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71st session of the General Assembly

**Closing remarks by H.E. Peter Thomson,
“Achieving Peaceful, Just, and Inclusive Societies for Sustainable Development:
Converting words into action”**

Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to be here today, and the launch of the new Global Alliance for reporting progress on promoting peaceful, just, and inclusive societies.

I particularly congratulate the organizers, UNDP and the Member States Cape Verde, Mexico, Norway, State of Qatar, Sierra Leone and Tunisia.

It is encouraging to see so many people from around the globe coming together to take action on such an important topic.

Your participation today demonstrates what I have been conveying to world leaders in meetings all week – that the universal push that we need to transform our world through the SDGs, involves every country, every region, and every person.

I have made the principle objective of the 71st Session of the General Assembly, to be to drive a universal push for meaningful progress in implementing all 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Practical and innovative initiatives like the Global Alliance are key to driving, effective implementation.

I want to highlight three positive aspects of the new Global Alliance which have come through the discussion today:

First: on the universality of the 2030 Agenda, and the cross-cutting nature of SDG16. There can, after all, be no sustainable development without sustainable peace, justice, and rule of law.

Second: on the importance of innovative partnerships to achieving the SDGs, including the critical role of civil society and the private sector.

Third: on the need to focus our action on those most at risk of being left behind.

On universality, the 2030 Agenda makes clear that the SDGs apply to all countries alike. Given the complexity of implementing SDG16, this Goal has particular relevance.

No country can claim to have met all aspects of the SDGs, and all countries have something to learn from the experiences of others.

A commitment to inclusivity and participatory decision-making, and to building effective, accountable, and transparent institutions, is essential to implementing SDG16.

On innovative partnerships: The 2030 Agenda is clear that all actors have a key role to play in implementation. We must draw on the ideas, energy, and resources wherever they may be available – there is no monopoly on wisdom.

Civil society, the private sector and other actors have a key role to play. The collaborative nature of the Global Alliance, bringing together Member States with civil society and private sector counterparts is exactly the sort of partnership that is needed.

And finally, on the need to focus action to ensure that no one is left behind.

Words on paper or said in conference rooms in New York are not enough. Dedicated action is needed. That is why the Global Alliance's focus on reporting is so fundamental – not only to assisting Member States with their statistical reporting under the SDG indicators, but also in communicating stories of positive progress from the grassroots level.

Unless people have a clear understanding of what is needed to achieve peaceful, just and inclusive societies, implementation will always be incomplete.

Today's launch is an important first step to building a partnership for action on SDG16. I hope that the Global Alliance will help to provide the necessary tools to Member States to report on their progress.

In closing, I wish the co-sponsoring States, civil society, and private sector colleagues, associated with this initiative.

Thank you.