Meeting of the General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals - New York – 4 April 2014

Cluster 8 - Peaceful and non-violent societies, rule of law and capable institutions

Intervention by Portugal

His Excellency Álvaro Mendonça e Moura

Portugal strongly welcomes the important work currently being done by the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals and would like to commend the Co-chairs for their key role in this process.

Concerning Focus Area 19, Portugal believes that peaceful and non-violent societies are both an important pre-condition for sustainable development and a crucial goal in itself. We welcome the fact that the inter-linkages document clearly identifies the intrinsic link of this focus area with other key areas of the post 2015 framework, including poverty eradication, economic growth and equality, including gender equality.

This recognition represents a paradigm shift from the current MDG framework, where, human rights, peace and security, rule of law and institutional capacities where excluded from the set of goals and targets. What we've learned, however, as was eloquently stated by Timor Leste just a little while ago, is that violence and conflict affected and fragile states are precisely the countries facing the greatest constraints in meeting the MDGs. Not addressing these challenges in a future framework would seriously compromise our common endeavor to "leave no one behind" and ignore the results of the MyWorld survey, where honest and responsive government and protection against crime and violence were among the top priorities identified.

While recognizing the important inter-linkages between peace and security, rule of law and capable institutions, **we consider that peace and non-violent societies, on the one hand, and rule of law and capable institutions, on the other should be established as two separate goals.**

Stronger commitment is needed regarding the prevention and reduction of violent deaths, universal access to independent justice, and independent national human rights institutions, as

well as to the professionalism and accountability of the security forces, including as proposed in the Report of the High Level Panel on the post-2015 development agenda. It is also of utmost importance to include consideration on the reduction of crime, giving particular attention to the protection of children and women from violence in this new framework. We would therefore welcome targets in these specific thematic areas supporting a goal on peaceful societies.

Concerning rule of law and capable institutions, we strongly support the comprehensive approach contained in the focus area document - addressing key target areas such as the provision of legal identity, which has important cross-cutting impacts in several other areas, the provision of quality public services and the inclusive participation in the decision-making processes - thus effectively putting governance and effective institutions as both an enabler and an outcome of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

The proposed list of targets in these areas is long and we agree with those calling for a reduction and clustering in the number targets under each goal, while noting that those already identified in the focus area document are extremely important.

The needs of fragile states, as well as violence and conflict affected states, merit particular attention in this future framework. It is of paramount importance that the work already developed under the New Deal for Fragile States and the Peace building and State building Goals is therefore duly reflected in the future targets and indicators to be established, including in terms of peaceful and non-violent societies, the rule of law and capable institutions.

Allow me to finally reaffirm the importance Portugal attaches to the reinforcement of the security and development nexus. The Strategic Concept for Portuguese Cooperation, just adopted in 2014, underlines the importance of the peace, security and development nexus, and foresees, inter alia, the establishment of working groups between the state entities responsible for the different areas in view of ensuring a more effective action in this area.