

**DIRECTOR GENERAL DGCS FABIO CASSESE**  
**CLOSING REMARKS**

*Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, we have reached the conclusion of this edition of the SDG16 Conference.*

*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, 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 goes as well to all those involved in the organisation, for making the event possible in spite of the still precarious context.*

*I believe the Conference has been particularly effective in fostering an honest, inclusive and in-depth discussion on how people-centered governance can help rebuild trust in institutions, accelerate sustainable development processes and address the challenges of the post-pandemic world.*

*During these two days, many ideas, interpretations, facts and figures and visions have been shared and discussed. As we all know, the conclusions of this Conference will feed into the 2022 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, where some of the SDGs hardest hit by the pandemic, such as SDG 5 on quality of education and SDG 5 on gender equality will be discussed.*

*It has emerged how the consequences of the crisis have weighed and still weigh heavily on vulnerable groups such as women, girls, young people and people with disabilities. Different approaches, based on data and experience, to build and sustain development in conflict-affected contexts, counter growing polarization and combat disinformation and misinformation have been fruitfully discussed. Also, the degree to which the pandemic has exacerbated tensions both between countries and within them has been deeply analysed.*

*What began as a violent shock has turned into prolonged stress for institutions, with devastating long-run effects regardless of the level of development of each country, in some cases bringing public services near breaking point.*

*Tangible examples of long-term problems were discussed during the conference, with the aim of identifying the best strategies to promote the resilience and effectiveness of institutions in times of prolonged stress.*

*The need for a new vision of the rule of law through which global challenges are faced has clearly emerged. Focusing on people-centred justice, based on evidence and a better understanding of the needs of those seeking it, is essential to rebuild the social pact between citizens and governments, and to put the respect of fundamental rights of people at the centre. A renewed trust in institutions is more than ever needed and it represents the driver through which we will have to build back better after the pandemic.*

*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. On the issue of inclusiveness, our speakers have also mentioned the need for initiatives that encourage a stronger coordination between institutions and civil society, as well as within civil society associations themselves.*

*While the pandemic has created major challenges, it also provided an opportunity to rethink governance, with SDG16, from a people-centered perspective, 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.*

*Finally, the issue of institutional accountability was discussed. Our speakers have not only highlighted the need to ensure that the resilience mechanisms are not flawed by corruption, but also expressed a general and heartfelt need of actively promoting, among the people, the culture of transparency, accountability and the rule of law.*

*Ladies and gentlemen.*

*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.*

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

*Thank you.*