

Conference in preparation for HLPF 2019



# SDG 16 CONFERENCE

## Peace, Justice & Inclusive Societies



Organized by

the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)  
and the International Development Law Organization (IDLO)  
with the Government of Italy

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Rome, Italy

### Outcome: key messages and recommendations

The theme for the July 2019 High-level Political Forum (HLPF), under the auspices of ECOSOC, is 'Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality', and it will carry out an in-depth review of SDG 4 (education), SDG 8 (economic growth and jobs), SDG 10 (inequality), SDG 13 (climate change), and SDG 16 (peaceful societies, access to justice, effective and inclusive institutions), in addition to SDG 17, which is considered each year.

In preparation for the 2019 HLPF, the Division for Sustainable Development Goals of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA/DSDG) and the International Development Law Organization (IDLO), organized the Global Conference on SDG 16 implementation on 27 to 29 May 2019 in Rome, Italy. The Conference was hosted by the Government of Italy and benefitted from the substantive support of numerous partners. The conference programme and related background materials are at: <https://www.idlo.int/SDG16Conference2019>

The objective of the SDG 16 Conference was to take stock of global progress towards achieving SDG 16; share knowledge, success stories and good practices; identify particular areas of concern; and suggest ways forward in terms of policies, partnerships and coordinated actions at all levels.

The SDG 16 Conference brought together over 300 participants from national governments, United Nations entities, international organizations, the private sector, local governments, academia and civil society, including several youth participants. A Civil society day, organized prior to the Conference, produced the Rome Civil Society Declaration on SDG 16+, introduced at one of the plenary sessions.

In addition to plenary discussions, the SDG 16 Conference included three parallel workstreams:

- Workstream A: Peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development
- Workstream B: Ensuring access to justice and effective rule of law at all levels
- Workstream C: Effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

**Key messages included:**

- SDG 16 is not just a goal in itself but also a necessary enabler towards the implementation of much of the 2030 Agenda. The goal is universal and efforts are needed for its implementation and follow up in developing and developed countries. Illicit flows across countries - including finances, arms and people- also need to be countered.
- 'Good laws make good economies': adherence to the principles and values underlying SDG 16 support greater confidence, and investment in economies.
- Given its pivotal role, it is concerning that progress towards SDG 16 is uneven and millions continue to be deprived of security, rights and opportunities. Attacks on civil society are also holding back broader development progress.
- Peaceful societies and good governance are aims in themselves, and also catalysts for achieving many other targets: - conflict, violence and fragility are among the biggest obstacles to achievement of the SDGs. At the same time, civil wars and internal conflict are often grounded in inequality, injustice and mismanagement of natural resources. The SDGs serve to guide investments in human capital development, poverty eradication, inequality reduction and boosting inclusion, thus helping reduce bases for conflict. In countries and regions recovering from conflict, key aspects include the role of reconciliation, transitional justice, the legacy of unresolved missing-persons, the well-being of displaced people, human rights, conflict-sensitivity, fragility and prevention.
- Tackling the nexus between insecurity, injustice and inequality is necessary to ensure that interrelated peacebuilding and sustainable development objectives underlying SDG 16 are pursued in mutually reinforcing way. Establishing mechanisms for cross-sectoral coordination is key to addressing the interdependence between SDG 16 components, and creating opportunities for integrated outcomes promoting peace, justice and inclusion.
- Access to justice empowers the poor and marginalized to claim their rights -at the same time, people battle multiple barriers towards this. 'Leaving no one behind' can be an entry point for reviewing progress on SDG 16, covering cross-cutting issues, and reaching the furthest behind first, including those threatened by violence, injustice and exclusion. This is not only about identifying relevant groups, but determining and addressing the root causes, structural issues and systematic patterns of exclusion.
- Children are, by definition, the most vulnerable and need special attention as regards inclusion in terms of access to services, and prevention in terms of exposure to violence and exploitation. This could mean differentiated approaches to children from different groups. Youth, too, should not be treated as a homogeneous group and decision-making on youth-related policies and programmes should involve their direct participation.
- Women and girls are central to delivering on the SDGs, yet often are also among the furthest behind in terms of access to justice, while also being at the receiving end of violence, discrimination and non-inclusive institutions and processes.
- In institutional settings, legislation is important but seldom sufficient. with potential gaps between enactment, implementation and enforcement needing to be overcome. Effective institutions need to be guided by the trio of transparency, accountability and anticorruption measures. Other institutional challenges include those related to working effectively across silos and becoming more inclusive and accountable. Corruption and mismanagement erode people's confidence in their governments. These must be resolved not just to deliver results but also to strengthen trust and promote stable societies.

- Transparency, together with open government and right to information principles, was characterized as a key catalyst of effective institutions, particularly in public finance, taxation and budgetary arenas as well as in monitoring and evaluation of public policies, including audits.
- SDG 16 is considered one of the most difficult SDGs to monitor. Challenges include the complexity and evolving nature of the issues to measure, their political sensitivity and the fact that traditionally National Statistical Offices (NSOs) have not focused on SDG 16 related issues.
- Data (official and non-official) already exist and need to be put at the service of SDG implementation. At the same time, there continues to be an explosion in the availability of data from different sources, both public and private and applications to SDG 16 and related goals are being developed in specific contexts.

**Key recommendations** included:

- Countries need to increase investments in peace, dialogue and reconciliation as a foundation for achieving sustainable development. In particular, women should be seen as crucial peace-builders. Governments must also increase political commitment and financial resources behind efforts to reform institutions and systems to make them more accessible, affordable and accountable to citizens.
- The dialogue process is a central part of building trust towards delivering these results and must itself be seen as trust-worthy. Investing time and resources in an inclusive design that was sensitive to cultural and language differences; active convening to engage skeptical or non-engaged groups, and the need for being explicit about objectives were all viewed as important to establish trust. Participants also identified several enabling factors and good practices including freedom of expression, respect for equal participation, linkages with other processes; as well as structural factors such as non-violence and stability.
- A life-time based approach to preventing and ending violence is needed, and such approach should include education for a culture of peace and non-violence, as well as equipping children and youth with conflict resolution and life skills.
- There is a need to build local and national capacities in countries to ensure security forces are well trained and operate within a normative human rights framework.
- Action is needed to preserve the space of civil society, amplify the voice of those defending human rights and the rule of law, foster civic participation, and safeguard public freedoms.
- Ensuring access to justice for all and rule of law requires mobilizing greater political support, making a case for increased investment – including through the business case - being more effective about how we use existing resources, including through the use of inclusive innovations. Solutions must be people-centred – for example, mobile courts and community-based dispute solving systems can facilitate access to justice and courts. Partnerships and programmes can expand coverage by free legal aid. Technology based innovations can also help but must be managed so as to not exacerbate inequalities.
- Actions could focus on access to justice and rule of law interventions on the most vulnerable groups. There is a need to engage and consider alternative forms of dispute resolutions, including customary justice and out of court mechanisms, while seeking to align them with human rights standards.
- Access to justice needs to be considered in a wider sense – access to a quality justice system which is both efficient and independent, therefore inspiring trust among individuals. This can

work together with empowering people through education and sharing of knowledge on rights and how to enforce them, to secure access to justice There is a need to find ways to regularly measure the actual performance of a justice system, to create an evidence-base for reform efforts and monitor progress achieved.

