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The Road to HLPF 2019
SDG 16+ Technical Consultation: Justice for Sustaining Peace
Concept Note
Sarajevo, Bosnia i Hercegovina
16-17 May 2019

Background

The High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) is an annual gathering and serving as a global platform for taking stock of and reviewing progress towards achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The HLPF includes two main elements: countries' presentation of their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) and the annual Thematic Review of a chosen set of SDGs, for which the 2019 edition will be under the theme of 'Empowering People and Ensuring Inclusiveness and Equality.' Accordingly, SDG 16 on peaceful, just and inclusive societies will be featured alongside five other goals.¹

Apart from being a critical goal in its own right, SDG 16 is considered an enabler for the whole of the agenda; promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, providing justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels helps realize all other SDGs. The term "[SDG 16+](#)" was coined to indicate the linkages between SDG 16 and targets across other SDGs that also address peace, justice and inclusion. This further emphasizes the role and importance of SDG 16 across Agenda 2030 as a whole. The thematic review of SDG 16 at the HLPF 2019 thus provides a unique opportunity to promote understanding of and support for SDG 16+: what it is and why it matters for inclusive development and transforming our world; how it accelerates progress across the 2030 Agenda; how to implement it; where progress is being made; how to monitor progress; and what it takes to create measurable improvements in peace, justice, and inclusive institutions that deliver on all goals for all people.

As part of the campaign leading up to HLPF 2019, the United Nations Development Programme and the *Global Alliance on Reporting on Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies*, in partnership with other SDG 16+ initiatives, is convening a series of technical consultations on SDG 16+ to highlight progress on monitoring, reporting and implementation of SDG 16+ and distill key messages for the thematic review of SDG 16 in 2019. Five consultations

¹ Other goals under review will be SDG 4 on Education, SDG 8 on Growth and Employment, SDG 10 in Reducing inequalities and SDG 13 on Climate Change, and SDG 17 on Partnerships.

have previously been convened in Sierra Leone on Justice; in Praia, Cabo Verde on Inclusion and Human Rights; in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia on Peace, Human Rights and Democracy; and upcoming in Panama City, Panama on Accelerating the SDGs as well as in Tunis, Tunisia on Inclusive Institutions at the Local Level. The findings from these consultations will feed into the UN DESA-led Global Conference on SDG 16 in 2019 and will be featured in a narrative report on SDG 16+ to be launched at HLPF 2019.

The sixth SDG 16+ technical consultation focused on access to justice in fragile contexts and as a means of sustaining peace will be convened in Sarajevo, Bosnia i Hercegovina, in May 2019, co-hosted by government counterparts and the United Nations Development Programme, in partnership with the *Global Alliance on Reporting on Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies*. The consultation will serve to highlight how SDG 16+ is an accelerator across the 2030 Agenda particularly for fragile and conflict-affected contexts. In particular, participants will exchange experiences in supporting the implementation of access to justice for sustaining peace and the role of monitoring and reporting on putting SDG 16+ into action by enabling people-centered and multi-stakeholder participation in defining, delivering, measuring, and reporting on objectives.

SDG 16.3 “Promoting the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all” will be specifically addressed during the consultation in relation to sustaining peace. Access to justice and the rule of law are considered cornerstones for peace to be sustainable, however in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, institutions often lack the capacity to reach those furthest behind. In contexts of protracted conflict and fragility, lack of accountable, effective, transparent and inclusive access to justice and rule of law are considered key contributors for conflicts to remain unresolved and latent. Strengthening the justice system and ensuring respect for the rule of law are thus vital for sustaining peace and, ultimately, development.

