Background Note on Panel Discussions for the
General Assembly Thematic Debate on
"Ensuring Stable and Peaceful Societies"
24-25 April 2014

The thematic debate will feature an opening segment, three consecutive, interactive, multi-stakeholder panel discussions and a brief closing segment. The primary objective of the thematic debate is to provide an opportunity for Member States to identify concrete ways on how stable and peaceful societies can contribute to the ongoing process of sustainable development in the context of the post-2015 development agenda, whose overarching objective is the eradication of extreme poverty. The panel discussions will also benefit from expertise and insights of relevant stakeholders including representatives of UN Agencies, civil society, academic practitioners and the private sector. The three panel discussions will focus on the following issues:

Panel discussion I: Nexus between sustainable development, peace and stability

The Millennium Declaration emphasizes the critical role of peace as fundamental for human well-being. Peace and stability are critical enablers of sustainable development and are inherent development outcomes. Peaceful and stable societies based on democratic governance, including the rule of law, benefit from higher levels of growth, more jobs, lower levels of poverty, higher rates of investment in sustainable development and more tools to address inequalities. In the same vein, sustainable development is a key foundation for peaceful and stable societies.

There are many ways in which sustainable development can positively contribute to peace and stability as well as a key ingredient for poverty eradication. Various forms of instability and lack of peace have demonstrated long-term, far reaching, and costly effects on sustainable development. Violence is a universal phenomenon, including against women and children and has devastating consequences for development. Societies affected by violence conflict are lagging behind on progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Aspects of sustainable development, including equitable access to social services, natural resource management and jobs, have impacts on the sustainability of peace.

The internal root causes of instability are also exacerbated by external stresses such as organized crime and illicit trade which could undermine the stability of different societies. This panel discussion seeks to explore the linkages between sustainable development, peace and stability. It will further deliberate on how to integrate these linkages into national development strategies and to ways to measure their progress effectively. Select questions will focus on:

- What has been the experience of Member States on integrating the links between sustainable development and peaceful societies into national development strategies and policies?
- How can the nexus between sustainable development and peace and stability best be addressed in the post-2015 development agenda?
- Given the universal importance of peace and stability for sustainable development, how can this issue best be framed in the post-2015 development agenda?
- How best to utilise the post-2015 agenda to address root causes of instability?

Panel discussion II: Strengthening national institutions towards achieving sustainable development

Institutions are critical for sustainable development. They (institutions) determine whether children have safe access to schools, whether natural resources are exploited in a sustainable manner and whether the benefits are shared fairly, whether conflicts are settled peacefully or whether the police and courts protect all people and provide effective service to all. At the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), Member States reaffirmed "that "to achieve our sustainable development goals, we need institutions at all levels that are effective, transparent, accountable and democratic." Through institutions, countries are establishing rule of law, maintaining peaceful societies and delivering public services. Institutions need to be effective, equitable, transparent and accountable and resilient to shocks. This Panel will examine concrete ideas to strengthen national institutions in support of achieving sustainable development. Focus will be on the following questions:

- What institutions can contribute to peaceful and stable societies in support of sustainable development?
- How could the importance of institutions best be reflected in the post-2015 development agenda?
- How can the international community support nationally-owned processes in order to strengthen national institutions?
- What measures are required to address external stressors such as illicit trafficking and organized crime that may undermine stability and peace?

Panel discussion III: Building Global partnership for ensuring stable and peaceful societies

Global partnerships are critical for supporting national and regional efforts to ensure stable and peaceful societies. Partnerships are also needed among governments and with international, regional and sub-regional organizations, civil society and the private sector to strengthen domestic institutions that are suited for

specific contexts. Several external stressors can have negative effects on domestic conflicts, including spillovers from armed conflict in neighboring countries, illicit trafficking and organized crime, trafficking in arms, drugs, humans, or natural resources, as well as economic and financial shocks. These factors cannot be addressed successfully by a single country or only by governments. Global partnerships are therefore necessary to contain these negative factors and support efforts by countries to address them.

Sustained national, regional and global efforts are requirements for ensuring stable and peaceful societies. Yet if our world is to achieve global stability and sustainability, collective action and partnerships are critical including those with international organizations such as the UN, regional and sub-regional organizations, civil society, and business sector. Steps to mitigate the challenges of weak national institutions and harmful effects of external stressors including organized crime, illicit trade in persons and illicit financial flows require the resolve of national governments. However, predictable and sustained supports and partnerships from international community form an integral part of this success.

This Panel discussion provides an opportunity to offer constructive proposals on how capacities and partnership required for building stable and peaceful societies for sustainable development. Focus will be on the following questions:

- What capacities and partnerships would be required for building peaceful and stable societies for sustainable development?
- How can global partnerships best support national efforts to ensure stable and peaceful societies?
- What additional efforts are needed to minimize the risk of external factors in fueling violent conflict?