

General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals
Eighth Session
3-7 February 2014, UNHQ

Summary

The Eighth session of the Open Working Group (OWG) of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), was convened from 3 to 7 February 2014, at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The session covered topics of oceans and seas, forests, and biodiversity; promoting equality, including social equity, gender equality and women's empowerment; and conflict prevention, post-conflict peacebuilding and the promotion of durable peace, rule of law and governance.¹

Opening Session

OWG Co-Chair Amb. Kamau opened the meeting on Monday, noting that this session would conclude the “stocktaking” period of the group’s work, addressing some of the most complex environmental and social issues on which the success of the SDGs, and life itself, depended. The task of the OWG moving forward would be to begin to decide on how to structure the SDGs and incorporate the many ideas and proposals thus far into a comprehensive narrative.

I. Oceans and Seas, Forests, Biodiversity

The OWG addressed the topic of oceans, seas and biodiversity on Monday and Tuesday, 3-4 February. Keynote speakers and experts panel discussions were followed by interactive open discussions among the group and delivery of formal statements.

Professor Jane Lubchenco, Oregon State University gave the first keynote address on the topic of oceans and seas. She highlighted the need for more holistic and integrated ways to frame the SDGs, rather than a path of “siloed choices”, and advised the OWG to choose goals that integrate the three pillars and bring benefits across them; choose goals “where the time is right”; incorporate the understanding that social and economic progress will only happen with environmental progress; and ground choices in good science. She stated that the environment cannot be a “second tier” issue, and oceans must not be taken for granted. Knowledge of ocean degradation is not new, but translation of this knowledge into meaningful policies is lacking. Ecosystems supported by oceans are essential to economic and social development. Healthy oceans contribute directly to the eradication of hunger, provide jobs, and reduce the risk of coastal disasters (i.e, reef breaks). She said a standalone goal on oceans would provide an explicit pathway to progress on all three areas of sustainable development; however, the challenge would be in the integration of interlinked targets and indicators.

¹ Presentations and statements delivered during the eighth session of the OWG on SDGs have been archived and made available at: <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1680>

Dr. Sylvia Earle, Oceanographer and Explorer-in-Residence at National Geographic, endorsed Professor Lubchenco's comments, and added that the next 10 years may be the most important in determining the course of the next 10,000 years on Earth. Human prosperity is derived from nature, yet we are not historically good at accounting for this. The Global Partnership for Oceans led by the World Bank aims to understand how we can maintain prosperity within systems that are feeling pressure from human activity. She noted that 64 percent of the world's oceans lay in areas beyond national jurisdiction, and that these areas are a part of the global commons. A sustainable development plan with goals and actions on governance of high seas should place ocean and biodiversity in the front and center. The SDGs must recognize that fish have value beyond their commodity value, and set an ambitious goal of protecting 20 percent of the ocean by 2020. She concluded that we must take care of the oceans as if our lives depend on it—because they do.

Dr. Baraulio F. de Souza Dias, Executive Secretary of the Convention of Biological Diversity, stressed that humanity's fate is linked to biodiversity, and we cannot achieve international sustainable development goals without mainstreaming biodiversity into our policies. He suggested biodiversity could be part of a larger SDG on "healthy ecosystems" and that the outcomes of this process must recognize and reaffirm previous globally agreed commitments.

Dr. Alfred Oteng-Yeboah, from the University of Ghana, recalled that 2011-2020 is the UN "Decade of Biodiversity". While seas, forests, and oceans structurally and functionally constitute biodiversity, human activity has been extracting from these ecosystems. Sustainability of human development hinges on the basic requirements for life, which include the need to reduce poverty, eradicate hunger, reduce risks of disasters, promote health, generate employment and promote equity and social justice. All these requirements can be provided by biodiversity and its ecosystem services. He concluded by saying that the real challenge to politicians, among other stakeholders, is to have the unresolved issues of global concern such as loss of biodiversity become urgent global issues that demand immediate and effective global attention.

Professor Virgilio Viana, from the Fundação Amazonas Sustentável, discussed the concept of planetary boundaries, noting that forests relate to the planetary boundaries on loss of biodiversity and climate change. Rather than engineering solutions to combat climate change, forests can play an important role in increasing resilience. Food demand is expected to increase by 70 percent by 2050, creating further pressure on forests to be turned into cropland. He underscored the need to recognize, demonstrate, and capture the value of these ecosystems in economic terms, so that forests might be worth more standing than cut, and suggested a goal that would secure ecosystem services and biodiversity while insuring good management of water and other resources. Targets under such an SDG could be to: reduce deforestation and degradation of forests; monitor value of products coming from forests; eliminate extreme poverty in forest dependent communities; and improve governance of forests.

