

PGA remarks to Opening of the 32nd Session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ)

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22 May 2023

(as delivered in Vienna)

Madame Chair,
Madame Executive Director,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

It is an honour to address you today, opening the 32nd session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

As we gather today, our world order is fraught by unprecedented and interlocking crises.

And in times like these, upholding the rule of law and protecting justice is paramount to our work as governments and international organizations.

This year's theme, to enhance the functioning of the criminal justice system, could not be timelier.

In New York, we will be convening a high-level debate on "Equal access to justice for all: advancing reforms for peaceful, just and inclusive societies", on the 15th of June. I would like to thank you in advance very much for your contribution to the success of this high-level event.

Equal access to justice for all is at the core of effective and inclusive justice systems. It is essential to maintaining the rule of law, to ensuring full enjoyment of human rights, and preventing human rights abuses, crime and conflict.

And the rule of law itself is critical to development and security.

It is the foundation of the social contract we have and we've drawn up both inside countries and among nations.

It is the backbone of our global structure.

SDGs cannot be achieved if the rule of law does not prevail.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Agenda 2030 is about transforming our world.

It is the single biggest undertaking of humanity in present time.

We are halfway through the time foreseen for the implementation, but way off track in achieving the targets.

The implementation of these goals requires consistent policies, transparent declarations and well-functioning institutions.

It requires consultation efforts, and resources in all countries, in all societies.

This can only be achieved if there is public trust and stability.

And that is based on the belief that our jointly accepted rules are respected by all.

If a society has to focus on a heavy conflict, it overrides the priorities and makes transformation highly improbable.

I am certain that quite a few roles, regulations, will have to be rethought and changed as we implement sustainable development because a sustainability transformation is about major changes.

They should be, they will be reflected in our laws and regulations, too, but it is important to preserve our adherence to the jointly established, adopted ratified laws; the transparent way of further developing our regulations; and consequently, to the notion of the rule of law and related accountability, including in the time of big changes and including in the time of deep crisis.

We often emphasize that the 17 SDGs are indivisible and inseparable.

SDG16 a good illustration of that.

On one hand it is a standalone goal in the 2030 Agenda, but on the other hand it is also an enabler of our entire endeavor called sustainable development or sustainability transformation.

And precisely because SDG16 is key to achieving our other goals in the 2030 Agenda, the CCPCJ is a cornerstone of the UN as a whole.

We are counting on you very much.

Most targets under Goal 16 fall within the remit of this Commission.

It is, it should be, a year of transformation.

Currently 16 negotiating processes are underway in the General Assembly.

They address issues that include health, global and regional conflict, financing for development, and of course, the upcoming summits – the SDG Summit, and the Summit of the Future.

As I mentioned, we already know how far off track we are on the 2030 Agenda.

We have all seen the disappointing results.

The SDG Summit in September will be the moment to introduce transformative solutions that can speed up the lagging implementation and make our further efforts credible.

Let me emphasize, credibility will be the key word in September.

For that, we need everybody on board.

We need you on board.

We need you to be bold.

To question what should be questioned, and to offer answers supporting the transparent transformation.

To spark action on SDG16.

To bring up game-changers.

And to “be the change you wish to see in the world”, as said by Mahatma Gandhi.

The political declaration of the SDG Summit should contain a roadmap tracing how to follow up and track our progress on the implementation of SDGs, including SDG16.

In these efforts, the CCPCJ can play two essential roles:

First, to promote more attention to and greater capacities for the achievement of Goal 16.

Second, to provide Member States with tools to measure progress towards meeting SDG 16 indicators.

And speaking about measurement: A priority of my Presidency this session has been to integrate science and evidence-based knowledge into the decision-making of the General Assembly.

I firmly believe that the impartiality of science gives it the potential to restore trust in and within the multilateral system.

States' decisions should always be driven by data and evidence on our progress towards tackling violence and corruption, enforcing and reinforcing justice.

Dear Colleagues,

CCPCJ plays a critical role in the implementation of the SDGs, and, ultimately, in building a world which is not only liveable, but also freer and fairer.

Let me once more express my appreciation for your work and wish you a fruitful and constructive session.

I thank you.