

## **Remarks by Denmark, Ireland and Norway on Focus area 19 - peaceful and non-violent societies, rule of law and capable institutions**

- As stated at last meeting, we believe that the issues covered by focus area 19 merit two separate goals. One on building peaceful and non-violent societies and one on good governance and rule of law.
- The goal on **peaceful and non-violent societies** is universal as it is relevant to all countries. Conflict and violence affect people and societies negatively, no matter where they live. Peace is a condition that allows society to prosper socially, economically and environmentally. It also enables the fulfillment of human rights as well as forming a key part of the social contract between government and people. Peaceful and non-violent societies are therefore fundamental for the achievement of all the other goals for poverty eradication and sustainable development.
- The present text captures well many of the important issues relevant for ensuring peaceful and non-violent societies. We would like to highlight a number of issues, which we propose be taken forward as possible target areas:
  - Reduce the number of violent deaths and reduce the number of people affected by all forms of violence.
  - Build constructive state-society relations, through inclusive, legitimate politics and participatory decision making.
  - Enhance the capacity, professionalism and accountability of the security sector, police and judiciary.
  - Eliminate gender based violence, abuse and exploitation, and violence against girls and boys.
  - Address the impact of global financial shocks and climate change.
  - Reduce illicit arms trade and trafficking.
  - Fight human trafficking and organized crime.
- **We propose a separate goal on good governance and the rule of law.** These issues are at the core of any effort to eradicate poverty and ensure sustainable

development, and will be crucial for the achievement of all the SDGs. They are both preconditions for and outcomes of development.

- Among the many important action areas reflected in the text, the following will be crucial to include under a goal on good governance and the rule of law:
  - Ensure effective, accountable and transparent institutions, including oversight institutions.
  - Ensure the rule of law at all levels, including through access to independent and responsive justice systems, the protection of property rights and access to legal aid.
  - Ensure freedom of speech, freedom of association, an independent media, and access to publicly owned information.
  - Ensure inclusive, participatory decision-making at all levels, including for women and marginalized groups.
  - Eliminate corruption and curb illicit financial flows, including their international drivers.
  - Provide free and universal legal identity.
  - Create and protect civil society space, including for human rights defenders.