

Introduction

In 2015, United Nations Member States adopted the 'The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' which includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through **Sustainable Development Goal 16**, Member States have committed to "Promot[ing] peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provid[ing] access to justice for all and build[ing] effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels."

When the international community looked back on the MDGs, governance emerged as a critical element in explaining the uneven progress across these goals in many countries. One of the lessons from the MDGs was therefore that "democratic governance, peace and security and the rule of law, including protection of human rights, are critical to sustainable development."¹ Indeed, a human rights approach helps identify who is vulnerable, or "being left behind," and the ways in which those who are marginalized can be empowered to overcome their vulnerability. As a result, many State and non-governmental actors — including youth and women's organizations across the world — advocated for a global governance goal during the national, intergovernmental and global consultations and negotiations that led to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda.²

The 2030 Agenda presents a paradigm shift and radical new approach to transforming our world, focusing on the integrated pillars of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. **It is universal, including issues such as inequality, access to justice and peace and security, and aims at leaving "no one behind."** Moreover, the SDG agenda has an **additional complexity in terms of its implementation**, and requires a mix of national ownership, flexibility, innovation, political acumen, high quality technical support and a collective, multi-stakeholder effort at all levels in order to become progressively a reality.

SDG 16 is key to achieving the transformative 2030 Agenda. Its focus on seven tenets of strong institutions (effective, inclusive, responsive, participative, representative, accountable and transparent), as well as peaceful societies, are necessary for achieving all SDGs. This is true whether the goal is related to education, health, economic growth, climate change or beyond. **Without sustained peace, which goes beyond the mere absence of violence and includes respect for human rights and the rule of law, development gains are reversed. And without inclusion and access to justice for all, inequalities in poverty reduction and socio-economic development will increase and countries' commitments to leaving no one behind will not be met.**

SDG 16 and societal transformation

Ambitious and visionary, Goal 16 has the potential to catalyse profound social transformation. Transformation requires addressing the root causes and drivers that generate and reproduce economic, social, political and environmental problems and inequities, not merely their symptoms. As noted in the UN Research Institute for Social Development (UNSRID) Flagship Report on *Policy Innovations for Transformative Change* (2016)³, transformation involves changes in social structures, institutions and relations, including patterns of inequalities related to income, gender, ethnicity, religion or geography that may lock people (current and future generations) into positions of disadvantage or limit their choices. It is also necessary to identify pathways to transformative change that are *desirable*, in the sense that they are (i) promoting social justice on the basis of universal human rights, (ii) systemic (addressing various factors simultaneously and in an interrelated way), and (iii) long term (cannot be easily reversed in the short term). Goal 16 means changing norms and institutions, both formal and informal, that shape the behaviour of people and organizations in the social, economic, environmental and political spheres. Policy debates that highlight the goal of transformation often ignore the deep-seated changes that are required in economic, social and power relations. Without specific attention to how SDG 16 applies in all dimensions of human life — and not only in relation to targets related to political and legal inclusion — it will be impossible to realize the transformative potential of the SDGs.

SDG 16 has strong intrinsic value as it encapsulates commitments and standards to which all countries have agreed. In particular, it provides a blueprint for simultaneously promoting inclusion, addressing inequality and empowering people, thus embracing the theme of the July, 2019 High Level Political Forum. But SDG 16 also has tremendous **value as an enabler and accelerator for all SDGs**. The term **SDG 16 'plus'** acknowledges the other SDG targets that contribute to peace, justice and responsive institutions (see below).

Governments and stakeholders are translating the commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals into reality. SDG 16+ offers a framework for institutions at all levels (both formal and informal/State and non-governmental) to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies that place human rights protection and inclusive and accountable governance at the heart of tackling inequality. In this way, the goal is to ensure that **the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in societies are engaged as actors and beneficiaries of the Agenda 2030 principle to “leave no one behind.”**

The SDG 16+ framework provides countries with a rights-based approach to tackling the drivers of suffering that affords dignity and agency to those left behind. It addresses patterns of exclusion, structural and institutional constraints and unequal power relations that produce and reproduce patterns of exclusion, marginalization, inequality and suffering over generations. SDG 16+ requires countries to support legal, policy, institutional and other measures to dismantle harmful gender and other stereotypes and to promote equality and non-discrimination. **It also requires free, active and meaningful participation, particularly of women and girls,** as stakeholders in subsequent review processes to ensure accountability and gender responsive remedies for rights violations.

