

Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka

8th Session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

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Statement by Ambassador Masood Khan, Permanent Representative of Pakistan

On

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

Co-Chair,

I am pleased to share these views on behalf of India, Sri Lanka and my own delegation, Pakistan.

We associate ourselves with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Co-Chair,

We express our sincere thanks to the panelists and others who have made contribution to this conversation and our work.

Co Chair,

Paragraph 8 of the Rio+20 outcome document states “We also reaffirm the importance of freedom, peace and security, respect for all human rights, including *the right to development* and the right to an adequate standard of living, including the right to food, the rule of law, gender equality, women's empowerment and the overall commitment to just and democratic societies for development.”

At the high-level meeting at the United Nations last September on the MDGs and post-2015 Development Agenda, world leaders agreed to have a “single framework and set of goals – universal in nature and applicable to all countries, while taking account of differing national circumstances and respective national policies.” Leaders affirmed the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and underlined the central imperative of poverty eradication in the Post-2015 Development Agenda. They also said that this framework “should promote peace and security, democratic governance, the rule of law, gender equality, and human rights for all.”

Co-Chair

The two paragraphs that I have cited above set the boundaries for our work.

In search of Sustainable Development Goals in this setting, we have to keep in mind the differentiation between *enablers* and *goals*.

Conditions of peace and security are directly linked to economic and social development. Where there is no peace there will be no development. There cannot be durable peace without growth and development. Peace will not flourish in the absence of economic development and social stability.

Conflicts cast a shadow on growth prospects. Several countries have been obliged to divert their limited resources from development to conflict management.

But the Open Working Group is not the place to discuss hard-core issues of conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building because of the following reasons.

One, the Security Council works round the clock to prevent conflicts, as well as to make, keep and build peace. It is also supported by an elaborate apparatus, supported by regional organizations and commissions, to accomplish these tasks.

Two, the UN budget for UN peacekeeping operations for 2013-2014 is US\$7.8 billion, the bulk of which is being spent in the DRC, Darfur, South Sudan, Haiti and Cote d'Ivoire.

Three, a Peace Building Commission has been created to build resilience in conflict and post-conflict situation and to prevent relapse. It must be streamlined and strengthened.

Co-Chairs,

Here in this setting what we can say is that more resources should be made available to the UN for economic and social development and environmental protection because the main drivers of conflict are poverty, social exclusion, inequalities and ethnic or religious rivalries.

Barring aside the complexity of these matters, jurisdiction of different international bodies and organs must be respected.

Co-Chairs,

The grievances that often lead to conflict, either within or amongst countries, are driven largely by a sense of deprivation linked to the absence of development. Economic growth and development, especially availability of opportunities to individuals and communities, are crucial buffers to conflicts.

Sustainable Development Goals agenda should first and foremost be about development. Only development can promote peace and erect strong barriers against strife and conflict. Prosperity and social stability are the guarantor of peace. It is, therefore, essential to retain our primary focus on the objective and mandate of this Group: to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development.

Co- Chair,

Let me now turn to governance and rule of law and governance, which is more relevant to our work.

One of the main lessons drawn from the implementation of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has been the absence of synergy between the governance, rule of law and development.

The growing body of research considers good governance and the rule of law to be both an *enabler* and *outcome* of development. It is axiomatic that the rule of law, sustained growth and sustainable development are inextricably linked.

The rule of law is a multidimensional concept that encompasses protection of individual rights, good governance, checks and balances in government, transparency and accountability of institutions, security of property, enforcement of contracts, and measures against corruption.

We also believe that all individuals must have the right to education, health care, and a basic standard of living. Youth and gender empowerment must be an essential part of this process.

Also, the rule of law and governance are as much relevant to the international context as they are to the national context. Our attempts at advocating rule of law would remain insufficient without effectively addressing institutional deficits in global governance, which also ought to be part of our focus on the rule of law and governance discussions.

In this entire process, promotion of economic growth, equality of opportunity, equitable distribution of national resources, a secure ecosystem, gender equality, inclusion, and political participation must be kept in mind.

There is a compelling case for the rule of law in the context of the SDGs. This should, however, be pursued in a manner that it does not scuttle our goal of robust economic growth. To this end, we believe that our work should take into account the following aspects:

- i. The rule of law has to be conceived in the broader context of good governance and the right to development.
- ii. Institution building should be accorded priority. Without strong and resilient institutions, we will be merely building sand castles even if we are passing the most robust laws.
- iii. Instead of a top-down approach, we should bolster a peoples-driven paradigm supported by the grass roots communities.

- iv. The very purpose of the rule of law within the context of the SDGs will be defeated if it is used and invoked by the donor countries or IFIs to impose conditions on economic and financial assistance to developing countries for sustainable development.
- v. There should be a marked emphasis on *national ownership* and indigenous development of laws. A model, however perfect it may be in one setting, will not work in another setting. To this end, SDGs should seek to evolve a basket of indicators allowing countries to choose relevant indicators in the context of their national conditions.
- vi. A set of principles which could be relevant in the context of the rule of law and governance are:
 - a. Accountability of public institutions;
 - b. Transparency in public decision making;
 - c. Access to justice and information;
 - d. Effective enforcement of property rights;
 - e. Equality of opportunity;
 - f. Reform of global governance at international level
 - g. Inclusion and representation in public decision making and responsiveness to public needs.
 - h. Legally enforceable access to education and healthcare

I thank you Co-Chair.