Thematic Debate of the General Assembly
"Ensuring Stable and Peaceful Societies"

24- 25 April 2014

<u>**Background**</u>

Stability and peace in relations both between and within societies are essential and overarching conditions for progress toward the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and for sustainable development. The mutually reinforcing nature of the inter-linkage between peace, stability and development is abundantly articulated in both the 2000 Millennium Declaration and the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document which, among other things, acknowledges that peace and security, development and human rights are the three pillars of the UN system and foundation for collective security and well-being.

While over the past decade some progress has been recorded in terms of inter-state conflicts, during the past few years the attention of the international community has been increasingly absorbed with conflict and violence within societies, particularly in the wake of prolonged conflict. One of the lessons of the attempts to rebuild societies that have been torn apart by such conflict is that beyond silencing the guns, restoring trust and re-constructing the shattered social cohesion which the conflict itself manifested, is much more complex. The process of promoting development is seriously at risk where conditions do not exist for such restoration and reconstruction. External stresses such as human trafficking and illegal trade in wildlife and other organized crime networks can also undermine peace and development progress.

The international community is about to embark on the task of defining a post-2015 Development Agenda with the overarching goal of poverty eradication that will also have the hallmarks of inclusiveness, good governance, the rule of law, gender quality and human rights, including the right to development for all. It is essential that a deliberate set of strategies be contemplated to protect against the exclusion from the benefits of such an agenda, of the growing numbers of persons who continue to be affected by the tensions and instability persisting in the wake of conflict and violence, so as to ensure that building stable and peaceful societies is an essential part of the international effort to achieve sustainable development.

Against this backdrop, sustained efforts to ensure stable and peaceful societies are today more important than ever before. This task requires intensification of efforts at all levels, national, regional and global, in order to improve social cohesion and remove the marginality, alienation and other forms of social and economic inequities which may have contributed to the conflict in the first place. This includes, inter alia, consideration of the role of women in conflict prevention and in post-conflict peace-building and governance.

<u>**Objective**</u>

The primary objective of the thematic debate is to provide a platform for Member States to reflect and deliberate on this theme with a view of identifying concrete ways on which stable and peaceful societies can contribute to the ongoing process of sustainable development in the context of the post-2015 development agenda.

Cognizant of the ongoing work and efforts within the UN system, the thematic debate will avoid duplication but aim to complement such efforts in the context of the GA responsibilities and mandate. In this context, the debate will be carried-out in close consultation with relevant stakeholders bearing in mind the discussions in the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals.

The thematic debate will be guided by the following preliminary questions:

1. What are the linkages between sustainable development, peace and stability, and how can these be integrated into national development strategies and their progress be effectively measured?
2. How can political, economic and social institutions be strengthened in such a manner that they work harmoniously to replace the legacy of conflict and violence with a new, inclusive and more people-centred order of relations in support of achieving sustainable development?
3. How can the development challenges for stable and peaceful societies be reflected in the post-2015 development agenda?
4. What capacities and partnerships, including donor-relationships, would be required for building peaceful and stable societies for sustainable development?

Format and Outcome

The thematic debate will consist of an opening segment in the morning and three consecutive, interactive, multi-stakeholder panel discussions and a brief closing segment. The outcome of the thematic debate will be a President's summary that will be made available as an input to the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, as applicable.

Participants

The thematic debate will include participation of Member States at the highest possible level, Observers, UN Agencies and representatives of civil society, private sector, and other relevant stakeholders. Permanent Missions are invited to express to the President of the General Assembly their interest in co-chairing an interactive panel discussion.

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