Countries demonstrate commitment to **following up and reviewing** their progress on the 2030 Agenda, including the SDGs, at global, regional and national levels. At the global level, the annual UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) provides a platform for countries to present Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) on their progress. This year, 47 countries are presenting their VNRs at the HLPF, seven for the second time. In addition, thematic reviews on four to five goals is conducted every year. This year, under the theme of “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality,” global progress on SDG 16 is due for review.⁴

This report has been developed by the **Global Alliance for Reporting Progress on Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies (“Global Alliance”)**. It seeks to help governments conduct participatory planning, monitoring and reporting by drawing together stakeholders and data from all parts of government, civil society, youth, and the private sector. The idea is to gather the evidence and determine the joint action needed for transformative change. The Alliance is operated by seven member States, three CSOs, and three businesses. Its work is supported by a Secretariat co-facilitated by UNDP, UNODC, UNESCO, UNHCR, OHCHR, UN Women, UN Global Compact and a UN Advisory Group composed of 10 UN Agencies.

The present report is the **Global Alliance’s contribution to the 2019 Thematic Review** of SDG 16. While it is not part of the formal SDG reporting process, it complements the UN’s mandated reports on the 2030 Agenda (the Secretary General’s annual progress report on the SDGs and the quadrennial Global Sustainable Development Report) in at least four ways:

- It focuses specifically on SDG 16 and also on what is termed SDG 16 “plus,” which refers to targets in other SDGs that also contribute to building peaceful, just and inclusive societies (a further explanation is provided below in “About this report”).
- It spotlights the efforts and perspectives of multiple stakeholders active in accelerating progress on achieving SDG 16, including government, civil society and the private sector.
- It reflects country-level experiences.
- It draws on recommendations and key messages emerging out of six regional Technical Consultations organized by UNDP on behalf of the Global Alliance and dedicated to SDG 16+ held between late 2018 and 2019. It also draws on other events and consultations organized by the co-facilitators of the Global Alliance, in the run up to the HLPF in July 2019.

This report seeks to reach a range of actors in the UN system, as well as national policymakers, non-governmental actors, academia, and the private sector. The report unfolds as follows. The brief section, **About this report**, explains the approach taken to draw together existing knowledge, country experience and stakeholder analyzes on SDG 16+.

Part A sets out the **Key findings** and a **Summary of key trends** captured in the report around progress on implementing, monitoring and reporting on SDG 16+. It also offers a **Taking stock** section that assesses opportunities and challenges for countries when adapting/nationalizing, implementing, monitoring and reporting on SDG 16 within a given national context. Case studies illustrate these points. **Moving forward: Policy and programming recommendations**, sets out a list of suggested actions that different actors can take to accelerate progress on achieving SDG 16.

Part B provides case studies on SDG 16+ prepared by countries with the support of UN country teams as well as drawn from the Technical Consultations.

Annex 1 explores in greater detail **global and regional trends and countries’ policy efforts** to achieve key elements of SDG 16+ covering the pillars of peace, justice and responsive institutions. It summarizes existing analyzes and provides **signposts to key current sources**. It also **illustrates** how progress on **SDG 16 enables progress on other SDGs**, both in terms of outcome and process. Finally, this section seeks to clarify the roles peace, justice and inclusion play in achieving seemingly unrelated goals such as education (SDG 4), economic growth (SDG 8) and climate change (SDG 13).

About this report

To guide understanding of how this report presents progress on the implementation of SDG 16+, the following questions and answers set out the overall framework and methodologies used.

What is SDG 16+?

In essence, the ‘plus’ in SDG 16+ gives us a fuller understanding of the targets across other SDGs that contribute to peace, justice and inclusion. The Pathfinders, a global, member-State led initiative that also works on SDG 16, identifies **peace, justice and inclusion** as the three main dimensions comprising the twelve targets of SDG 16 and stresses that targets in other SDGs also contribute to peace, justice and inclusion. Hence, the term **SDG 16 “plus”** was born.⁵ The Global Alliance for Reporting on Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies has adopted this conception of SDG 16+ along with an increasing number of other global, regional and national SDG 16-focused initiatives.

The Pathfinders graphic depiction below sets out the SDG 16+ framework (see Figure 1).