Mr. Mark Smith, the Director of the Global Water Programme at IUCN Headquarters, spoke about the intrinsic and undeniable value of biodiversity. Biodiversity is a development issue and a core challenge to be addressed in the SDG framework. Biodiversity is not a drag on growth; rather, ecosystems can be seen as the infrastructure for development. His suggestion for a

biodiversity SDG is one that would enhance the benefits for all from biodiversity and ecosystem services in a just world that values and conserves nature.

Ms. Marie Haga, Executive Director of Global Crop Diversity Trust, discussed why eradicating hunger and malnutrition through sustainable agriculture is the biggest challenge of our time. With less food to feed more people, we may see an increase in social unrest and famine; pests and diseases will increase due to climate change, presenting new challenges. A 1°C temperature increase could decrease rice yields by 10%; 2°C could be catastrophic. Diversifying crops could give us more options for the future, to fight disease, adapt to new climates, and produce higher yields. While we cannot retrieve the vast amount of genetic diversity we have already lost, we can protect and make available what we still have. Diversity still exists in farmer's fields, in the wild, and in plant gene banks. No sole country is self-sufficient in crop diversity; crop diversity is part of the global commons. She emphasized that crop diversity is a prerequisite for a sustainable food system, which brings about livelihoods and more food in spite of climate change. She suggested that the SDGs should recognize the importance of crop biodiversity as a basis for food security.

Dr. Daju Resosudarmo, from the Center for International Forestry Research, talked about why forests are fundamental to human wellbeing and sustainable development. Forests are fundamental for food, nutrition, and health. They provide fuel and food for 1 billion of the world's poorest people. In addition, up to 50% of traditional medicine is derived from forests. They store 75% of the world's usable water, absorb a third of all fossil fuel emissions every year, and provide resilience from extreme weather events. Despite all the benefits derived from forests, poverty and inequity persists, food security lingers, and developing countries are the most affected. To strengthen forests in the sustainable development landscape, member States must clarify forest tenure rights, integrate land use allocation and planning, facilitate participation in forest related decision making, increase transparency and accountability, build fair and sound markets, and research collaborative solutions. He proposed two complementary ways forward for the SDGs: to recognize forests as an essential element in multiple SDGs, or to explore the idea of sustainable landscapes as a standalone SDG, in which forests are a major component.

A number of key points emerged during the interactive exchanges:

- Many participants highlighted the need to create new incentives to address ecosystem degradation while also balancing the tradeoffs for development, noting that the rate of new insights is accelerating much faster than the development of policies.
- There was detailed discussion on specific examples of what could be done to address overfishing, with some noting that this is very difficult because the incentives of traditional fisheries management are aimed in the wrong direction. New and stronger approaches (i.e., annual catch limits) with enforceable timetables should be implemented. Some countries noted their own progress in this regard.
- One speaker highlighted the Forever Fish initiative, which allocates a fraction of catch to communities or individuals. This changes the incentive so that individuals have this quota through time, and short- and long-term incentives are aligned. This provides an incentive

for fishers to be precautionary and to abide by the rules, rather than a race to fish until a quota is reached.

- Many agreed that perverse incentives that cause deforestation to be desirable should also be addressed. To make forests worth more standing than cut, taxes should be reduced in forestry sectors, and cash payments for ecosystem services should be offered.
- Many SIDS and LDCs reiterated the need for financial and technical assistance in sustainably utilizing their natural resources.
- Many countries agreed that oceans, seas and coastal areas form an integrated and essential component of the Earth's ecosystem and are critical to sustaining it, and that international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources.
- Many targets for oceans have been agreed upon, and therefore can easily be incorporated into targets for an SDG on oceans. However, progress on implementation remains limited.
- References were made to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity in 2011, and the Aichi Targets.
- The FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries could be incorporated into an SDG on oceans, as could the three objectives of the CBD.
- There was a common call for addressing the unique challenges of the global commons, specifically fisheries on the high seas, biodiversity and climate change. References to possible instruments to address high seas fishing were made by several parties and panelists, including the Rio+20 outcome document, UNCLOS, and the Hamilton Declaration.
- Other possible instruments included rights-based management that allocated a fraction of the revenue to communities or individuals. New technologies [foref](#) addressing IUU fishing, such as satellite imagery, were also highlighted.
- Many parties and panelists called for SDGs that were better integrated and interlinked, as a key lesson learned from the MDGs, stating that singular goals will not accomplish the objective of addressing multidimensional challenges.
- The need for a coherent and integrated approach on both national and international levels should bring together many diverse sectoral agencies.

