

*Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,*

*We have reached the end of the final day of the Rome Conference on SDG16.*

*First of all, let me take this opportunity to thank Ms. Spatolisano, Assistant Secretary General at DESA and Ms. Beagle, Director General of IDLO for their continued engagement, as well as all the moderators, the high-level attendees, Ministers, speakers and delegates who joined us in our discussions. Their presence has been invaluable and, without a doubt, has helped make the event a great success.*

*A special thank you as well to all those who have been involved in the organisation of the event for making it possible and to the members of the media in covering our activities and in disseminating our views to a wider audience.*

*I believe the Conference has been particularly effective in fostering an honest, inclusive and deep discussion on the impact of the pandemic on progress towards SDG16, providing a comprehensive overview of the challenges posed by the pandemic to governance at all levels.*

*During these 3 days, lots of ideas, statistics, interpretations and visions have been discussed. However, three key messages have clearly emerged during the conference:*

*1. We have heard how COVID-19 has negatively impacted many dimensions of SDG 16. It has most impacted those who were already at risk of being left behind, including women and girls, older people, youth, people with disabilities and groups in marginalized and vulnerable situations.*

*Pre-existing challenges to peace, justice and inclusion have been both exposed and magnified by the impact of the pandemic. The functioning of public institutions at all levels has been hampered.*

*Yet, we also heard how governments, citizens, civil society and other actors have joined forces to design and implement effective and innovative practices to enhance governance during the pandemic. They provide invaluable lessons not only for the next phase of the recovery, but also for building more resilient societies, addressing inequalities and vulnerabilities, supporting the Decade of action and delivering sustainable development agreed by world leaders in 2019.*

*2. Renewing the social contract and re-building trust between people and governments has emerged as a major challenge and is key to making progress on all the sustainable Development Goals. The Conference has explored some of the root causes of lack of trust in public institutions. You emphasized the importance of policies and measures at the national level, sustained by international cooperation, to ensure equity in distribution of public goods and delivery of services, with a focus on those most at risk of being left behind. These policies will be important also to strengthen*

*transparency, accountability and oversight, to open space for participation and stakeholder engagement, to support adherence to constitutional frameworks and the independence of judicial institutions and to reinforce action to fight corruption.*

*3. While the pandemic has created major challenges, it also provides an opportunity to rethink governance, with SDG16 as a central pillar and lever for transformation. The transformative actions that the health crisis is compelling governments to take, if rooted in multilateralism and global solidarity, can bring about renewed, sustained progress in achieving the 2030 Agenda. Governance, institutional and policy innovations at local, national, regional and international levels can accelerate the implementation of SDG 16 and promote integrated, “whole of society” approaches needed to tackle complex, interrelated challenges such as entrenched conflict, increasing inequalities, social and economic insecurity, climate change and rapid technological disruption.*

*I want to assure you that the Government of Italy will report on the conclusions of this Conference at the 2021 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development next July, where SDG 16 will be reviewed for only the second time, as one of the central goals for promoting a sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic*

*A peaceful, just and inclusive recovery will be possible only through transparent and accountable institutions that can guarantee the rule of law, good governance, human rights, gender equality and environmental sustainability.*

*I believe that a continued exchange between Member States, Independent Authorities, the Judiciary, Multilateral Partners, Civil Society and all the relevant actors is crucial to build back better and leaving no one behind.*

*Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, SDG16’s implementation requires collective, coordinated and continued efforts. Let’s increase, intensify and elevate our actions towards a full SDG16 implementation!*

*Thank you.*