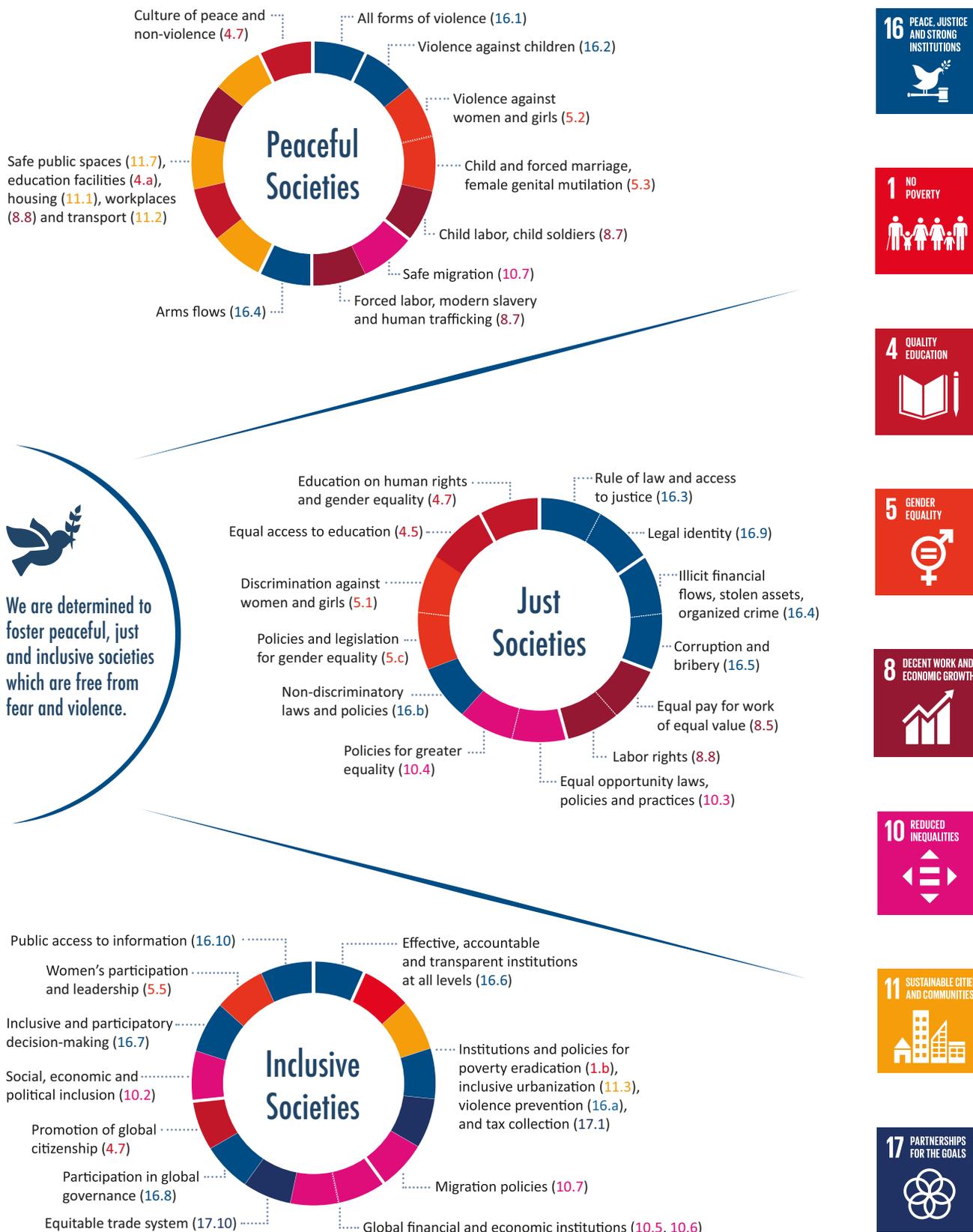
This report builds on the Pathfinders’ concept of SDG 16+ by organizing all the SDG 16+ targets into clusters that contribute to the three dimensions of peace, justice and inclusion. The report defines a total of nine clusters of targets or “elements” of peace, justice and inclusion. These elements are used to organize trends and policy efforts described in Annex 1: “Detailed trends and efforts on peace, justice and inclusion.”

The graphic below sets out the three elements within each of the three dimensions of peace, justice and inclusion and identifies the targets that contribute to each element and dimension (see Figure 2).

What information was used for the report?

The information in this report has been gathered and analyzed using **inclusive, participative and consultative processes**. The author worked with governments, international agencies, civil society actors, academics and students to gather, document and peer review information on progress on SDG 16+ implementation.