- Prioritizing women’s access to justice is a prerequisite and enabler to achieving all SDGs. All stakeholders should engage strategically to enhance women’s access to justice and ensure that all who are affected by various forms of inequalities have access to services.
- Empowering those left furthest behind and particularly women and girls as key actors of development, is essential. However, empowering individuals to advocate for their rights requires that they are protected and not subject to threats and harassment.
- Children and youth should be brought into the ongoing dialogue among stakeholders with regards to the implementation of Goal 16. Specific means and platforms are needed to involve youth and to effectively integrate youth issues into SDG implementation.
- Specific measures are required to safeguard children, who are by definition the most vulnerable, with some more vulnerable than others - refugee children, survivors of violence and sexual exploitation, and children without legal identity.
- Increased efforts are needed to achieve the target on non-discrimination and discriminatory laws, especially in the context of populations whose conduct is stigmatized and/or criminalized, such as drug users and sex workers.
- Due to the transnational and cross-border nature of many challenges, there is a need for international cooperation among judicial and law enforcement systems, starting with information sharing. Information sharing should be part to coordinated policy formulation and action, especially in areas linked to organized crime, illicit flows and corruption. While there is a considerable focus on reducing the supply of illicit firearms and ammunition, the challenge is to develop policies and interventions that would aim at reducing the demand of arms and ammunition as well.
- Member States should also accelerate efforts to ratify, comply with, and implement existing international legal frameworks like the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), including its three protocols, the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and the Firearms Protocol, with particular emphasis on sustainable development.
- Capacity deficits need to be addressed in many areas and across many actors: for public sector workers these often lie in areas such as cross-sectoral policy formulation and implementation (‘teaching silos to dance’); financing and partnerships; capacity on science and technology; strengthening monitoring and review. Such efforts need to be accompanied by implementing institutional reforms as well.
- Human resource development and continuous training of government officials is needed to enable and empower them to effectively implement the full scope of the SDGs. Additionally, empowerment of local governments is also vital provided that real-time collaboration between national and subnational authorities is ensured. Education on human rights is also key as is the role of public administration schools and institutes.
- Public participation and engagement were emphasized regarding citizen involvement in comprehensive and quality service delivery and decision-making, from the formulation and design to implementation, monitoring and evaluation phases.

- There is a need for increased transparency and accountability and a need to invest in open governments and open parliaments. There is a need to create enabling environments that foster participation and partnerships, including through using tools and approaches that facilitate stronger civic space for journalists, trade unionists, and human rights advocates.
- The ECOSOC-endorsed “Principles of effective governance for sustainable development”, developed by the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA), provide a framework for strengthening governance in a manner that is consistent with the 2030 Agenda.
- SDG audits encompass not only financial readiness but also overall performance assessment per SDG and SDG target was underscored. Although recommendatory in nature, periodicity of audits combined with their oversight function, exercised together with institutions such as parliaments, public account committees and national human right institutions, were listed among effective measures to enhance the viability and impact of audits on effective SDG implementation.
- Increased attention should be given to target 16.8 on broadening the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance. There is a need to enhance the proportion of membership from developing countries across a range of international organizations, as well as the proportion of voting rights each country is allocated across such organizations.
- Civil society involvement in data collection and indicators, jointly with government institutions, can contribute to reliable, good quality comparable data. Collaboration with the private sector also needs to be stepped up, and governments could focus on finding incentives for private sector partners to collaborate in data gathering for the SDGs and ensure long-term solutions.
- Methodologies for data collection on SDG 16 should be harmonized. In this regard, the time has come to move beyond the traditional methodologies and to use available data and collect new data in creative and innovative ways. In many cases data already exists in multiple domains but it is not being utilized. There is also the potential to develop innovative data collection tools that consider ways to include youth, refugees and other vulnerable groups.
- NSOs need assistance particularly in overcoming three challenges:
  - maintaining independence and autonomy to uphold the impartiality of statistics;
  - overcoming budgetary constraints and investing in evidence-based policymaking; and
  - ensuring that the data is collected using robust, inclusive methodologies that meet international standards. In this context mention was made of the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS) developed by UNODC and adopted by both, the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and criminal justice and the UN Statistical Commission.
- While new data sources should be used, privacy questions must also be addressed. Entities gathering data must evaluate whether there is a risk that the information may be used against people or vulnerable groups. At the same time innovative approaches at putting data to work must be explored. There is a need for having a human-rights based approach when collecting data on SDG 16.
- Enhancement of environmental governance and sustainable management of natural resources is crucial and should be done in consultation with local communities. There is an urgent need to combat climate change which is often interlinked with peace and security.
- Ensuring synergies between the concluding observations and recommendations of human rights mechanisms, such as the treaty bodies, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), and special procedures on the one hand, and the Voluntary National Reports (VNRs) on the other can strengthen implementation.

## Key points by session

### **High-level roundtable: SDG 16 and the transformational vision of the 2030 Agenda** - SDG 16 as an enabler for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda

- Peaceful societies, rule of law and inclusive and effective institutions are aims in themselves but also catalysts for achieving many other SDG targets.
- Conflict, violence and fragility are among the biggest obstacles to achievement of the SDGs. Conflicts are often grounded in inequalities, unfairness in justice delivery, human rights abuse legacy, ignoring of informal justice mechanisms and mismanagement of natural resources. The SDGs serve as a good framework for investments in human capital development, education, health care and poverty reduction and for ensuring inclusion.
- Access to justice empowers the poor and marginalized to claim their rights – for instance access to land improves food security.
- Corruption and mismanagement erode people’s confidence in their Governments.
- There is a need to consider customary informal institutions and dispute resolution mechanisms for service delivery for people, including small claims courts.
- People battle a myriad of barriers to access justice, including physical and geographic accessibility challenges. Mobile courts and community-based dispute resolution systems can facilitate access to justice.
- Security, political stability and economic progress are all dependent on justice.
- Universality of the 2030 Agenda, including SDG 16, should be upheld, and issues such as illicit financial flows, illicit arms flows, and corruption demand more attention from all countries.
- Providing access to justice demands a committed government that abides by human rights obligations and the constitution.
- Accessible and effective justice, particularly an independent judiciary, is the basis for peace, security, economic development and political stability.
- People’s participation and ownership allows for the support and confidence in institutions.
- Recognition of challenges in collecting and reporting on statistical data – even countries with data rely on a variety of sources with varying methodologies. Importance of considering innovation and data towards SDG 16 implementation.
- Preventive perspective also important – violent extremism and conflict can also be driven grievances of exclusion and marginalization.