II. Promoting equality, including social equity, gender equality and women's empowerment

On Wednesday and Thursday morning, 5-6 February, the OWG deliberated on the promotion of equality, including social equity, gender equality and women's empowerment, in the SDGs. Keynote speakers and expert panel discussions were followed by interactive open discussions among the group and delivery of formal statements.

Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director, UN Women, opened the discussions on equality by stressing that achieving the wellbeing and rights of all people, and not just their economic growth, is the hallmark of sustainable development. Women's empowerment is central to economic, social and environmental progress. This importance is recognized in the Millennium Development Goals and the Rio+20 outcome document. However, the agenda for women and gender equality remains unfinished, and women's rights, empowerment and gender

equality must now be firmly reflected in the post-2015 development agenda with an aim to remove the structural and systemic barriers to women. This will require taking advantage of the progress made and the insights gained from the past decade. It will also require renewed commitments and bolder actions from member States.

Fostering gender equality will require action from men and women alike. Gender equality and women's rights must be addressed in a stand-alone goal and in an integrated manner across all goals. Three main priorities for a gender equality goal are (i) freedom from violence for women and girls; (ii) equality in human capabilities and access to human opportunities and resources such as education, finance and land as well as improving the working conditions and pay for women as well as guaranteeing access to sexual and reproductive health; and (iii) equality in legacy, voice and participation across the full range of decision making arenas in public and private institutions. In addition, relevant gender concerns and targets should be included across all goals, for example an employment goal should include targets on equal access to work. Beyond goals and targets, there needs to be a strong emphasis on enabling implementation through adequate resources and funding in terms of capacity building and access to technology. Strong accountability and transparency are needed to enable citizens to hold decision makers accountable. Reflecting women's priorities will also require the introduction of gender sensitive indicators. This must include efforts to address the underinvestment in gender statistics to allow every country to collect and analyze data on matter such as time use and violence against women. Targets should be chosen based on what is important to measure—not simply what is available—for example, the UN Statistical Commission has approved 50 gender indicators, of which nine measure violence against women.

In his remarks, **Mr. Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director UNFPA**, stressed that people must be at the center of development. When women are educated and have agency and skills they can contribute to development of themselves and of their communities. Focusing on gender equality is therefore of great importance and it is necessary to reflect this focus not only in deliberations in New York but in every country. Reflecting gender equality in the future framework must go beyond access to health and services alone. It must look at the fundamental structures of societies, and the status of women and girls. Laws must be applied equally to boys and girls, educational opportunities must be affordable to everybody, and women should have equal access to employment, credit and opportunities. Issues that need to be urgently addressed include child marriage, access to health services and sexual and reproductive health for women, human trafficking and female genital mutilation. Implementing a women's agenda to make women equal partners in society will require women and girls to be part of the discussions at the community and political level, and at the center of the learning process, education and skills development. Most importantly, men and boys must also be brought into these discussions.

Moving toward a broader focus on inequalities, **Mr. Jose Antonio Ocampo, Columbia University**, called for a specific goal on reducing inequalities in the post-2015 development agenda. He noted that inequalities both *among* and *within* countries are two dimensions of inequality that need to be addressed. Inequality among countries is by far the most important, and roughly 80 percent of in-country inequalities are associated with inequalities across countries; yet while the differences between developing and developed countries are declining, the differences among developing countries are increasing. The SDGs and the post-2015

development agenda must include a renewed concept for the global partnership, where official development assistance and other forms of development financing must play an important role. State intervention can also play a significant role in reducing in-country inequalities by mainstreaming inequalities across economic policy making and firmly placing social objectives at the centre of economic policies. Employment generation should be the major objective of economic policies. Mechanisms are needed to support small enterprises, which are major generators of employment and a source of wealth and distribution.

To bring in the perspective of people with disabilities, **Mr. Lenin Moreno, Secretary General's Special Envoy on Disability and Accessibility**, stressed that far too often discussions on inequalities do not reflect equality based on ability. In the same vein, gender equality proposals often do not particularly reference women with disabilities. People with disabilities have always been marginalized, excluded and mistreated. He said that each country should develop its own specific policies that aim to fully include people with disabilities, and stressed that social inclusion of people with disabilities should be promoted in all countries by implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol.