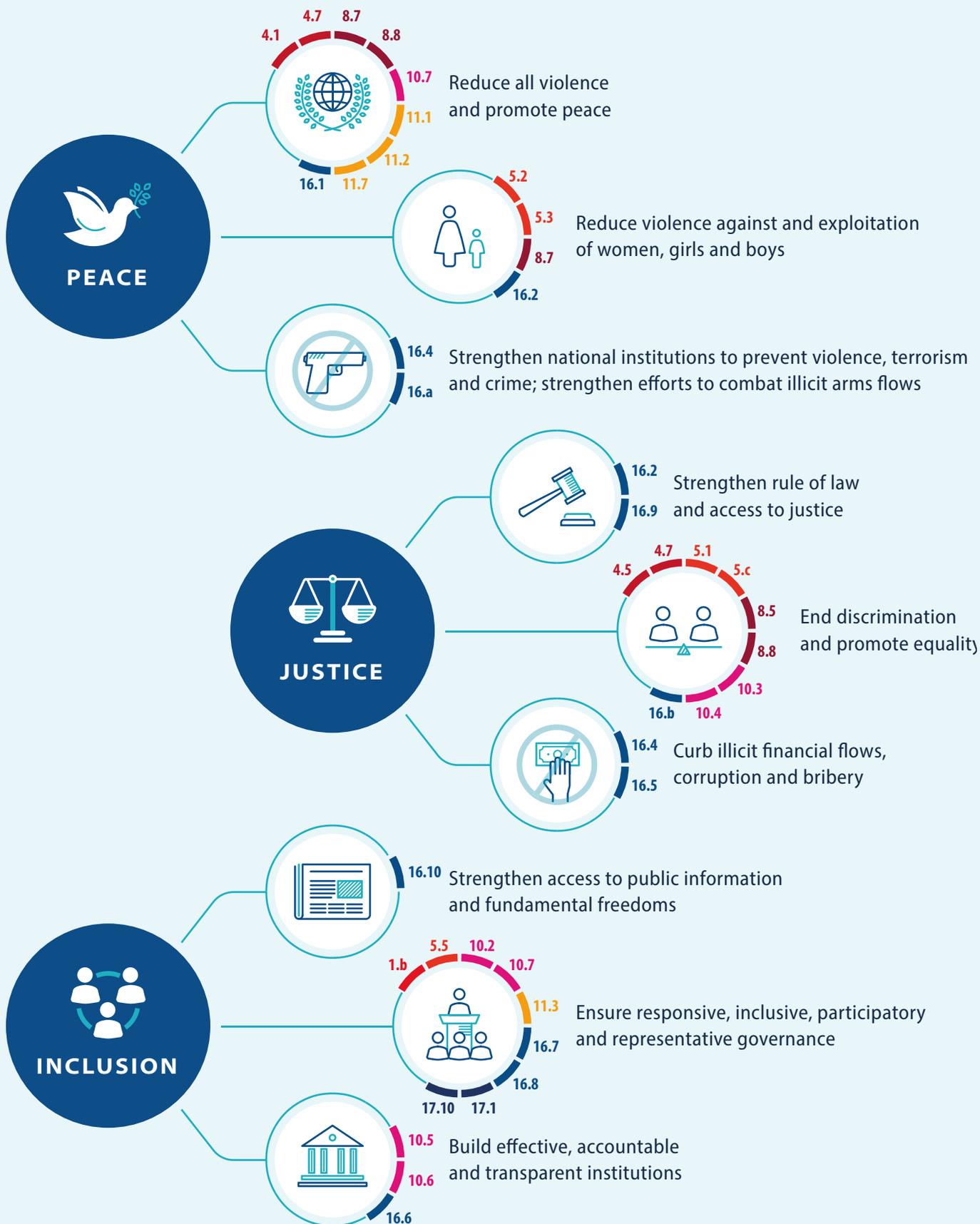
FIGURE 1. Pathfinders' graphic depiction of the SDG 16+ framework



We are determined to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence.

Source: Pathfinders, www.sdg16.plus

FIGURE 2. Elements of the SDG 16+ dimensions on peace, justice and inclusion



Case studies: Following an open call, the report team supported interested UN Country Teams of 25 countries to work with their national partners on SDG 16+ case studies. (For a list of the 25 case studies see Annex 3. The Acknowledgements sets out a list of partners involved in the drafting of each country case study). These case studies seek to show either countries' specific policy and programming efforts on SDG 16+ or their overall approach in adapting, implementing, monitoring and reporting on SDG 16+. The development of the case studies has involved the input of multiple partners in countries, from government agencies to civil society organizations to the UN Country Teams. These case studies serve as **illustrative examples of countries' work on SDG 16+**. **Extracts from the 25 country case studies are included in blue boxes throughout the report.** The full country case studies are published on the SDG 16 website: www.SDG16hub.org.

In addition, case studies documenting country and regional progress on SDG 16+ — based on information gathered at regional SDG 16+ Technical Consultations and other relevant events, as well as a review of existing literature — are also included in the report. They are referenced in **green boxes**.