### **High-level roundtable: SDG 16 in the context of leaving no one behind** - Leaving no one behind as an entry point for reviewing progress on SDG 16, cross-cutting issues, and reaching the furthest behind first, including those threatened by violence, injustice and exclusion

- Implementing SDG 16 with a focus of leaving no one behind is not only about identifying relevant groups that face exclusion, but determining and addressing inequalities and other root causes, structural issues and patterns of exclusion that have led to pervasive exclusions.
- Justice is not a luxury but a basic human right.
- The law is an important instrument to promote and advance social justice.
- While children are, by definition, the most vulnerable, they have special rights and require access to justice and rule of law. Some children are more vulnerable than others and deserve

primary focus for assistance, including, refugee children, survivors of violence and sexual abuse and exploitation.

- Many children have no legal identity, which is a risk factor for trafficking or exclusion from public services.
- A focus on prevention of violence against children is an accelerator of progress on all other SDGs.
- Youth should not be treated as a homogeneous group, or as a group at risk of reverting to violence, and decision-making on youth-related policies and programmes should involve direct participation of youth for youth. Empowering individuals to advocate rights, cannot be done without safety.
- As referred to Amartya Sen's definitions of the relationship between justice and development: 1) justice is of instrumental value to development; 2) justice is a constitutive element of development and one of the criteria by which development is judged; 3) meaning of development is constructed by guaranteeing conditions of justice.
- Law should not be an instrument of social repression, but an instrument to solve peoples' problems and conflicts in non-violent ways. This will require refocusing, and certainly additional investment.
- Accountability is key. If wounds of past abuses are not healed, there will not be peace.
- Corruption undermines people's perception of justice and judicial integrity is an imperative for just societies.
- There is a need to ensure right to participate and civic space. SDG 16 national and local implementation should be informed by Human Rights Commission guidelines on the right to participation in public affairs.

**Plenary roundtable: Reporting on SDG 16: Data gaps, challenges and opportunities** - Exchange of lessons learned from national monitoring, reporting, and follow-up on SDG16

- SDG 16 is considered one of the most difficult SDGs to monitor. Challenges include the complexity and evolving nature of the issues to measure, their political sensitivity and the fact that traditionally National Statistical Offices (NSOs) have not focused on SDG 16 related issues.
- As the main producer of data and statistics, NSOs have the capability and knowledge to accurately measure SDG 16 targets, and to apply standard methodologies. As coordinators of a national monitoring system, NSOs have the responsibility to liaise with various stakeholders to ensure that all the data sources available are captured and recorded to fill in existing data gaps, ensuring that data and analyses ultimately feed into evidence-based policies and programmes.
- NSOs need assistance particularly in overcoming three challenges:
  - (i) maintaining independence and autonomy to uphold the impartiality of statistics;
  - (ii) overcoming budgetary constraints and investing in evidence-based policymaking; and
  - (iii) ensuring that the data is collected using robust, inclusive methodologies that meet international standards.
- In this context mention was made to the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS) developed by UNODC and adopted by both, the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and criminal justice and the UN Statistical Commission.
- For SDG 16 indicators on which official data collected by NSOs themselves is not available, NSOs should look towards integrating data from other sources (civil society, academia, research organizations, private sector etc.). These sources are usually readily available in the public domain

and upon review, could be brought into the folds of the National Statistical Systems to ensure that all available and relevant sources are used to fill existing data gaps and produce actionable analyses.

- Collaboration with the private sector could fill crucial data gaps. In forging partnerships with the private sector, having a clear vision, and clearly defined expectations would ensure that both the private sector, and the international or government entities can engage in a mutually beneficial relationship.
- Academia can pilot innovative methodologies such as data mining and scraping to produce meaningful analyses. Engaging with academia can therefore accelerate progress in filling data gaps and coming up with robust methodologies that are applicable to specific contexts.
- While new data sources should be used, privacy questions must be addressed. Entities gathering data must evaluate whether there is a risk that the information may be used against people or vulnerable groups. At the same time, it is also important to ensure that private sector uses and shares data ethically.
- Peace, justice and inclusion are multidimensional concepts, which require a multitude of measurements for their monitoring, beyond the limited number of existing Global SDG 16 indicators. Continuing a robust parallel discourse on expanding and improving data, indicators and methodologies is important to maintain a check and balance on SDG implementation and support state efforts. At the same time, however, priority of Member States should be to first focus on the existing indicators and ensure data comparability so that lessons can be learned and shared to inform evidence- based policymaking at the local, national, regional and international levels.
- Addressing corruption is essential for achieving SDG 16 and 2030 Agenda as a whole. There is a need for a sound, clear and universal definition of corruption for analytical purposes, and for adopting methodologies that are sensitive to contexts, and are based on analysing facts rather than perceptions.
- Innovative methodologies and sources and multi-stakeholder partnerships is the way forward to strengthen national statistical systems and bring about a data revolution. The UN should adopt an open innovation philosophy and engage in innovative actions such as hackathons to accelerate progress on Goal 16.

#### **Plenary roundtable: Strategies for accelerating broad and inclusive implementation of SDG 16 -**

Drawing together cross-cutting themes, overlapping issues

- The HLPF in July and the SDG Summit, in September 2019 will provide a platform for country leaders to mobilize further actions to accelerate implementation, provide solutions and strengthen commitments.
- Importance of multi-stakeholder approach, involving the government at the national and subnational level, academia, business and philanthropy, including women, children and the media.
- Recognized role of parliament's as well as inter-sectoral collaboration within governments for SDG 16 implementation.