Ms. Nicole Ameline, Chairperson, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, remarked that while progress has been made on gender equality, especially in terms of access to education, women continue to be the primary victims of suffering in violence and conflict. The Millennium Declaration marked a very positive consensus of the fact that gender equality was a substantive condition for achieving the MDGs. The struggle against violence and all discrimination was truly outlined as the condition for achieving sustainable development. Yet, the MDGs did not fully embrace this full vision of gender equality, adopting only a narrow range of indicators that did not adequately reflect all kinds of discrimination women face. A paradigm shift is therefore urgently needed to ensure that equality is fully at the heart of development. The international community has the responsibility to develop this new paradigm, which reduces the gaps and draws lessons from the MDGs. Human rights are a useful reference on which the SDGs should be based, e.g. the rights to food, education and health. They also provide a set of norms on equality and discrimination, particularly those based on gender.

In the ensuing interactive exchange, member States and representatives from international organizations and Major Groups responded to the presentations and outlined their vision on integrating equality in the SDGs. The following points were broadly supported:

- Inequalities prevail along a number of spheres such as sex, race, ethnicity, migrant status, language, religion, sexual orientation, ability and location. Persistent inequalities perpetuate this exclusion and marginalization further and in turn affect social cohesion, sustainability, economic growth and overall development outcomes.
- Strong support was shown for integrating the promotion of equality across the entire framework. There was some support for a stand-alone goal on inequalities, which could also include targets on the adoption of social protection policies and measures.
- Policies to reduce inequalities at the national level should include policies for inclusive economic growth. Effective institutions will be necessary to ensure that economic growth translates into equal wealth sharing and benefits all segments of society. Enhanced investments in social economic infrastructure and human resource development, in

particular education, health, housing and sanitation can help to provide all members of society with access to economic opportunities.

- Social protection floors and free or subsidized health care, food and other social services can make an important impact on reducing inequalities.
- Fostering employment opportunities for those traditionally excluded from the labour market, aiming to provide equal pay for equal work in the formal and informal sectors and supporting small and medium enterprises will also be important milestones in ensuring equality.
- Other targets to tackle inequalities should include the elimination of practices of inequalities, abolition of discriminatory laws, promotion of social equality, empowerment of excluded groups and reduction of gaps between specific groups.
- The global dimension will be important in the fight against inequalities, and the global partnership for development should be revised with the aim of reducing inequalities and creating an enabling environment for countries to tackle inequalities.
- Financial resources will be key in this regard, and countries need to fulfill their development commitments, especially on official development assistance. Estimates predict that in 25 years, the largest numbers of poor people will live in LDCs, which means that the most vulnerable countries, which also include LLDCs, will continue to need special attention.
- The creation of a more level playing field between labour and capital through greater international mobility of labour and regulation of international capital movements and financial markets was highlighted, as well as attention to reducing economic volatility and fixing trade distorting measures such as agricultural subsidies. Other priorities include fairer global governance, debt restructuring, and technology transfer
- Taxation can play an important role in fostering equality.
- Gender equality was affirmed as an end in itself and as an essential means for sustainable development and poverty eradication. There can be no sustainable development without gender equality and the full participation of women and girls.
- Gender inequality was overwhelmingly recognized as the most pervasive form of inequality in the world.
- Virtually all member States emphasized that gender equality is a universal priority to be addressed in the sustainable development goals.
- The majority of member States supported a stand-alone goal on gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment.
- There was a strong consensus on the integration of gender targets and indicators across the framework to address the structural barriers to gender equality. Every goal in the framework should have gender-specific targets and indicators.
- Gender equality, women's rights, and women's empowerment in the new framework must be aligned with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Development and Population (ICPD), the Rio+20 outcome document, resolutions of the General Assembly, and agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). There was a strong call for the implementation of commitments on gender equality already made.

