highlighted prominently in the second Global Conference on SDG 16, co-organized by IDLO with DESA and the Government of Italy in April.//

The Conference, which brought together over a hundred leaders including ministers, officials, judges and, human rights advocates, facilitated the exchange of experiences and good practices at local, national and international levels that can help guide the way forward.//

It emphasized that despite the challenges, we have a unique opportunity://

--to build more equal, inclusive, people-centred governance,//

--and, to transition to more resilient and sustainable development models.//

After living through over a year of a crisis that has challenged us to adapt and innovate, no one has all the answers but all of us, I am sure, have part of the answer.//

I am delighted to welcome today, a distinguished and diverse set of speakers, working on different aspects of the pandemic response and recovery efforts.//

Let me quickly introduce our panel://

--Ms. Gabriela Bucher, Executive Director of Oxfam International

--Ms. Armida Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.//

--Ms. Quarraisha Abdool Karim, Associate Scientific Director, Centre for the AIDS Programme of Research in South Africa (CAPRISA); and Professor of Clinical Epidemiology at Columbia University.//

--Mr. James K Boyce, Senior Fellow at the Political Economy Research Institute at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst;//

and

--Ms. Sarah Cliffe, Director, New York University's Center on International Cooperation.//

Each Panelist will make initial remarks for 3 minutes on the SDGs under consideration, and their interlinkages.//

We will then turn to an eminent group of discussants and respondents who bring expertise and experience on different aspects of health, inequalities, peace, justice and institutions.//

Following these interventions, the floor will be open.//

Speakers will be given the floor for a maximum of two minutes each.//

Given the high level of interest in this session, I request our speakers to keep within the allotted times to give an opportunity to all those who would like to intervene.//

Without further ado, let me turn to our first speaker.//

Our first panellist, Ms. Gabriela Bucher, Executive Director of Oxfam International, is a leader in the field of gender equality and human rights.//

Ms. Bucher, how is the COVID-19 exacerbating pre-existing inequalities?//

What lessons can we draw from the past year to help us promote greater equality as we seek to rebuild from the crisis?//

Thank you, Ms. Bucher.//

I now invite Ms. Armida Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. She brings a breadth of experience in planning, economics and sustainable development from a career spanning multilateral institutions, government and academia.//

Ms. Alisjahbana, what actions can countries take to promote more equitable and inclusive societies in both the short and long-term?//

How can regional cooperation support transitions to a more sustainable development model?//

Thank you, Ms. Alisjahbana.//

Our next panelist is Ms. Quarraisha Abdool Karim, Associate Scientific Director, Centre for the AIDS Programme of Research in South Africa.//

Ms. Karim, your research over the past 30 years has focused on preventing HIV infection in adolescent girls and young women, including the interlinkages between exclusion, inequality and HIV.//

How can social factors such as exclusion, poverty and inequality affect health?//

What lessons can we draw from the global response to AIDS, that can help us effectively manage the COVID-19 crisis and tackle persistent health inequalities?//

Thank you, Ms. Karim.//

I now turn to Mr. James K Boyce, author, economist and Senior Fellow at the Political Economy Research Institute at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.//

Mr. Boyce, your recent book “Economics for the People and the Planet” argues for a more egalitarian distribution of power and wealth to enhance human well-being and protect the environment.//

How are issues of inequality, violence, and climate change interlinked and what do you see as the most urgent areas for action?//

Thank you, Mr. Boyce.//

Our final panellist is Ms. Sarah Cliffe, Director of the Center on International Cooperation at New York University.//

She brings significant experience working on issues of fragility, conflict and inequality, including at the United Nations and the World Bank.//

Ms. Cliffe, the issue of growing inequalities has been a common thread in our discussion today.//

What do you see as the key linkages between SDG 10 and Goals 3, 16 and 17?//

How can we accelerate progress on the SDGs and meet the needs of people and communities most at risk of being left behind?//

