Press Release
Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies
From Words to Action: Implementing SDG 16+ in focus at International Forum in Georgia

TBILISI. 31 October 2017 – **Representatives from twenty-five countries gather in Tbilisi, Georgia, for an international Forum "From Words to Action: Implementing SDG 16+ at the local and national level." From October 31 to November 2, 2017, the Forum will discuss best policy and practice in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with the focus on SDG16 – Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies.**

"Georgia is honoured with the opportunity to host this important international event. This year marks the 25th anniversary of Georgia's membership in the United Nations. Over this period, despite all difficulties, we managed to transform our country from a UN humanitarian aid recipient to a model state that assumed the Open Government Partnership (OGP) chairmanship this year. Throughout the past decade, Georgia has achieved tangible progress in building strong state institutions and ensuring: a free civil society; free media; free markets; social cohesion, and the rule of law. The global sustainable development agenda provides us with the great prospect to consolidate our achievements, share success and learn from each other's experience", **Mikheil Janelidze, Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia**, said in his welcome remarks to the Forum participants.

Head of the United Nations in Georgia, Niels Scott, stressed the role of international partnership and cooperation in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

"The United Nations and UNDP globally lead in the support to states to strengthen democratic governance and sustain peace as part of reaching the Sustainable Development Goals. Our support helps build the capacity of governments to deliver, and provides them with essential tools for social engagement and effective delivery," Niels Scott said.

The 16+ Forum Annual Showcase in Tbilisi focuses on a range of topics to ensure that the full breadth of Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies is featured during the discussions. Six plenary sessions, organised throughout the Forum days, demonstrate the successes and challenges faced by the countries as they, in partnership with civil society, strive to improve governance, ensure rule of law, fight corruption, introduce innovation to public services, resolve conflict, and work towards sustaining peace.

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Some special attention at the Forum will be provided to Open Government Partnership (OGP) and to opening civic spaces for accelerating national development. The participants will discuss the experience of Georgia, the current OGP chair country, highlighting how the sustainable development agenda comes together with Open Government priorities. Forum participants will also visit the Ministry of Justice of Georgia, Public Service Hall and customs clearance zone, and will meet with representatives of the Georgian media and civil society.

Held in Tbilisi, this inaugural event is the first for the 16+ Forum, a multi-stakeholder platform, inclusive of Georgia, eight other member states, the g7+ and the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) as its Secretariat.

"On behalf of the 16+ Forum, we are incredibly grateful to all our partners and particularly to Georgia, as our host and as a global leader in advancing SDG 16+", noted **Bonian Golmohammadi, Secretary-General of WFUNA**.

The Showcase is hosted by the Government of Georgia – the Administration of the Government of Georgia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Justice – in partnership with WFUNA and co-organisers and supporters: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, Government of Sweden, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), GIZ, Austrian Development Agency (ADA), Tetra Tech ARD, Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI) and the United Nations Association of Georgia (UNAG).

The 16+ Forum was launched in New York, USA in 2016.