- Many member States supported a human rights-based approach to gender equality and sustainable development and the need to eliminate discriminatory laws, norms, and social practices.
- The new framework must especially focus on women living in poverty or otherwise excluded and marginalized groups of women, such as indigenous women, women with disabilities, and older women
- ~~There A strong consensus~~ emerged widespread agreement on priority target areas that need to be included in the framework and related policy measures to realize gender equality, women's rights, and women's empowerment with most speakers referring to ending violence against women and girls, access to assets and resources, and full participation of women and girls:
 - Virtually all speakers underscored the target area of elimination of violence against women and girls as a central element of the new framework, including ending early, child, and forced marriage. The elimination of violence would require prevention measures, multi-sectoral services, women's access to justice, and ending impunity.
 - Participation of women and girls in political and economic decision-making at all levels – in the household, in the family, at work, in government – was stressed as underpinning sustainable development.
 - Nearly all speakers identified women's economic empowerment as critical to sustainable development. This requires education and capacity building, access to decent work and social protection, and access to and control over assets and resources, such as land, finance, and technology.
 - The recognition, reduction, and redistribution of unpaid care and domestic work, disproportionately borne by women and girls, requires investment in infrastructure and services, social protection, and appropriate incentives.
 - Many speakers highlighted the crucial roles and responsibilities of rural women, especially in relation to ensuring their equal access to land, water, and energy, and supporting their contributions to agricultural production and food and nutrition security.
 - Sexual and reproductive health and rights across the life cycle was considered essential for reducing maternal mortality, promoting the rights of adolescent girls, and empowering women and girls. This requires the universal provision of quality health information, education, and services.
 - The new framework should emphasize the active involvement of men and boys in realizing gender equality, women's rights, and women's empowerment.
 - The achievement of gender equality and sustainable development depends on the means of implementation, including financing, investment, trade, technology transfer, capacity development, and international development cooperation.
 - There was a strong call for disaggregating indicators by sex, age, disability, and other dominant inequalities. Many stressed the importance of improved gender statistics and collection, analysis, and use of data relevant for monitoring progress on gender equality, women's rights, and women's empowerment.
 - A monitoring framework relevant for public policy was recommended, as well as the involvement of civil society in holding all stakeholders accountable.

III. Conflict prevention, post-conflict peace-building and promotion of durable peace, rule of law and governance

Mrs. Mary Robinson, Chair of the Mary Robinson Foundation - Climate Justice and United Nations Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region of Africa, stated that the MDG framework exhibited significant weaknesses in its failure to account for peace and security. She welcomed the proposal made by the Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda to recognize “peace and good governance as core elements of wellbeing, not optional extras”, as a “universal agenda for all countries”, rather than for fragile and conflict-affected poor countries alone. She also endorsed the outcome of the Global Thematic Consultation on Conflict, Violence and Disaster, and the Post-2015 Development Agenda, where an integrated and comprehensive, human security-centered and human rights-based approach to addressing the causes and consequences of conflict, violence and disasters was unanimously called for. She stressed that peace is not merely the absence of violence, and called for addressing structural violence by eliminating barriers in access to education, health, food, water, land and decent work, as well as the elimination of socio-cultural systems that perpetuate or condone violence. On the issue of rule of law, she believed that by concentrating on five priorities – access to information, legal identity, rights to land and property, legal participation, and legal services – the new framework can ensure that no one is left behind.

Drawing on her experience as UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region of Africa, she further emphasized that peace, rule of law and governance are critical enablers of sustainable development in their own rights, interlinked and mutually reinforcing. Approaching it in a comprehensive and multidimensional way entails, among others, creating responsive, transparent and inclusive governance, promoting dialogue between the organs of state, civil society and the private sector; guaranteeing citizen’s rights to access to public information, free, independent and pluralistic media, inclusive economic governance, growth and development, inclusive local and national institutions for conflict prevention, transformation and resolution, and peacebuilding. She strongly recommended a goal on stable and peaceful societies in the post-2015 development agenda, as well as the inclusion of relevant targets and indicators across all goals.

Mr. Cassam Uteem, former President of Mauritius, representing the views of the Club of Madrid, an independent organization created by former Presidents, former Heads of States or Governments to promote democracy and good governance, underlined the central role of good governance in the achievement of sustainable development. He advocated for the concept of “shared society”, which is democratic, transparent, sensitive and inclusive, that belongs to everyone and serves the interests of all people. He highlighted participation and consultation of people in decision-making that affect them, calling for specific targets to be included in the SDGs, and underlined that effective communication channels, including between identity groups, would be crucial for all States to work more effectively.