Thank you, Ms. Cliffe.//

My thanks to our panellists for sharing their insights.//

I will now turn to our distinguished lead discussants to share their reactions and perspectives on how we can get back on track for building more peaceful, equal and inclusive societies.//

First, it is my honour to introduce Her Excellency Marina Sereni, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy.//

Madam Sereni, Italy has been a strong advocate for the 2030 Agenda and a champion for SDG 16.// In April, IDLO had the privilege of co-organizing with Italy and DESA, the 2021 SDG 16 Conference, which brought together a diverse, multistakeholder group on the theme of Transforming Governance for a More Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Future.//

I invite you now to take the floor share the key takeaways and recommendations from the Conference.//

Thank you, Madam Sereni.//

Our next speaker is Ms. Najat Maalla M'jid, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children.//

Ms. M'jid, as a physician and someone who has dedicated her career to the protection and promotion of children's rights, we welcome your insights on interaction between your mandate and issues of health, inequalities and justice.

Thank you, Ms. M'jid.//

I now invite Ms. Natela Menabde, Executive Director of the World Health Organization's Office at the United Nations, to share her reflections on today's discussion from the perspective of the WHO, which has been at eye of the hurricane during this extraordinary crisis.//

Thank you, Ms. Menabde.//

Our final respondent, Ms. Valentina Bodrug-Lungu is President of Gender-Center, which works on issues of gender equality, combatting domestic violence and non-discrimination in Moldova.// She will share some remarks on behalf of the Women's Major Group.//

Thank you, Ms. Bodrug-Lungu.//

I will now ask the Ministerial Respondents invited by the President of ECOSOC to take the floor.//

I call on His Excellency, Francisco André, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Portugal.//

As President of the Council of the European Union between January and June 2021, Portugal pursued an agenda for a fair, green and digital recovery from the pandemic.//

Your Excellency, it is my pleasure to give you the floor.//

Thank you, Excellency.//

I now invite His Excellency, Mohamed Edrees, Permanent Representative of Egypt to the UN and Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, to share his perspective on sustaining peace and building resilience in fragile contexts.//

Your Excellency, you have the floor.//

Thank you, Excellency.//

Our next respondent is Ms. Margit Kraker, Secretary-General of the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions.//

She will share her perspective on the importance of in ensuring transparency and accountability during crises like COVID-19 and the key role played by Supreme Audit Institutions as independent oversight bodies.//

Ms. Kraker the floor is yours.//

Thank you, Ms. Kraker.//

I now invite Mr. Jorge Bermúdez, Comptroller General of the Republic of Chile to take the floor to address the important topic of fiscal.//

Fiscal control and auditing which are particularly important as large levels of public resources are mobilized for COVID-19 relief and recovery efforts.//

Thank you, Mr. Bermúdez.//

I invite our final respondent, Ms. Irma Pineda Santiago, Member of Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, to share her perspective on the key issue of indigenous peoples.//

Ensuring the inclusion and participation of indigenous peoples is critical to the effort of building more peaceful, equal and inclusive societies.//

Thank you, Ms. Santiago.//

The floor is now open for interventions.//

We will continue to take interventions until 11:00am, at which point we have to take a short break, and I will resume after 15 minutes.//

I have received a list of Member States who have inscribed to speak.//

Our first speaker is [NAME], followed by [NAME] and [NAME].//

To allow all those who have asked to intervene, I request that you keep your interventions to two minutes each.//

Thank you for your interventions so far. We will now take a 15 minute break.//

Welcome back. I would like to continue with interventions from the floor.//

Our next speaker is [NAME], followed by [NAME] and [NAME].

Please keep your interventions to two minutes each.//

I would now like to pass the floor to our panellists to provide a brief final thought.

Ms. Gabriela Bucher

Ms. Armida Alisjahbana

Ms. Quarraisha Abdool Karim

Mr. James K Boyce

Ms. Sarah Cliffe, Director

- **12:10-12:12** – Conclusion by ECOSOC Vice President