Larry Attree, Saferworld: 'Remarks to Interactive Dialogue with Major Groups and other Stakeholders on the Inter Governmental Negotiations on Goals and Targets' - 25 March 2015

Co-Chairmen, your excellencies, honoured delegates, colleagues, thanks for this opportunity to discuss the post-2015 goals, targets and monitoring framework with you all.

My organisation, Saferworld, promotes peace around the world, and has with our CSO partners engaged in detailed dialogue on the peace, justice and governance issues promoted under Goal 16 and elsewhere in the framework over the last few years, providing governments and the UN with evidence and ideas to shape this agenda. What I say reflects the technical analysis we have provided in a new briefing 'Measuring peace from 2015: an indicator framework in action' that we released on Friday to assist in your deliberations this week.

I have 3 general points, and 4 specific points related to Goal 16.

General points
1. Monitoring of the framework with global, shared indicators is essential if there is to be accountability for commitments.
2. Member states need to commit to investing in credible and impartial monitoring that matches the ambition of the goals and targets adopted.
3. The contribution to be made to measuring Goal 16 and other goals by third parties is huge and should not be overlooked by member states. The post-2015 process has been inclusive until now, and this has been important in ensuring member states work towards an agenda that people want and need. But when it comes to the work on indicators, we must ensure that the door is not shut to CSOs, research institutes, companies and UN agencies when they are still needed – to keep ambition high, and to put the best know-how at the disposal of member states. The potential of a "data revolution" won't be realised if this work is led by National Statistics Offices (NSOs) alone.

Goal 16
1. We know the report of the UNSC is very preliminary, but it is not optimistic enough about the potential for monitoring goal 16 – too few indicator options are assessed, and a conversation is needed about a longer list of promising indicators before particular options are dismissed. For example, the assessment of the indicator on corruption as unfeasible at this stage is extraordinary when we know that data on this indicator is collected by multiple actors for a very large number of countries (and is certainly of very high relevance to target 16.5). As our detailed work on this has repeatedly illustrated, the challenge of monitoring corruption, bribery, access to information, illicit financial flows, levels of violence, access to justice, rule of law, accountability and citizen participation is *not* a technical one.
2. The methodologies exist for measuring these issues all around the world – good data is available for large proportions of the globe in each case. Many of the most promising initiatives to measure the core issues under goal 16 are being taken by states and third parties in the contexts worst affected by conflict, violence and weak institutions. In particular, African actors are leading the way. The challenges really lie at the level of ambition to measure new things and the willingness to resource innovation. We are here to ask you to keep this ambition and willingness

high – and to embrace the knowledge available all around the world, including from 3rd party monitors.

3. The involvement of third party monitors is patently crucial to the promise of an ambitious and accountable set of goals. Third parties can ensure the feasibility of monitoring more issues in more countries. They can also make monitoring a credible process (in what sphere of public life would the public be satisfied with governments, businesses or NGOs monitoring their own progress without the involvement of more independent stakeholders?).

4. We need to live up to the assertion made by the OWG that 'People are at the centre of sustainable development'. If Member States want such language to be taken at face value, then public perceptions data must be used when monitoring many issues across the framework.They are a critical source of information on the realities of the peace, justice and governance issues that lie at the heart of goal 16. When building peace, it is also essential to understand levels of public confidence in the progress being made. A key point is this – all governments everywhere are already judged in the court of public opinion. The only question is how interested they are in listening. The chance to get feedback on whether the public has confidence in progress, and on which issues the public feels more needs to be done – this is not in my experience sensitive, but it is a vital tool for policymakers – it offers them the crystal ball they need to prevent unrest constructively before it emerges. The lesson from the ShaSa initiative to monitor peace and governance issues in Africa is that *governments* have the most to gain from using the latest tools to measure peace, justice and governance, and people's confidence in them.

Conclusion

Your work thus far is commendable, but even if you are all tired after the heavy negotiations last year, you are not nearly as tired as people living in poverty, in insecurity and amidst environmental degradation: please keep going, stay ambitious, trust one another, roll up your sleeves and have the difficult conversations that you need to, and give people outside this room a post-2015 agenda they can understand and believe in: You have not achieved this yet!

Thank you

Further relevant analysis from Saferworld:
- Saferworld (2015) Measuring peace from 2015: an indicator framework in action
- Saferworld (2014) From the Sustainable Development Goals to the Post-2015 Agenda: Building a Consensus for Peace
- Saferworld and CDA (2014) Defining and measuring the external stress factors that lead to conflict in the context of the post-2015 agenda
- Saferworld and Conciliation Resources (2014) Gender, violence and peace
- Saferworld (2013) A vision of goals, targets and indicators
- Saferworld (2013) Issue Paper 2: What are the key challenges? What works in addressing them?
- Saferworld (2013) Issue Paper 1: The impact of conflict and violence on achieving development