

25 November 2016

71st session of the General Assembly

**Statement by H.E. Peter Thomson,
Informal Meeting with the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on
Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice**

H.E. Mr. Friedrich Däuble (Chair of the 25th Session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice),

H.E. Mr. Vladimir Galuska (Chair of the 59th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs),

H.E. Mr. Yury Fedotov (Executive Director, UN Office on Drugs and Crime),

H.E. Mr. Li Yong (Director General, UN Industrial Development Organization),

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to be here in Vienna and to have the opportunity to address the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ).

I thank both Chairs for extending this invitation to me and thank all of you for your presence today.

The hosting of today's meeting is a reflection of the strong institutional relationship between the entities of the United Nations here in Vienna and in New York.

It is a relationship of critical importance to us all – to achieving each of our mandates, to the effective functioning of the UN system, and to furthering the purposes and principles of the UN Charter.

As the international community faces global challenges on an unprecedented scale, the need for coordination and coherence in the work of the United Nations could not be clearer.

As we meet, the UN is responding to the highest number of simultaneous security and humanitarian crises in its history. The emergence of non-State actors, the rise of terrorism and violent extremism, and the expansion of asymmetrical warfare are threatening international peace and security and challenging the UN's capacity to respond.

The worst humanitarian and refugee crisis since the Second World War is taking place, affecting millions of people across the globe.

Inequality within and between nations is greater today than it was thirty years ago. And many countries are seeing long-standing human rights protections being eroded.

Xenophobia is on the rise. And people are far too often and far too quickly are reverting to hateful philosophies in their search for security in this rapidly changing world.

At the same time, unrestrained human activity is threatening the health of our planet. The last few years have been the hottest in recorded history, and catastrophic climate events are occurring with greater frequency and intensity than ever before.

It is not an exaggeration to say that if we do not change course, humanity's long-term future on this planet is under threat.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement, and other key outcomes adopted over the last 15 months, provide us with a universal masterplan for people, planet, and prosperity.

If implemented efficiently, effectively and at scale, the Sustainable Development Goals will transform our world, including by eliminating extreme poverty, building peaceful and inclusive societies, empowering women and girls, combating climate change, and protecting the health and well-being of our people and planet.

These historical landmarks will not be successful in transforming our world, however, if humanity is not aware of their existence, and people are unable to take ownership of the Agenda, serve as agents for change, drive innovation, and hold their Governments to account for SDG implementation.

The scale of this challenge is why I have made the principle objective of the UN General Assembly's 71st session overseeing a universal push for meaningful progress in implementing all 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The work of the Vienna-based agencies and commissions is critical to realizing this goal. In this regard, I would like to recognize the work that is already being done by Vienna-based delegates and officials to contribute to the SDGs.

As you all know, crime and corruption, weak or non-existent rule of law, uneven access to justice, human trafficking, illicit financial flows, and fragile criminal justice institutions, fundamentally undermine the pursuit of development, human rights, and peace and security around the world.

At the same time, illicit drug use, cultivation, manufacture, and trafficking have dramatic socio-economic impacts, while also hindering the growth of legitimate businesses and economies.

Each of these issues has direct implications for achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

Current estimates, for example, provide that financing the SDGs will require annual investments of USD\$3-7 trillion, from both public and private sources.

Mobilizing financing on this scale is a significant challenge. However, it is a challenge made more difficult for countries and regions where illicit financial flows, transnational organized crime, corruption, and money laundering, undermine domestic revenue collection and private sector investment, and divert resources away from SDG implementation.

If the international community is to achieve the SDGs by 2030, it is clear that action on crime prevention, rule of law, human trafficking, and justice, must be taken. Such activities are critical not only to achieving SDG16 on Peace, Justice and Building Effective, Accountable and Inclusive Institutions, but also as cross-cutting priorities to drive implementation of all the SDGs.

The Vienna-based agencies and commissions have a key role to play in this regard.

First, I commend UNODC for its important work in the fight against illicit drugs, human trafficking, and international crime. I encourage you to continue to consider your work through the lens of sustainable development, and to provide steadfast support to Member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda. Your support for building of peaceful and stable societies through accountable and effective institutions, and inclusive political processes, is particularly crucial.

Second, your data collection, research, and analysis work on global developments relating to drugs, violence, access to justice, rule of law, human trafficking, corruption, and illicit flows can support evidence-based policy development in Member States. As appropriate, such work should be scaled up.

Third, the Commission on Narcotic Drug's vital thematic research and trend analysis on the World Drug Problem must be supported. The Special Session on the World Drug Problem (UNGASS) convened in April this year, and the adoption of the outcome document, were critical steps in this regard, and should be built upon.

Fourth, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice's work to develop standards, norms, and best practices to help Member States advance the rule of law, build resilient institutions, tackle organized crime, counter corruption, and end the brutality of people smuggling and human trafficking, is critical. I encourage you to step up efforts to raise global awareness of the interlinkages between this work and sustainable development, and to ensure that your work is accessible to Member States, civil society, and other relevant stakeholders.

Fifth, the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons work to implement relevant international instruments, including the UN Global Plan of Action, are critical to the global fight against trafficking in persons. In October 2017, the General Assembly will convene a High-Level Meeting to conduct the second appraisal of the implementation of the Global Plan of Action.

I will soon appoint co-facilitators to consult with Member States on the modalities for this meeting, and I look forward to working closely with UNODC and you in the lead up to this important meeting.

Finally, given the scale of the challenge of implementing the SDGs, the UN system must deliver on SDG implementation in a coherent, efficient, and effective manner. Your work to enhance dialogue, coordination, and collaboration of activities between Vienna, New York and other relevant areas is vital.

Not only will this work help to ensure that the UN is fit-for-purpose, but that the UN fulfils the international community's collective commitment to 'leave no one behind', to pursue an inclusive and people-centered approach to sustainable development, and to achieve a more just world.

Excellencies,

As part of our efforts to build on the current global momentum for implementing the 2030 Agenda, my office will be overseeing a number of key events during the 71st Session in New York. Of particular note, this includes:

- an informal General Assembly Meeting on the interlinkages between the 2030 Agenda and the UN's new Sustaining Peace agenda, in January;
- a meeting on Sustainable Finance, in April;
- a Conference on the Ocean on 5-9 June; and
- a series of events held in the margins of the ECOSOC Youth Forum in January, Commission on the Status of Women in March, Financing for Development meeting in May, and the High-Level Political Forum in July.

Broad cross-sectoral engagement at each of these discussions will be critical to harnessing the political will, knowledge, resources, and strategies needed to drive our implementation work forward, and I encourage you to participate.

Excellencies,

Given the fundamental relationship between advancing the rule of law and achieving sustainable development, building inclusive economic growth, eradicating poverty, and realizing the human rights of all people, your work here in Vienna could not be more central center to these efforts.

I congratulate you on all that you have achieved so far, and I call on you to redouble your efforts in this regard.

We are running out of time to act if we are to come together to save humanity's place on this planet.

The security of our children, our grandchildren, and all future generations depend on the success or failure of our efforts in implementing the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Thank you.