- Need to enhance justice infrastructures, through coordination, collaboration and communication among various actors, and also by introducing innovative systems of justice administration, including ICT systems that aim to alleviate judicial backlog.
- Gender mainstreaming should be a priority on SDG 16 implementation.
- Importance of linking the SDGs agenda with the open-government agenda. Important to enhance the capacity of civil society to enter into the political process and provide input in the policy-making process. Importance of reflecting on the most appropriate mechanisms for inclusion and participation, including criteria for ensuring meaningful stakeholder consultation processes and coordination with local governments.
- Localization is an area for acceleration which requires more thinking about using local environments for fostering more ambitious and innovative approaches.
- Importance of ensuring the inclusion and protection of the voice of civil society, social and grassroots movements and dissenting voices and of ensuring civic spaces for engaging in participatory dialogue and discussion. International organizations and agencies have a role to play in supporting the creation of those spaces for inclusion to allow for systemic changes and foster the nexus between SDGs implementation and the inclusion of different voices.
- Role of national human rights institutions (NHRI) in monitoring, ensuring inclusion and participation, as well as in the domain of access to justice. These institutions can bridge the link between sustainable development and human rights.

#### **Roundtable: Addressing capacity needs and gaps towards SDG 16 implementation and follow up**

- Importance of digitalization for the provision of public services. Tools need to be widespread and diffused and systems harmonized as part of public administration reform.
- Need to update skills of public servants, increasing capacity on science and technology and management focus areas.
- Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, some areas have been demanding specific support on capacity building including: Policy formulation; Financing and mobilization of domestic and private resources; Strengthening monitoring and review.
- Capacity building on SDG implementation also demands changing the culture and implementing institutional reforms in parallel.
- Capacity building and awareness raising on the SDGs as interlinked.
- Importance of devising strategies to reach out and strengthen the capacity of the vulnerable.
- Recognition of the importance of the sub-national level and community engagement and for specific capacity building strategies to be developed.

## Session A1: Ending and Preventing Violence: Advancing Peace and Sustainable Development as Mutually Reinforcing Processes

- Countries need to increase investments in peace, inclusive dialogue and reconciliation as a foundation for achieving sustainable development. Efforts should also focus on the root causes and drivers of crime and violence, and the important role of women peacebuilders was noted.
- Inclusive and effective institutions are important for all SDGs, but are particularly important for promoting peaceful societies and increase the legitimacy of and trust in governments.
- Inclusive dialogues on political issues, priorities, policies, laws and difficult issues, such as natural resources and the security sector, also at sub-national level, are important.
- A lifelong approach to preventing and ending violence is needed, and such an approach should include education for a culture of peace and non-violence, as well as equip children and youth with conflict resolution and life skills.
- Investing in children and youth in particular in evidence-based prevention of violence against children was emphasized. Children and youth should be brought into the ongoing dialogue among stakeholders with regards to the implementation of actions towards reaching Goal 16.
- Just, peaceful and inclusive societies can't be achieved if violence against children and women isn't tackled through a multi-sectoral and comprehensive approach. Existing data shows the extent and magnitude of the problem, particularly that violence against children is widespread and hidden (1 of 10 girls will experience violence before 18 and every 5 minutes a child dies out of violence).
- It was also noted that many more people died as a result of crime and inter-personal violence than as a result of violent conflict, therefore prevention using holistic and comprehensive approaches, such as the INSPIRE technical package which promotes a set of multisectoral evidence-based interventions for the prevention of violence against children, was welcomed by a few speakers.
- Evidence-based violence research on efficient prevention strategies on reducing violence in urban areas are needed. Findings should also be more widely shared with political leaders, so they can take concerted and well-informed action.
- More reliable data is needed, particularly in fragile states. It was further recommended that there was a pressing need to address data, information and analysis gaps related to measuring complex factors, such as social cohesion, and that data needed to be disaggregated in a manner that ensures leaving no one behind. Lack of data in remote conflict afflicted areas could be gathered through more fully realizing the potential of new technologies to gather real time data.
- There is currently a gap in monitoring informal systems and criminal activities, such as organized crime, or illicit flows, including illicit trafficking of cultural objects, which needs to be addressed. The establishment of registries of beneficial ownership of companies to fight illicit financial flows was recommended.
- Leaving no one behind is a key measure to the success of the 2030 Agenda, and there is a pressing need to identify those who are left behind furthest. In particular, this includes those who are in contact with the criminal justice system and in prison without fair access to justice.
- There is a need to build local national capacities in countries to ensure security forces are well trained and operate within a normative human rights framework.

- Enhancement of environmental governance and sustainable management of natural resources is crucial and should be done in consultation with local communities. There is an urgent need to combat climate change which is often interlinked with peace and security.
- Attacks on cultural heritage have been used to fund terrorism, organized crime and money laundering. But culture is also important for peace and reconciliation between and among countries. There is a need to protect all forms of cultural heritage and promote respect for cultural diversity to foster inclusive, peaceful and just societies.
- Partnerships to achieve SDG16 were highlighted, in particular those between academia and governments and between governments and communities. Peacebuilding actors, such as the Peacebuilding Fund, also contribute to the SDGs.

**Session A2: Accelerating progress on peaceful, just and inclusive societies: SDG 16 implementation and the path towards leaving no-one behind**

- Interventions from the speakers addressed a variety of contexts – including both post-conflict and currently conflict-affected – and covered a number of topics, focusing on what are the key challenges of achieving SDG 16 with a focus on the role of reconciliation, transitional justice, human rights, conflict-sensitivity and prevention.
- Fragility is a major obstacle to sustainable development. It is not just about capacity development, but it is also about the oversight, accountability and effectiveness of the security sector.
- Political will – recognized as an essential underpinning to any endeavor to achieve SDG 16 – is not something that can be switched on at will, and experiences from countries indicate that it needs to be built over time. Political will also depends on many different conditions and actors in the country, it can be helped or improved by the international community. The importance of building coalitions among a range of actors, including less obvious, against vested interests was emphasized.
- Even in a post-conflict context, war is still the biggest challenge, and presents major inter-generational risks and consequences. There are some key challenges associated with successful reconciliation, including: insufficient justice for victims; the legacy of unresolved missing persons (leaving major emotional and psychological trauma for families); ensuring displaced people have access to social protection, property, jobs and respect for individual rights; and nationalism.
- Societies with pronounced horizontal inequalities are particularly at risk of conflict outbreak and atrocity crimes, and addressing these kinds of inequalities is one of the primary tasks of prevention.
- Reconciliation takes time and needs adequate and sustained support, it doesn't happen overnight. To this end, it must be regarded as a long-term process.
- All speakers commented on the serious and sometimes ignored risk of latency of conflict, for different reasons and according to the nature of different contexts. It was generally noted that the danger of a revival of conflict needs to be better recognized, and one speaker referred to the ongoing “taste of frozen conflict”.

