



**Meeting of the General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals
United Nations - New York – 3-7 February 2014**

**“Conflict prevention, post-conflict peacebuilding and promotion of durable peace, rule of law
and governance”**

Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States

**delivered by
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I have the honour to speak on behalf of the EU and its Member States.

The outcome document of the Special Event on 25th September 2013 called for a post-2015 development agenda that, amongst other things, should "*promote peace and security, democratic governance, the rule of law, gender equality and human rights for all*". These are shared and universal values of the international community and of the United Nations, and their realization is an imperative for us. The report of the Secretary General's High Level Panel of Eminent Persons described freedom from fear, conflict and violence as "*the essential foundation for building peaceful and prosperous societies*". We very much agree with this view. The linkage between the rule of law and development was also affirmed in the Declaration adopted by the UNGA on 24 September 2012 at the High Level meeting on the Rule of Law, which states that "*this relationship should be considered in the post-2015 international development agenda*". The EU and its Member States strongly support this. In this context, we also wish to recall the need for full and equal participation of women and civil society in conflict prevention and conflict resolution.

Evidence clearly shows that **violence and insecurity have undermined sustainable development and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals**. On average, it is estimated that a country that experienced major violence over the period from 1981 to 2005 has a poverty rate 21% higher than a country that saw no violence. Without peace, it is also much harder for countries to

sustainably manage their natural resources, or to build resilience to natural disasters. As stated in Rio Principle 25 "Peace, development and environmental protection are interdependent and indivisible." The challenge goes far beyond fragile and conflict-affected states however, since it is estimated that worldwide each year over 1.4 million people lose their lives to violence, more than a third of these through homicide.

Peaceful societies, stability and good governance are what the poorest and most vulnerable want. The UN's MyWorld Survey showed that having an honest and accountable government was among the top four priorities of citizens across the world, and ensuring freedom from crime and violence was among the top seven priorities. These are essential parts of our agenda moving forward.

Promoting peaceful and stable societies means trying to address **key drivers of conflict**. These are multiple, varied and intertwined, and include domestic issues as well as external stresses.

In order to address national drivers, and for peacebuilding and sustainable development progress to be durable, **institutions must be strengthened**, especially for fragile states. Effective, accountable institutions that deliver services, give people a voice and uphold human rights and the rule of law are fundamental to free people from fear of violence, provide personal security and avoid impunity. These are outcomes in themselves and are essential building blocks for sustainable development. They can also have significant impact in preventing conflict. Regional integration can make a major contribution to peace and lasting reconciliation.

Access to impartial justice for all is an important aspect of good governance and a key part of diffusing social tensions that may lead to conflict. But wider efforts to durably improve social inclusion and to reduce inequalities are also essential. We must leave no one behind. This means tackling issues such as gender equality and violence against women and girls as well as eradicating discrimination and corruption, creating economic and employment opportunities for all, sustainably and transparently managing natural resources and sharing benefits for their use, as well as tackling issues such as climate change that could spur conflict. We therefore need to seek greater coherence between policies at all levels and across the post-2015 development agenda. Transparency and accountability are also fundamental elements in improving the effectiveness of development policies.

We recognise that national ownership is essential if we are to tackle these challenges effectively. We need to take into account different contexts and capacities. However, there are some **common critical issues** (such as violence) faced by many countries which could form the basis of a joint vision. In this

context, it is important to note that elements of progress are measurable and to support the capacity of countries, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable, to collect data.

The EU and its Member States remain committed to the mutually reinforcing concepts of sustainable development and the eradication of poverty in all its dimensions, including ending extreme poverty in a single generation. Promoting good governance, peaceful and stable societies is key to achieving this and must be done in a meaningful way. This means having concrete and measurable commitments on issues such as peaceful society, freedom from violence (including sexual violence in conflict), accountable government, participation and the rule of law in the new framework.

We look forward to building on the progress made in this Open Working Group session to effectively incorporate these essential issues in the post-2015 development agenda.