Talking Points Clare Hart

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An Expert Group Meeting in preparation for HLPF 2024 - SDG 16

10:45– 12:15 Monitoring SDG 16

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Local governments in peacebuilding

- Peace is not only the absence of war, but also the absence of all kinds of violence Local and regional governments are committed to preventing violence in all its expressions: from the most evident, the direct ones, to the structural violence in the form of inequalities, and the cultural violence that divides and disarticulates peace in our cities and territories.

- To achieve cities and territories of peace, it is necessary to protect the commons, those things on which everyone's life depends and which are not subject to private appropriation. We need to include local communities in the conversation about the dimensions of everyday life, such as health, water, housing, care and social protection.

- To build societies that respect human rights, we need to rebuild the architecture of global governance in a fairer, healthier and more equitable way. The escalation of conflicts between and within countries is a grim reminder that the current architecture of global governance is being challenged.

- The new multilateral system must reflect this dimension of belonging if it is to have legitimacy and respond to people's need for multiple identities, and it must also protect and promote systems of care at all levels of governance.

- Our World Organization of United Cities and Local Governments World Forum of Cities and Territories of Peace, acting as its Secretariat. Over the course of four editions, the Forum has been building a political process that gathers local and regional governments to build this idea of peace with human development and care, built on local diplomacy and aiming to transform how peace is managed.

SDG 16

- **SDG 16 was designed not only as a means of building more peaceful, just and inclusive societies but as an *enabling goal*,** correlating to a broader network of interlinked goals and targets across the SDGs.

- As Local authority directly involved in projects of decentralized cooperation, particularly under the umbrella of our national network, United Cities of France, I would like to recall the extreme importance of city-to-city cooperation and city diplomacy. SDG16 it is also very linked to SDG17 that is in revue this year. We as a official from local and regional authorities we need to stand, clearly and without ambiguity against the war. We need to make our cities a "safe refugee" for all people escape war, climate catastrophes and all kind of violence by defending a world of open borders! Increase decentralized cooperation and partnerships all around the world in particular where National States closed all diplomatic relations,

where crisis make dialogue complicate…it is there that our city to city cooperation make sense…it is there that city diplomacy make sense and can have a real impact

- Advancing SDG 16 at all levels is a matter of urgency and a policy imperative of utmost importance. This is particularly true at local and regional levels, given urbanization trends, global backsliding or stagnation on SDG 16, and the degree to which national governments are struggling to leave no one behind. LRGs must therefore be empowered to deliver on more peaceful, just and inclusive societies, as a means of renewing the social contract and rebuilding trust

Monitoring SDG16

- While the capacity of LRGs, and the enabling environments they operate in, often constrain measurement of SDG 16, there are important advantages that LRGs have, such as proximity to local communities, as well as processes like the Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) and the Voluntary Subnational Reviews (VSRs). VLRs and VSRs can play an important role in supporting LRGs plan, execute, and review SDG 16 implementation, while offering a forum to deliberate on sensitive issues, transparently

- Local and regional actors, strategies, approaches to SDG 16 implementation are a necessity amidst receding public trust in many national governments and components of the multilateral system. LRGs must also be equipped with the necessary resources, capacity and authority to help bridge the SDG 16 gap in real terms.

Recommendations

1. **Utilize multilateral policy forums and frameworks such as the 2024 HLPF to amplify and empower the work of LRGs in advancing SDG 16, while strengthening collaboration with national governments, multilaterals, regional organizations, civil society and other stakeholders.**

2. **Empower multi-level governance as a blueprint for stronger institutions, access to justice and citizen buy-in in governance, with LRGs as partners in delivering on more peaceful, just and inclusive societies.**

3. **Increase decentralized cooperations projects and programs and encourage the city diplomacy everywhere**

4. **Prioritize and support the capacity of LRGs in collecting and disaggregating local data on SDG 16, while amplifying subnational reporting processes, such as VLRs and VSRs.**

5. **Support people-centred approaches in every aspect of SDG 16 localization, as well as open, non-discriminatory, inclusive and participatory practices.** From policy planning to budgeting, and implementation to monitoring and review, it is vital to deliberately put the needs, priorities and perspectives of people and the communities they live in at the core of action.

6. Improve enabling environments and sufficiently resource, empower and enable LRGs to further act on SDG 16 and its interlinkages.

7. **Protecting the commons:** housing, health, food systems, and new essential goods is vital to developing peaceful, more just and equitable societies, and overcoming the causes of urban violence.

8. **Promote and protect peace-building initiatives that are born from cities and territories,** channeling the conflicts that may arise in our streets and territories, to prevent them from turning into violence and thus enhance the belonging, creativity and cultural development that can save us from the destruction and meaninglessness that violence entails.