

**Message from Michael Møller, Director-General of the United Nations Office  
at Geneva, to the Dialogue on Just Governance at Asia Plateau, India.  
*February 2015***

Greetings from the United Nations Office at Geneva. The promotion of just governance is at the heart of our work for peace, rights and wellbeing. Initiatives of Change is a strong partner in these endeavours. I have personally benefited from the inspiring exchanges at the annual Caux conference and I am very pleased to be sending this message to you in India for your Dialogue on Just Governance.

The international community is faced with many challenges of extraordinary scale. In the context of flows of more than 60 million refugees and the spiraling humanitarian needs in conflict-ridden regions, the solidarity of the international community is under strain. The fragmentation of governance at global but also national and local levels continues to progress. The failure of our leaders and institutions to adequately address these trends is very worrying.

There is general agreement that the current government structures and instruments dating from 1945 do not properly address today's challenges. The Westphalian system with states as exclusive actors in international relations is outdated and under great strain. Multi-stakeholder processes with a variety of actors at all levels down to individuals have to be developed further.

We see many encouraging signs that give reason for optimism. Let me give you an example. With about seven million mobile phones in the world today, and thanks to other technologies, people have direct access to information and are better informed than ever. This enables individuals to mobilise and challenge their governments when their most basic needs are not addressed properly. Technology will further enable different actors to be heard.

To realise the opportunities that arise from more inclusive governance it is absolutely essential to restore mutual trust between people and trust in their institutions at local, national and global levels. The current trust deficit has to be overcome. For this to happen, justice and fairness need to be guiding principles.

There is a risk that inappropriate groups with access to resources continue to fill the leadership vacuum caused by a lack of vision, the fragmentation of our governance systems and rising income inequality. Whether this is to accumulate personal wealth and power or to spread extremist political views, it is all at the root of conflict that too often turns violent.

In response, a holistic approach to just governance is needed. The historic agreements on the sustainable development goals and their financing, on climate change and on disaster risk reduction of last year provide the frame within which we can fight inequalities and promote inclusive institutions. Their implementation, much of which will be assisted by actors located in the operational hub of the international system here in Geneva, is a shared responsibility.

It can only succeed when all of us – civil society, governments, parliaments, private sector, think-tanks, academia, and individuals like you and me – come together. A number of countries in Asia from Myanmar to Sri Lanka serve as examples that progress is possible when this happens. But the path is still a long one and I am glad that we can count on you and your joint efforts to promote just governance everywhere. I wish you a stimulating and successful conference.