- security sector reform (SSR) is not just about capacity building of the security forces, but it is also about oversight, accountable and effective security sector. *Pathways for Peace* report has shown that lack of security sector oversight and access to justice can be one of the causes of violent conflict.
- The participation of victims in the reconciliation process as an essential and critical key component was highlighted by numerous speakers. Without this the risk of conflict re-emerging is exacerbated and heightened.
- Regarding how to deal with the legacy of human rights crimes and war, there is a need to acknowledge the suffering of the people, to use traditional cultural values and principles to promote forgiveness where there is recognition of wrongdoing, and to support activities to heal wounds, including with respect to people who remain missing.
- Human rights are fundamental, and conflict risks can only be reduced when respect for human rights is ensured. To this end, the role of national human rights institutions is critical.
- In terms of security sector reform (SSR), local ownership is critical so that populations regard security services as being for them as opposed to being imposed from above or outside. Security sector reforms also need to focus on more than just rule of law, and should include multi-sectoral approaches, for example urban planning perspectives in terms of designing spaces that are perceived as functionally safe.
- Focus on corruption is important as it has a catalytic effect on violence, and the perceptions of populations towards institutions at all levels can easily feed feelings of marginalization and exclusion. This implies a reform of the administration of justice, in terms of recruitment, transparency in hiring, an anti-corruption agency, and recognition of parallel justice systems (e.g. national human rights councils).
- Concerning the responsibility to protect (R2P), there is often much confusion: state has the responsibility to prevent crimes from occurring (international community not primary responder).
- The obligation to “do no harm” was stressed, as sometimes development aid increases the risks of atrocity crimes, and context- and conflict-sensitivity is key. Responsibility to protect should also apply to refugees and foreign citizens on countries’ territory.

### **Session A3: Promoting Dialogue and Reducing Insecurity**

- A multiplicity of different definitions of dialogue could be elaborated, with a range of different objectives – ranging from the reaching of political agreements; changing of individual’s mindsets; and resolution of root causes of conflict. Shared understanding emerged that intercultural dialogue (encounter) necessitates the bringing together of individuals and communities, across real or perceived differences, to build understanding and respect, leading to transformative changes in attitudes, values and behaviors.
- Developing trust among participants in dialogue processes, and towards the process itself, is crucial as an essential factor for rendering them effective. The importance of active conveners and positive role models in engaging skeptical or non-engaged groups in dialogue processes was highlighted, as was the centrality of being explicit about the objectives of dialogue processes for enhancing participant trust. Defining ‘success’ through clear milestones and outcomes is also critical to ensure that momentum is not lost and to avoid dialogue fatigue.

- The importance of inclusive design for dialogue processes was stressed by several participants, drawing on specific in-country examples where a lack of cultural awareness, or consideration of the potential sensitivity of language, caused challenges to the subsequent success of dialogue activities. The need to invest time and resources in inclusive design processes for effective dialogue processes was strongly underlined to build trust in the dialogue process itself.
- Specific enabling factors are needed to render dialogue processes effective. These include structural factors, such as non-violence and stability; freedom of expression; governance and citizenship; horizontal equality; and social cohesion. A number of principles, values and skills were also mentioned, including the good management of dialogue processes; partnerships and linkages with other processes; inclusion and representation; the development of skills and competences for dialogue; and respect for equal participation.
- The centrality of inclusion and representation for rendering dialogue processes effective was underlined by several of the participants. The need to root the design of dialogue processes in local contexts, thereby ensuring that meaningful vectors of inclusion and representation are identified, was stressed by several participants. Better analysis is needed to achieve these aims.
- Importance of using role models and catalysts to reach non-engaged populations, as well as active efforts to directly reach out to non-included populations, was stressed as important for realizing the mantra of 'leaving no one behind' in this context.
- The importance of engaging youth in dialogue processes was underlined by several participants. Intercultural skills are best developed from a young age, and young people often bear the consequences of inter-community conflict and distrust, the need for early support for young people to be active agents within dialogue processes was stressed.
- Better support must be provided for those who enable dialogue processes, in particular youth, volunteers and civil society organizations, to ensure that the efforts are sustainable.
- More must be understood about how to safeguard participants in inclusive dialogue processes, particularly those in transitional or post-conflict environments.
- More must be done to generate, disseminate and mobilize better data on the conditions that enable effective dialogue in order to increase political and financial commitment towards it. A promising initiative in this regard is the efforts being undertaken by UNESCO, in partnership with the Institute for Economics and Peace, to measure the enabling environment and effectiveness of intercultural dialogue for cohesion, inclusion and peace.
- The need for investment in new tools for measurement was underlined, particularly to ensure effective allocation of limited resources, and prioritization of the most effective interventions to strengthen the environment for effective dialogue at the local-level.

### **Session B1: Sustainable Development through access to justice and the rule of law**

- The burden of injustice is not equally distributed. There is a very strong need to focus on those who have been left behind. Accordingly, justice interventions and rule of law interventions need to take a focused approach to ensure that those left behind are given a proper chance to understand their rights and how to enforce them by gaining access to justice and have a voice in the dialogue around accessing justice and local justice reforms.

- Governments, UN entities and other international organization, as well as civil society, academia and the private sector should commit to jointly strengthen people-centred, equal access to justice for all, prevention of crime and violence including in conflict and post-conflict situations, and protection of marginalized groups, based on international standards and good practices, and tailored to the needs of specific national/community contexts.
- It is important to consider access to justice in a wider sense – access to a quality justice system which is both efficient and independent. In many countries individuals do not have trust in justice systems that they consider dysfunctional or corrupt. There is a need to find ways to regularly measure the actual performance of a justice system, to create an evidence-base for reform efforts and monitor progress achieved.
- It can be also useful to make the business case for justice – to identify and quantify the economic benefits of a well-functioning, efficient justice process. Unmet legal needs have a high financial cost. In the long term, resources spent on prevention measures have a more sustainable positive impact than investment in law enforcement.
- Empowering people through education and sharing of knowledge on their rights and how to enforce them is crucial to ensure equal access to justice – including civil, political, economic and social rights.
- Prioritizing women’s access to justice is a prerequisite and enabler to achieving all SDGs. All stakeholders should engage strategically to enhance women’s access to justice and ensure that all who are affected by various forms of inequalities have access to services.
- With a third of the world population being children (under the age of 18), prevention of violence against children and their access to justice is a priority for implementing the 2030 Agenda in its entirety.
- All stakeholders should invest in access to justice for children to realize their special rights and respond to their developmental needs. Such efforts should be integrated from the outset in all access to justice and rule of law programmes and strategies, and not be added at the end of the process. Stakeholders should prioritize youth participation and inclusion, in particular of marginalized youth, to prevent human rights abuses and radicalization to violence and violent extremism.
- All stakeholders should ensure that civil society is given space to increase meaningful participation in access to justice and rule of law processes.
- Those who engage in civic activities, including human rights defenders, should be protected from violence and any action that restricts their work, including through the strengthening of oversight mechanisms such as national Human Rights Commissions.
- Public confidence in the judicial system and the moral authority and integrity of the judiciary is of the utmost importance in a modern democratic society. Implementing measures for judicial integrity, as well as surveys of public perception and trust are important. Additionally, communication strategies to strengthen transparency and public confidence in the judiciary based on experiences of the judges and prosecutors themselves is an integral part of the rule of law.
- The need for independence of the judiciary has to be balanced with mechanisms to ensure accountability. In order to be a driver for reform, bodies such as high judicial councils have to operate under clearly defined rules, to prevent corruption.
- Innovation and creative thinking should be the cornerstone in the design of strategies and actions to move forward on achieving SDG 16 in a conscious approach. Innovation is key to

address unmet justice needs, including through alternative forms of dispute resolution, customary justice and out of court mechanisms, use of paralegals, peer legal support through use of mobile phones and other new technology, while ensuring not to create new injustices.