Ms. Irene Khan, Director-General of the International Development Law Organization, acknowledged the linkages between the rule of law and conflict prevention and peacebuilding. There have been many proposals on how to deal with the rule of law in the SDG framework, from a stand-alone goal, to an overarching driver or enabler, to mainstreamed targets in different goals, which are not mutually exclusive. Rather than advocating for any particular approach, she clarified why the rule of law is essential to development, noting that it builds people’s confidence

by providing substantive justice, economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights that are crucial to provide predictability, to ensure equal opportunities and equal access to basic services, to ensure accountability and access to justice and redress. Inequalities grow when rule of law is not in place. Targets and indicators must be tailored to specific national legal systems, local practices and values, regardless of where countries are along the development spectrum.

Mr. William O'Neill, Program Director of the Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum (CPPF), highlighted governance and institutional reforms as the key to having real meaningful impacts through development assistance in post-conflict countries. However, citing relevant literature, Mr. O'Neill showed that very few projects actually fall into the category of "creating and transforming" projects that address the fundamental change of mentality and values and transform institutions by rewarding good behavior. He urged the international community to treat the rule of law as a core component of the SDG framework, ensuring capacity and integrity of individuals and governments. He strongly advocated for introducing indicators that measure the right results, such as efforts to inject more rigor and accountability for donors and State actors, indicators to cover police, courts and prisons, corrections and judiciary, broken into baskets, indicators for performance-effective service delivery, transparency, integrity and accountability, and treatment of vulnerable groups.

The following main points emerged during the ensuing interaction with keynote speakers and panelists, as well as the delivery of members' prepared statements:

- Many stated that peace, rule of law, and governance are both ends in themselves and critical enablers for poverty eradication and sustainable development. Inclusive development would promote peace and stability.
- Many underlined that conflict undermines development and that peaceful societies are the basis for sustainable development. Severe inequalities of power, voice, opportunity and wealth among ethnic and other identity groups are among the sources of conflict, as are competition over natural resource and wealth, and transnational crime and illicit arms trade among others.
- Promoting participatory governance can contribute to conflict prevention. It is crucial that such governance include both women and men, as well as young people and all vulnerable groups, including indigenous peoples.
- Transparency was identified as a key component of governance. Action in this area could promote public access to information and enhance openness of government, as well as fostering trust in government institutions. Local authorities are key actors in ensuring accountable and participatory governance.
- Rule of law was mentioned as a cornerstone of society. It touches on a range of sustainable development areas, including by further inclusive economic growth through protection of land, property and other resource use rights, providing access to fair and responsive justice systems, and improved provision of public services. A number of speakers mentioned the importance of legal identity.
- ~~Several A-number of~~ countries stated that the international dimension of the rule of law should not be neglected, which includes reforms of international organizations in order to increase the legitimacy, transparency, accountability and representation of the United Nations and other multilateral institutions. It was also pointed out that the rule of law has

developed subject to national conditions and particularities, and national ownership was emphasized as key in effective implementation.

- While recognizing the importance of peace, governance and rule of law, it was also underlined that the discussions of the OWG should be based on the Rio+20 outcome document, with a focus on the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. It was underlined that the concepts of conflict and violence should not be equated with each other. The effects of conflict on women and girls, including gender based violence, were highlighted.
- Curbing illicit financial flows, could potentially make available additional domestic sources of revenue for social spending, as well as promote stable and peaceful societies.
- Many referred to the declaration of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the rule of law at the national and international levels. The document, among other things, pointed out that rule of law and development are inter-related and mutually reinforcing, and that advancement of the rule of law must take place at the national and international levels.
- There were calls for peace, rule of law, and governance to be featured prominently in the goal framework as a stand-alone goal; others supported dealing with these issues in a cross-cutting manner; some supported both. However, a number of countries cautioned that the discussion of peace and security might divert the development focus of the OWG, and suggested to leave such topics to be addressed by the UN Security Council and peacekeeping operations.
- It was mentioned that there exist tools and indicators for measuring progress in the rule of law and governance, although there is not yet international consensus and there is a need for capacity building and assistance.

Closing session

On Friday afternoon, Co-Chair Amb. Korosi presented the concluding remarks, summarizing the discussions and recommendations of the eighth session of the Open Working Group.² Co-Chair Amb. Kamau commended the Group on the successful completion of the first phase of its deliberations and reminded its members of the great sense of purpose and historical responsibility to be entrusted with the future of the world. He urged all to reach out and listen to each other in envisioning a common future.

The Co-Chairs committed to provide a stock-taking document by Friday 14 February, and another document on 21 February containing possible focus areas and action points that member states might wish to take forward. He urged the group to set the bar high in their upcoming deliberations.

The next meeting of the OWG is scheduled to take place on 3 March 2014.

² <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/3195cochairconcluding.pdf>