Australia-Netherlands-UK: peaceful societies, the rule of law, governance and effective and inclusive institutions.

Co-Chair

Let me start with a quote from a speech by the former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in July 1997:

> *"Good governance and sustainable development are indivisible. That is the lesson of all our efforts and experiences, from Africa to Asia to Latin America. Without good governance -- without the rule of law, predictable administration, legitimate power, and responsive regulation -- no amount of funding will set us on the path to prosperity"*

This illustrates the centrality of governance and institutions to truly sustainable development. We collectively recognised this in the Rio + 20 outcome document where, in paragraph 8, we reaffirmed

> *"the importance of freedom, peace and security, respect for human rights…"*

And, in paragraph 10, that:

> *"…….democracy, good governance and the rule of law, at the national and international levels, as well as an enabling environment are essential for sustainable development"*

So the link between peace, good governance, the rule of law and sustainable development is not a new issue. This is backed by clear <u>evidence</u> from academic research that capable, accountable and inclusive institutions are a crucial factor in creating and sustaining the conditions necessary for sustainable development.

Better governance is correlated with improved completion rates for primary education, adult literacy and reduced infant mortality. As personal safety increases, growth increases and progress is made against the MDGs.

1.6 million people who voted in the MyWorld survey put "honest and accountable government" and "freedom from crime and violence" among the top seven issues they want the SDGs to address.

It is crucial to the credibility of the SDGs that we respond to the evidence – both academic and from the extensive global consultations.

Let me now turn to goals and targets. The co-chairs' focus areas paper suggests two sets of issues under focus area 19. Our team would like to take the logical next step and present two separate goals: the first covering stable and peaceful societies, the second on good governance and effective institutions.

A goal on "stable and peaceful societies" is not about international peace and security. It is about issues that matter to individual citizens and therefore about national level action, supported where necessary by international cooperation, to promote sustainable development. We suggest the following targets for consideration:

- Reduce levels of violence.
- Ensure justice institutions are accessible, independent, well-resourced and respect due-process rights
- Enhance the capacity, professionalism, accountability and legitimacy of the security forces, police and judiciary
- Reduce organized crime, including illicit flows and trafficking (of people, arms, drugs, finance, wildlife)
- Reduce the number of IDPs and refugees

These issues are all measurable, often using data that are already collected by the UN. These include data on refugees and IDPs, on illicit arms flows and trafficking, on violent and conflict deaths. The UN's Rule of Law Indicators can be used across several targets. Work for the UN Statistics Commission has confirmed that measurement is feasible and the importance of perception indicators, such as the number of people that report being safe to walk home at night.

We suggest the following targets for consideration in a goal on good governance and effective institutions:

- Free and universal legal identity, such as birth registrations. This is a first step to accessing public services and political and economic inclusion. Yet the births of a quarter of a billion children under five are currently unregistered.

- Freedom of speech, association, peaceful protest and access to independent media and information.

- Ensure inclusive public participation in democratic politics and civic engagement.

- Guarantee the public's right to information and access to government data.

- Reduce bribery and corruption and ensure officials can be held accountable.

Remarkable progress has been made in advancing the techniques for measurement in these areas over the last decade. Many of us are already

tracking progress through initiatives such as the Open Government Partnership and regional peer review mechanisms.

Measurements such as the existence of constitutional guarantees, public registers, government standards and legislation can be complemented by survey data.

I want to emphasise that this is a universal agenda. Different countries start from different positions. But for all of us, effective and accountable institutions build trust between the state and society. They also manage pressures that could otherwise drive conflict, and enable a country to build its economic capacity and deliver public services and goods to its citizens.

While goals and targets will be agreed here in the UN, our view is that how to get there would not be prescribed. As for other goals, decisions on how to implement would be for individual countries to take while international support would reinforce national ownership.

Sustainable development is inherently challenging. Whether ensuring healthcare for the most marginalised groups, tackling unsustainable consumption or building effective and accountable institutions, sustainable development is about transformative change, and therefore by definition challenging for all countries, my own included.

I will end with a final quote. This from the African Common Position on the post-2015 development agenda, which acknowledges in its pillar 5 "the importance of peace and security in Africa and in the world, and the inextricable links between development and peace, security and stability"…and that "to address this priority, we must: tackle economic and social inequalities and exclusion; strengthen good and inclusive governance".

Mr Co-Chair
We are standing at a crossroads. We have an historic opportunity to build on the ambition and success of the MDGs and Rio and work towards a future where societies are resilient and everybody will be able to live a dignified life, free from violence and exclusion.   Collectively we must rise to that challenge in this group.