- Partnerships for access to justice will be crucial, including public-private partnership, partnership with bar associations, pro bono and legal aid. Involvement of the private sector can harness resources and ideas.
- People-centric solutions are needed when utilizing new technology and innovation, as this can alienate wide sectors of the population and produce unexpected negative results. Technology must be inclusive and focused on the most vulnerable, otherwise it risks exacerbating inequalities.
- To inform evidence-based policymaking and allocation of funding, statistical agencies and other relevant stakeholders should periodically collect and analyze data in an inclusive manner, involving communities, and provide access to this data to the citizens based on their right to information.
- States should provide justice actors, including the judiciary, public prosecution, and legal aid providers with an adequate budget, build their capacity through training, and ensure independent appointment of public officials, anchored in the constitution. The legal profession should represent the population in its diversity, including women and marginalized groups.

## **Session B2: Promoting equality and protecting fundamental freedoms**

- There are setbacks in the realization of justice, rule of law and basic human rights, manifesting in regression on gender equality and women's rights, attacks on human rights defenders, infringement of independence of the judiciary, and violence against children and vulnerable groups. A countervailing trend is that SDG 16 is increasingly being seen as an opportunity to empower and give voice to the most vulnerable and marginalized.
- More attention is needed to the intersectionality of multiple forms of inequality and discrimination that are experienced by vulnerable groups.
- Cultivating access to justice can be achieved through innovative measures that focus on integrated justice centres where information on rights and legal matters can also be disseminated. Vulnerable communities can benefit from mobile courts that can be monitored for their efficiency and accountability.
- Discussions on access to justice should not shy away from the question of quality of justice: what type of justice are we looking at? Is it respectful of human rights?
- To ensure truly equal access to justice, there is a need to enhance the provision of free legal aid services to all. This should cover the formal justice system and apply to criminal, civil and administrative legal settings, and ideally include mechanisms such as alternative dispute resolution.
- The 2030 Agenda and the SDGs are anchored in the international human rights standards. Therefore, there is a great opportunity for advancing the human rights agenda together with sustainable development. Human rights mechanisms can be a key resource and reference point

for implementation of SDGs: Treaty bodies, special procedures, Universal Periodic Reviews (UPRs), and regional and domestic mechanisms can all support implementation.

- The SDGs emphasize inclusiveness, reflecting the universality of human rights. Inclusivity can be achieved through the achievement of fundamental freedoms of assembly and association and of expression.
- National human rights institutions can provide valuable contributions to the preparation of voluntary national reports (VNRs).

### **Session B3: Leveraging laws and policies to combat corruption, illicit flows, and organized crime**

- Corruption, organized crime and illicit financial flows have a devastating impact on the institutional integrity and economic indicators of countries. There is a need for an integrated approach that includes prevention and control and addresses different targets of SDG 16 for breaking the vicious circle between organized crime, corruption and illicit financial flows state fragility.
- Due to the transnational and cross-border nature of these challenges, there is a need for international responses. Member States were encouraged to double their efforts to ratify, comply with and implement the existing international legal frameworks like the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), including its three protocols, the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and the Firearms Protocol, with particular emphasis on sustainable development.
- Another crucial area is information generation and sharing for financial investigations (domestic and international); as well as for policy formulation in areas linked to organized crime, illicit flows and corruption.
- On international cooperation, advantages of engaging in Camden -style asset recovery networks like ARIN-SA and ARIN-EA for exchange of vital information was stressed. Resolution 6/3 of the Conference of State Parties on fostering effective asset recovery identifies key principles and actions to be taken by countries and the international community towards this end.
- Illicit arms flows have a transnational as well as a national dimension, which call for solutions that address both these dimensions equally. Further, while there is a considerable focus on reducing the supply of illicit firearms and ammunition, the challenge is to develop policies and interventions that would aim at reducing the demand of arms and ammunition as well.
- There is a vital need for the international community to measure illicit financial flows and recovery of stolen assets, and to agree on a suitable methodology for both. In this regard, UNODC and UNCTAD's joint initiative to develop a statistical framework was mentioned.
- Member States should consider involving civil society organizations in defining the parameters/modalities for distribution of stolen assets that are returned to the country of origin for their use in development initiatives. Further, their involvement can help in better monitoring of this process, thus increasing transparency and accountability. These organizations can often also provide useful information on the possible location of stolen assets.
- Institutional strengthening, particularly in terms of the independence and resourcing of national judicial and statistical institutions, is key, so that they can act as effective lynchpins of inclusive data collection and analysis systems and asset recovery mechanisms.



- Interagency cooperation – particularly among public sector financial management, revenue authorities and authorities on anti-money laundering/combating the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT), as well as relevant small arms control authorities – should be strengthened.

