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SDG16+ Technical Consultation on Justice

Freetown, Sierra Leone

11 October 2018

Summary Report



“It is time for increased resources and to galvanize momentum in closing the justice gap - it is inexcusable and out rightly incompatible with the objective of Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG16) to have four million people in the world with little to no access to justice,” stated the Hon. Abdulai Masiyambay Bangurah, Deputy Attorney General and Minister of Justice for Sierra Leone at the first Technical Consultation on SDG16+.

SDG16+ refers to the interconnected nature of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the catalytic elements of SDG16. UN Resident Representative Sunil explained, “All of the targets [in SDG16]- from reducing violence and conflict to strengthening the rule of law and

access to justice - are significant objectives in themselves. Crucially, they also have a key role to play in accelerating progress across all the other Goals and targets.”

As part of a week of events held in Freetown around SDG16+, the Government of Sierra Leone, UNDP, and the [Global Alliance for Peaceful, Just, and Inclusive Societies](#) brought together thought leaders from over 12 countries to share good practices and lessons learned on monitoring, reporting, and implementation of SDG 16+, particularly around access to justice. In addition, key trends and recommendations were identified to help shape national priorities in creating more peaceful, just, and inclusive societies and feed into a global report on SDG 16+. The report will be utilized to inform the UN Expert Group Meeting on SDG 16 in 2019 and the thematic review of SDG 16 during the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in 2019, which is the main platform for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, held annually at UN Headquarters in New York.

Representatives from government, civil society, private sector, and the UN all took part in the technical consultation, generating new ideas and multi-stakeholder partnerships around SDG 16+. Much of the conversation hung on the critical importance of inclusivity, one of the main principles of SDG16 and an approach that should be undertaken in delivering on all parts of the 2030 Agenda – through monitoring, reporting, and implementation of the goals themselves. Working together - the peripheral reach and grassroots connections of civil society, the advanced technology and entrepreneurial spirit of business, and the political influence and technical expertise of governments – can be an unstoppable force for positive change.

There was also resounding agreement in the need to develop an evidence-basis for investment in peaceful, just, and inclusive societies and the positive spillover effect that this has in many other areas of human, economic, and environmental wellbeing. Some actors are already tracking their progress – “Collecting data on SDG16 is just something we do on a daily basis”- Mr. Harry Ogwuche Obe, Deputy Director Legal, Department of Social, Economic and Cultural Rights, National Human Rights Commission of Nigeria; while others, are working hard to find the resources to establish a robust system and coordinating platform.

Reporting on government progress on the international stage was also discussed as a powerful impetus for concrete change. Sierra Leone has already aligned its National Development Plan with the Sustainable Development Goals and has committed to undertake a Voluntary National Review (VNR) of progress achieved at the HLPF next year when SDG 16 will be formally under review. The series of Technical Consultations on SDG16+, launched in Freetown, aims to increase attention to and investment in SDG16 leading up to the HLPF 2019 and beyond.

Key Points of the Discussion:

- Peace, justice, and inclusion are often a precondition for planning and successful implementation of SDG 16. This is particularly true in fragile contexts, where justice is critical for sustaining peace but also for furthering the 2030 Agenda. Often it is the sense of injustice that is the root causes of radicalization and alienation. Lack of access to

justice, including transitional justice processes, can also fuel violence and conflict, reversing gains made through development processes.

- A whole of government approach is needed to implement SDG 16, and SDG 16.3 in particular – this includes ensuring that there is coordination across different ministries in collecting data, developing sectoral strategies, and reporting on progress. Addressing key issues such as ‘inter-operability’ between national systems of data collection is also critical– even if a bureau is mandated to produce national statistics, the absence of institutional alignment can lead to overlapping and contradictory data.
- It is important to translate the global aspirations of SDG 16 to concrete steps for implementation at the national level. The principle of ‘Leaving No One Behind’ needs to ensure that human rights issues and inclusiveness is actively championed at the country level and that access to justice is delivered in all parts of the country. This also requires substantial investment in disaggregated data and a more active linking to other human rights mechanisms, including the Universal Periodic Review.
- Multi-stakeholder engagement is necessary for a successful VNR process at the HLPF. There must be genuine investment in facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogue between civil society, religious groups, children, youth, persons with disabilities, women, elderly, private sector, etc. to define progress and priorities on SDGs for the country.
- Increasing awareness and ensuring dialogue with citizens on progress towards the SDGs is critical to localizing the SDGs and making them relevant for people’s lives. The use of the media (e.g. weekly radio programmes) and simplifying the language around the SDGs can be helpful to ensuring information about the SDGs is accessible to all.

Other Quotes:

“Here in Sierra Leone, we believe -and I’m sure you all agree- that SDG16 is the backbone for delivery on all of the SDGs.” – H.E. Mrs. Nabeela Tunis, Minister of Planning and Economic Development, Sierra Leone

“Few countries can speak with as much passion and resonance as Sierra Leone – about the ruin of war and the need to invest in SDG16 for Peaceful, Just, and Inclusive Societies and the strong institutions that under pin them.” – Ms. Katy Thompson, Rule of Law and Conflict Prevention Team Leader, UNDP

“For a long time, lawyers were not very good with statistics. We were able to improve the quality of service provision through evidence-based reforms by putting lawyers and statisticians in the Justice, Law, and Order Sector Secretariat.” - Mr. Musa Modoi, Technical Advisor, Human Rights and Accountability, JLOS Secretariat, Uganda