Spotlight: Europe and CIS Region

As a result of protracted conflicts over disputed territories, many countries of the **Europe and CIS region** are marked by constant cross-border tensions and the legacies of post-conflict situations. From time to time, these tensions flare and result in new outbreaks of violence. Although there is fragile “peace,” internationally mediated peace talks have broadly failed to bring lasting solutions and in the absence of a political settlements, latent conflicts continue to increase polarization and risks of future conflicts. Economic and social rights as well as freedom of movement are not fulfilled and respected in these areas. Weak democratic practices and rule of law, as well as lack of independent judiciaries and rampant corruption in the administration of justice systems result in low levels of trust in justice and security institutions and unequal access to justice across populations. Consequently, demands for justice have become key aspects of uprisings in several contexts in the region.

Although many countries in the region have invested in the development of national human rights protection systems and justice and security sector reforms, these systems remain weak, especially for the most vulnerable groups including national and ethnic minorities. Fair, effective and equally accessible justice and security services at the local level remains an urgent need for building social cohesion and trust in institutions in all countries of the region. In the highly diverse societies, lack of experience in power-sharing between dominant and minority communities also hampers the development of common ground for democratic co-existence. Mechanisms to promote fair parliamentary representation, law-making and strong oversight institutions, including on protection of minority rights, are still largely limited. These factors also hinder the inclusivity of economic growth and create increasing income inequalities. Poverty rates remain high particularly especially among people living in the disputed territories. Gender-based discrimination continues to restrict women’s economic opportunities and broader political participation. A renewed focus on how to achieve the realization of the pillars and principles of SDG 16+ could lead to closing the justice gap, enhancing inclusion and ultimately sustaining a more robust, positive peace across the region.

Objectives

The SDG 16+ Technical Consultations aim to bring together thought leaders at community, local, national and regional levels to share experiences and key messages and recommendations. The Technical Consultations will enable members of a global, multi-stakeholder constituency to:

- Highlight key trends and achievements on SDG 16+.
- Provide case studies illustrating SDG 16+ in action.
- Demonstrate how progress on SDG 16+ enables progress across the 2030 Agenda.
- Identify challenges and opportunities on mainstreaming SDG 16+ as part of national and subnational development and SDG implementation plans, including in crisis and conflict affected contexts.
- Identify how inclusive planning, monitoring and reporting (including through Voluntary National Reviews) is or can be leveraged to put SDG 16+ into action.
- Make key policy recommendations to be discussed at the HLPF.

This particular meeting will have a focus on the importance of **justice for sustaining peace** in crisis-affected and prevention contexts. The meeting will aim to explore the following themes:

- What are the **trends, challenges and good practices** in implementation, monitoring and reporting of SDG targets and indicators related to justice, particularly 16.3? How has justice been included as part of national and subnational development and SDG implementation plans? What are some of the particular challenges unique to fragile and crisis-affected situations? What are the particular considerations in terms of prevention and sustaining peace?
- What has been the **role of different actors** -- private sector, civil society, and national human rights institutions -- in supporting popularization, implementation, monitoring and reporting on rule of law and access to justice for all?
- What are some **recommendations** for national and international policy makers on how to accelerate progress on justice in crisis contexts? What are the recommendations for civil society, national human rights institutions and private sector working in crisis contexts to help make progress towards SDG 16+ and access to justice for all? What are specific recommendations that can be made on promoting access to justice to sustain peace and foster development?

This sixth technical consultation will build on the lessons and messages stemming from the previous consultations and other past proceedings in the run-up to HLPF 2019 and feed into the Global Report on SDG 16+ being developed under the auspices of the *Global Alliance for Reporting on Progress towards Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies*.

Format

The technical consultation will take place on 16-17 May 2019 in Sarajevo, Bosnia i Herzegovina. The consultations will provide opportunity for countries to present their national case studies of best practices, as well as interactive dialogues and learning among countries in a roundtable setting. A draft agenda will be shared shortly.

Participants

The participants will include government, civil society and/or private sector representatives primarily from the Europe and CIS region in addition to selected contexts relevant to prevention and Sustaining Peace from across the globe. A confirmed list of participants will be shared closer to the date.