### **Session C1: Building effective institutions for implementation of the SDGs at all levels**

- n) The session focused on policy coherence and integration on one hand, and engagement and collaboration on the other as vital elements of effective institutions for implementing SDGs cohesively and coherently.
- o) Silos are due in part to the failure to move beyond diversity to inclusion and non-discrimination. Inclusive management was stressed at individual and organizational levels of analysis and structurally. Instead of breaking silos outright, “teaching them how to dance together” might be a better long-term strategy of interconnecting institutions and policies across levels and layers of government and all throughout sectors and programmes.
- p) Public participation and engagement were emphasized regarding citizen involvement in comprehensive and quality service delivery and decision-making, from the formulation and design to implementation, monitoring and evaluation phases.
- q) Organizationally, human resource development and continuous training on SDGs and inclusionary methods of government officials, such as parliamentarians and of the public sector workforce, was stressed. This is crucial not only for serving citizens but also for all intents and purposes, including for the internal functioning of public service from selection and recruitment to promotion and retirement of public servants. Education on human rights was also highlighted as was the role of public administration schools and institutes.
- r) The gap between finding the adequate speed of reform versus the challenge of continuity of progress across changing administrations was emphasized.
- s) Parliament is a critically important institution for national ownership of the SDGs and for SDG implementation; to translate the goals into laws and regulations and to hold governments accountable for SDG progress.
- t) Legislation was deemed important but seldom sufficient, as the gaps between enactment, implementation and enforcement may pose institutionalization challenges. Different monitoring and evaluation tools of impact of legislation were indicated, including the matrix of inequalities.
- u) Inequalities spawned by natural disasters, economic shocks, political mismanagement and social exclusion were put at the centre stage with leaving no one behind policies addressing their diverse aspects through methods of gap and vulnerability assessment, localization, risk management, empowerment and taxation policies, including particularly the private sector
- v) The trio of transparency, accountability and anticorruption measures in the public sector received ample attention as ubiquitous measures for building effective institutions. Transparency, together with open government and right to information principles, was characterized as a key catalyst of effective institutions, particularly in public finance, taxation and budgetary arenas as well as in monitoring and evaluation of public policies, including audits.
- w) Corruption and rent-seeking also attracted attention as an endemic institutional challenge, with exponentially negative repercussions in crisis and post-conflict contexts
- x) The role of SDG audits encompassing not only financial readiness but also overall performance assessment per SDG and SDG target was underscored. Although recommendatory in nature,

periodicity of audits combined with their oversight function, exercised together with institutions such as parliaments, public account committees and national human right institutions, were listed among effective measures to enhance the viability and impact of audits on effective SDG implementation.

- y) 11 Principles of effective governance for sustainable development, developed by the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA) endorsed by ECOSOC in July 2018 were proposed as a helpful framework in moving forward on all these grounds.

### **Session C2: Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making**

- The session focused on lack of representation and diversity in public service and decision-making, which is also a specific target under SDG 16 (target 16.7). Overall, the session addressed different contexts, needs, challenges, opportunities and good practices to ensure participation of women and youth in public life and spaces, while also making recommendations to this end to leave no-one behind.
- Participation of diverse stakeholders, such as children and youth, and their empowerment can support accountability and checks and balances to ensure policy implementation.
- Women often face additional scrutiny and challenges to effectively participate in public life, ranging from focus on qualifications to capacity. In addition, women also face significantly more threats in politics when compared to their male peers. Another element identified as an impediment to women's participation in politics is the lack of specific funding for them to run for office, and establishment of quotas for women's participation was proposed.
- The success of the SDGs was stated as being largely dependent on young people's involvement and integration into all aspects of policymaking. Proposals were made for how young people can be involved in participation, such as lowering age limits and minimum requirements for public tenure, while others provided positive examples of the impact that youth can generate in implementing the SDGs and making societies more inclusive.
- Development of child-, youth- and gender-sensitive budgets aimed at SDG implementation and inclusion of youth in shadow positions as a means to involve them in governments were also proposed. There is a need to provide for specific means and platforms to involve children and youth and integrate their issues into SDG implementation and provide decentralized assistance from international organizations directly to grassroots/civil society organizations working on youth issues.
- There is a need to promote transparency and accountability to ensure inclusion and participation in decision-making and allow for public participation in checks and balances.
- Due consideration should be given to vulnerable groups to ensure their participation.
- Particular challenges of conflict and post-conflict countries for implementation of the SDGs were stressed. In such cases, civil society is not structured, and institutions are weak, thus emphasizing the need for meaningful inclusion of women, children and youth. The lack of inclusivity in peace processes was also addressed. Special measures to ensure participation and diversity in conflict locations should be established.
- Importance of designing constitutions and laws to promote equality was stressed. There is a need to design legislation, including at the highest (constitutional) levels, to support participation and inclusiveness and create mechanisms to ensure the implementation of such normative frameworks.

### **Session C3: Enabling environments for participation and access to information**

- There are good standards on right to information, since it is a human right, but progress towards implementation is difficult to measure and there is not yet agreement on how to measure it. In addition, basic data collection in this area is weak.
- The international community should agree on what progress means on access to information and on how to measure such progress.
- Governments should connect human rights data collectors and the central SDG monitoring/collection bodies at the national level. SDG monitoring bodies should request data from human rights institutions and information commissioners.
- Transparency and openness of Governments' decision-making should be increased to allow for more participation.
- Governments should respect public freedoms, such as freedom of opinion and expression and freedom of peaceful assembly and association, as pre-conditions to meaningful participation in the implementation of the SDGs.
- There is a need to eliminate restrictions to civil society participation, both in law and in practice, and refrain from taking measures that may put civil society representatives in danger.
- Participants referred to discriminatory laws that impede participation of certain groups, including through their criminalization, and to reprisals against these groups for participating in international meetings. One participant referred to internet shutdowns as an obstacle to freedom of expression and participation.
- Access to information, and transparency and accountability are also key. If people are not able to organize, they cannot hold their Governments accountable. There are clear linkages between right to information laws and development, including a direct correlation with the decrease of corruption.
- There is a need to create investor-friendly legal environments, in the understanding that "good laws make good economies". Freedom of information in public procurement can also benefit the economy.

### **Summaries of the side events**

#### ***Summary of Side-Event: The United Nations Legal Identity Agenda – Fulfil the promise to Leave No One Behind***

During the Side-Event on 27 May, organized by UNDP, UNICEF and UNDESA, the subject of discussion was the promotion and acceleration of Legal Identity as prerequisites for achieving all SDGs, especially targets 16.9 and 17.19. Legal Identity for all - starting from birth - is a human rights issue as it ensures that everyone is recognized before the law and that everyone can exercise and claim their rights. Hundreds of millions of people worldwide still lack proof of legal identity. The vast majority are children who were never registered a birth. In order to address these challenges, the UN Legal Identity Experts Group (LIEG) has been established by the Deputy Secretary-General to advance the Legal Identity Agenda and to support countries in implementing holistic civil registration, vital statistics and identity management systems. A coherent approach by the UNDS in collaboration with the World Bank Group is essential to drive the Legal Identity Agenda and ensure effective implementation at the country level. The importance of technology as an enabler was also highlighted since it is critical to have an open standard for identity which defines a layer of connectivity and interoperability between different bricks of technology that contribute to ID systems

UN LIEG supports Member States to accelerate efforts to provide a legal identity to all - starting from birth by i) ensuring that everyone's right to be recognized as a person before the law from birth is guaranteed in both law and practice; ii) adopting a holistic - birth to death - full life-cycle approach to legal identity by establishing universal, inclusive civil registration and legal identity systems and recording vital events throughout a person's life including births, marriage and death; and iii) investing in and strengthening civil registration systems, as the fundamental means of granting legal identity to all and as the ultimate source for production of comprehensive, regular and reliable vital statistics.

