

# Accelerating **SDG16+** action to restore human well-being and build back better

## HLPF 2020 Side-Event - Summary Report

Co-organized by [CSPPS](#), the [Global Alliance](#), [TAP Network](#), [Pathfinders](#), and [16+ Forum](#), the event explored why SDG 16+ needs to be the foundation of reset and recovery strategies in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis.

**Moderator Sarah Lister, Director of Governance, UNDP Bureau of Policy and Programme Support**, introduced the "[Act Now on SDG16+](#)" statement, which leading SDG16+ partners<sup>[1]</sup> have put together, calling for action for SDG16+ in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its devastating social, economic and political consequences. Mrs. Lister emphasized how governance plays a central part in tackling COVID-19, and is one of four key priorities in the next phase of UNDP's COVID-19 crisis response.

The first speaker, **H.E Omar Castañeda Solares, Deputy Permanent Representative of Guatemala to the UN**, noted that the pandemic has had grave socio-economic effects in Guatemala (i.e. malnutrition, decline in tourism and remittances) and that a significant re-allocation of government resources into the public health sector and social protection have been critical. He emphasized that investing in SDG 16+ can help in the recovery phase, and the need to redouble efforts on civil registration and quality data collection on SDG16+ to inform policy making. Mr. Castañeda noted that Guatemala has provided enhanced support to anti-corruption initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic through the Presidential Commission against Corruption.

**Mr. Amin Ben Khaled, Advisor, Permanent Mission of Tunisia to the UN**, followed by noting that the pandemic offers an opportunity to build a stronger multilateral system, adding that solidarity between institutions needs to be at the heart of the response (between the General Assembly and the Security Council, the UN and regional organizations and local civil society organizations, as well as national and local institutions). Tunisia, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, advocates for an enlarged concept of peace - moving from a legalist and procedural perspective to a more holistic approach (i.e. food security, climate security, health security) based on inclusive and preventive diplomacy.

**Ms. Judith Kaulem, TAP Network Co-Chair and representative of Poverty Reduction Forum Trust-Zimbabwe** spoke to the exacerbated inequalities and social injustice brought by the pandemic. SDG16 is needed as an entry point to address and meet the institutional challenges we now see, particularly regarding transparency and accountability on ODA received by developing countries. She also stressed the need to address the digital divide when putting forth technological solutions to the challenges we currently face. SDG16 serves as a road map to build resilient institutions to cope with the crisis in which involvement of civil society is key. As illustrated by an African proverb, Ms. Kaulem noted: ***"if you are shelling nuts for someone who is blind, make sure you are whistling all the time to demonstrate that you are not eating the nuts"***.

[1] At time of writing: Pathfinders, CSPPS, Global Alliance, TAP Network, WFUNA, Saferworld, IDLO, UN Women, and UN Global Compact have signed the statement.

As the last speaker, **Michelle Breslauer, Senior Manager on Governance and Peace, UN Global Compact** spoke to the private sector's role and response to SDG16+ and COVID-19. Businesses see themselves as acting in complement to government action and not as a substitute – and they stress the importance of partnering with governments and civil society to strengthen institutions. Without peace, justice and strong institutions, solid cross-sectoral partnerships and responsible business cannot function as we move forward to rebuild after the pandemic. In short, **“SDG 16 makes trust actionable”**.

The floor was opened for interventions, **the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the UN, H.E Rodrigo Alberto Carazo Zeledón** highlighted the importance of including civil society in national and international decision-making fora, suggesting that states could **“listen more and talk less”** in conversations on the SDGs and COVID-19 response. Together with WFUNA, he is inviting SDG 16+ stakeholders to participate in the 16+ Forum Annual Showcase in Costa Rica in December 2020.

**Djordje Djordjevic, the Deputy Permanent Observer to the UN of the International Development Law Organization (IDLO)**, emphasized how different policymakers at different levels of government talking to each other have made a crucial difference in the response to COVID-19. SDG16, an enabling goal, needs to be at the heart of the response.

**Habib Mayar, Deputy General Secretary of the g7+** stressed how the COVID-19 outbreak has had severe consequences in fragile and conflict-affected countries, which are effectively facing the dual challenge of wars, famine and the pandemic. Within this context, the g7+ group has released a [joint statement](#) calling for an immediate global ceasefire in order to focus resources on COVID-19 recovery.

In the concluding round of reflections from speakers, it was reiterated that **SDG16 is foundational to COVID-19 response and recovery efforts** and to achieve the 2030 agenda as a whole. Cooperation on international, national and local levels are critical and the concept of peace needs to be enlarged. COVID-19 is giving us an opportunity to be introspective about our efforts – and it has demonstrated how no one is safe until everyone is safe.

Do you want to be a signatory of the SDG16+ Community statement and have your logo featured? Join us by completing [this google form](#) and take action now for SDG16+! For more details, please email [contact@sdg16.plus](mailto:contact@sdg16.plus).



Find the full recording of the meeting [here](#)