

SDG 16 Conference
Panel 2: “The Business case for investment in peaceful, just and inclusive societies”
12 May 2025, 15:00-16:15, ECOSOC Chamber

OHCHR intervention from the floor

Rio Hada, Chief, Equality, Development and Rule of Law Section, New York Office

To fulfill the SDG16 and its promises of peace, justice and strong institutions, we must invest in effective systems.

Human rights are the foundation of governance and the rule of law. Political participation and access to information are rights, not privileges. They are essential for inclusive, accountable and sustainable development.

As panelists have highlighted, investing in these systems builds peace, stability and trust. Every dollar spent on inclusive, rights-based institutions yields measurable returns.

In The Gambia, support for justice institutions addressing gender-based violence and child marriage helped to restore public trust.

In Colombia, sustained rights-based investment not only kept the Truth Commission active, but also made peace process more inclusive, empowering marginalized communities and embedding human rights in peacebuilding.

This September, OHCHR, UNDP and UNODC will launch the third global SDG 16 progress report, highlighting the impact of rights-based interventions, data innovation, and digital inclusion.

However, progress is fragile without protection for human rights defenders, journalists, and trade unionists who face threats and harassment. Strong legal frameworks are essential to safeguard civic space.

National Human Rights Institutions play a crucial role in accountability, collecting data and monitoring human rights impacts. Access to information must be guaranteed, yet nearly 50 countries still lack legal frameworks for public access. Digital systems must be scaled up with safeguards to mitigate human rights risks.

We must broaden our approach to prevention by investing in economic and social rights and in the empowerment women in order to address inequality and foster peacebuilding.

In conclusion, when human rights are part of the solution, real progress is possible.

Thank you.