***Summary of Side-Event: Inequality before the law and SDGs 3 and 10: how discriminatory laws and enforcement affect violence, equality and health, pushing the marginalized further behind.***

A discussion of the links between legal inequality, particularly criminal laws, violence, equality, health and gender, was organized by UNAIDS and IDLO on 27 May. The panel discussed the need for law reform, equality before the law and access to justice as critical tools in achieving the SDGs, particularly health (3), gender (5), inequality (10) and violence (16).

The law has a central role in realizing the right to health, including in the context of HIV. Therefore, an enabling legal environment is essential to achievement of the 2030 Agenda. In particular, affordable and accessible legal services can facilitate access to justice for poor and vulnerable people who face HIV-related discrimination.

In Latin America, as in other regions, legal environments and practices impede HIV prevention and promote HIV stigma and discrimination. IDLO supports the development of a regional network of HIV-organizations, health practitioners, lawyers and activists in the LAC region. Network members share information and expertise, and refer cases between organizations to optimize the diverse competencies across the region. Therefore, tailored HIV-related legal advice is essential and the key to improving these environments and practices, and hence to the national HIV response.

***Summary of Side-Event: Leaving No One Behind: Engaging with Customary and Informal Justice Systems to Provide Justice for All***

The side-event organized as a dialogue by IDLO and OHCHR on 28 May 2019, highlighted the fact that the plurality of legal systems that exist through which disputes are resolved and the high numbers of individuals that do not resolve legal issues through formal court processes, whether by choice, convenience, or due to a lack of a functioning state systems. These justice seekers include the most marginalized and those left behind.

Importantly, there is history and tradition to customary and informal justice mechanisms that pre-date modern instruments and the focus of SDG 16 and engagement with the justice sector is moving from an institutional focus to both an institutional and individual focus, with successful justice strategies rooted in the needs of justice seekers and service delivery. Customary and informal and alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms can facilitate dispute resolution, but there is need to ensure that the rights of marginalized groups are protected, gender equality is strengthened, and for greater awareness and exchange by those working to strengthen justice sectors of how to improve the quality, scale and scope of a variety of justice actors through legitimate and inclusive means.

Techniques like introducing ADR guidelines, policies for collaboration, capacity enhancement, ensuring fact finding in customary systems, monitoring, resource enhancements through para-professionals, interaction with civil society and codes of conduct for both legal and para-professionals are examples of practices signaling progress towards justice for all.

### ***Summary of Side-Event: The Critical Role of Non-Official Data in Monitoring and Implementing SDG 16***

The side-event on 28 May 2019, was promoted by the SDG 16 Data Initiative (DI), launched in July 2016 by a consortium of 14 partner organizations to respond to the gap in terms of comprehensive data on SDG 16 issues.

The side-event stressed the importance of perception and experience-based indicators in a people-centered agenda, to mainstream gender and diversity and leave no one behind. On this account, partnerships are needed to engage both, data producers and data users in the conversation, while at the same time combining expertise and experience of practice that work on SDG 16 in order to contribute to complementing official indicators with non-official data.

Consequently, Member states, NSOs and UN custodian agencies should accept the role of civil society non-official innovative methodologies, data and resources, which should be integrated into monitoring processes. Custodian agencies for different indicators should be required to come up with clear methodologies for assessing whether States have achieved those indicators.

### **Civil Society Day**

In the lead up to the Rome SDG16 Conference, the Transparency, Accountability & Participation (TAP) Network, in partnership with IDLO, hosted a pre-conference civil society day on Sunday 26 May, for all civil society stakeholders attending the conference. This Civil Society Day convened a diverse range of participants from over 30 countries, covering all issue areas of SDG16, and provided an opportunity for these organizations to coordinate and meet prior to the official Rome Conference events on 27-29 May.

In addition to serving as an opportunity for stocktaking on priorities and activities amongst civil society leading up to the 2019 HLPF, the Rome Civil Society Day culminated in the "Amplified Commitments and Partnerships for Accelerated Action: Rome Civil Society Declaration on SDG16+", which was adopted and presented in a statement to Members States, international organizations, and other SDG16+ stakeholders during the plenary of the Conference itself. This Rome Declaration, which outlines key recommendations and calls-for-action around SDG16+, will be important for mobilizing civil society advocacy around the 2019 HLPF in July, as well as the SDGs Summit in September. The Declaration explores the shared underlying principles of civil society around SDG16+, and highlights key recommendations and an ambitious "call to action" for all stakeholders for accelerating progress towards SDG16+.

The Rome Civil Society Declaration on SDG16+ is the product of an online consultation that the TAP Network and its partners promoted amongst its membership and other civil society networks. The extensive process to draft this resolution was guided by three co-facilitators from Namati, the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, and the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict.

### **16 x 16 participants**

Through the 16 x 16 Initiative, young leaders participated in the Conference in preparation for the United Nations High-Level Political Forum 2019: "Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies: SDG 16 implementation and the path towards leaving no one behind" in Rome, May 2019. At the conference the 16 x 16 participants shared their experience in advancing SDG16 implementation, monitoring and accountability in their respective contexts and raised awareness of youth specific needs. The 16 x 16

participants presented a Call-to-Action for promoting and supporting youth-inclusive and youth-led SDG16 implementation, monitoring and accountability, which urges governments and relevant stakeholders and partners to take bold and strong action on SDG16.

The 16 x 16 Initiative recognizes, values and supports the positive role that 16 young women and men play as leaders of youth organizations, movements and networks. The Initiative is supported by the Government of Italy and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme's Youth Global Programme. The 16 x 16 participants will collaborate with United Nations Development Programme and partners throughout the year, around SDG16 implementation, and linking SDG16 to other global, regional and national agendas.

### **Resources:**

**SDG 16 Conference Programme:** <https://www.idlo.int/SDG16Conference2019/programme>:

**SDG 16 Conference Background notes:** <https://www.idlo.int/SDG16Conference2019/documentation>

**The Rome Civil Society Declaration on SDG16+:** <https://tapnetwork2030.org/romedeclaration/>

**Video recordings and photos from the SDG 16 Conference:**

<https://www.idlo.int/SDG16Conference2019/news-media>

**Summaries of approaches and tools presented at the Knowledge Exchange on 29 May 2019:**

[https://www.idlo.int/system/files/event-documents/SDG16\\_summaries\\_Tools\\_Approaches\\_2905.pdf](https://www.idlo.int/system/files/event-documents/SDG16_summaries_Tools_Approaches_2905.pdf)