SDG 16+ Technical Consultations and other relevant events: The report draws from six regional Technical Consultations that UNDP, with support from The Netherlands and DFID, and in partnership with the Global Alliance, organized with governments, civil society organizations, private sector actors and other experts. These meetings were set up to allow for learning from country and regional experiences. They also provided a forum to exchange opportunities and challenges in adapting, implementing, monitoring and reporting on Goal 16+ in the countries themselves.

The Technical Consultations (<https://www.SDG16hub.org/hlpf2019/consultations>) were organized around the three elements of SDG 16+, with two consultations each addressing peace, justice and inclusion. They took place across regions, in Sierra Leone (October 2018); Cabo Verde (November 2018); Mongolia (February 2019); Tunisia (March 2019); Panama (April 2019) and Bosnia y Herzegovina (May 2019).

In addition, information was gathered from other relevant events (co-) organized and supported by Global Alliance UN co-facilitators, e.g. an international meeting in Tashkent organized by United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (and the General Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Uzbekistan), which explored how Central Asian countries and Azerbaijan and Georgia might be supported in monitoring and implementing SDG 16, especially in close relation with SDG 3; a technical discussion on "Pushing forward on achieving Sustainable Development Goal 16," led by UNODC and UNDP at the Third International Conference on Access to Legal Aid in Criminal Justice Systems in Tbilisi, where member States shared successful practices as well as challenges towards achieving SDG 16, with special emphasis on access to legal aid as central to achieving SDG 16.3 on access to justice for all; and an SDG 16 event in San Salvador on exploring a joint vision to fight organized transnational crime in the wider Caribbean Region.

Review of existing literature: The report also draws from existing literature and analyzes on SDG 16+ that have been produced since 2015. The full bibliography is found in Annex 2.

What are SDG 16+ interlinkages?

In its preamble, the 2030 Agenda states that “[t]he interlinkages and integrated nature of the Sustainable Development Goals are of crucial importance in ensuring that the purpose of the new Agenda is realized.” **Put simply, none of the SDGs can be fully realized on its own, the goals depend on each other.** ‘Interactions’ is also a term used to explain this relationship between the SDGs. For its part, SDG 16+ is frequently referred to as an enabling goal for the achievement of all other SDGs and for Agenda 2030 broadly.

For SDG 16+ and for the purpose of this report, the concept of ‘interlinkages’ has two meanings:

1. Progress on peace, justice and inclusion targets affects outcomes in other SDGs. Sometimes this may be obvious, e.g., how peace or its absence affects economic growth (SDG 8). In other cases, the interlinkage or interaction may be less evident, e.g., how peace, justice and inclusion affect ocean management (SDG 14).

Interlinkages often go both ways: For example, peace, justice and inclusion (SDG 16+) will influence education outcomes (SDG 4) by ensuring safe environments and effective, accountable and transparent institutions to deliver education services. In turn, education is critical to ensure and sustain a culture of peace, justice and inclusion in any society. Interlinkages further support the Agenda 2030 claim that “there can be no sustainable development without peace, and no peace without sustainable development.”

It goes beyond the scope of this report to provide a comprehensive picture of how SDG 16 interlinks with all the other goals. The report therefore focuses on interlinkages with the goals that are under thematic review at the 2019 High-Level Political Forum. These include SDG 4 on education, SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth, SDG 10 on inequality (we also include SDG 5 on gender equality because it is related to SDG 10 although not under Thematic Review) and SDG 13 on climate action. SDG 17 on the means of implementation is also reviewed every year. **These interlinkages are illustrated throughout Annex 1.**

2. Progress on peace, justice and inclusion targets also affects overall processes to achieve the 2030 Agenda, for example by enabling stakeholder engagement and country-level coordination mechanisms, etc. **These interlinkages are also illustrated in Annex 1** and show how SDG 16+ targets can guide overall processes to implement the 2030 Agenda. SDG 16+ targets can, in fact, be used like a checklist when developing these processes and Annex 4 provides a list of general guiding questions that can be used to ensure that SDG 16 targets are met during implementation.

It is worth reinforcing that the universality of the SDGs means that all countries in all contexts are expected to be guided by a human rights-based approach to development that focuses on the principles of inclusion, participation, rule of law, accountability and respect for human rights. This approach is also necessary to fully uphold the objectives of “leaving no one behind” and “reaching the furthest behind first” as enshrined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

To illustrate the difference between the concept of SDG 16+ and the concept of SDG 16+ interlinkages as understood in this report, see graphics below (Figures 3 and 4).

FIGURE 3. SDG 16+: How is peace, justice and inclusion reflected in the SDGs and their targets?

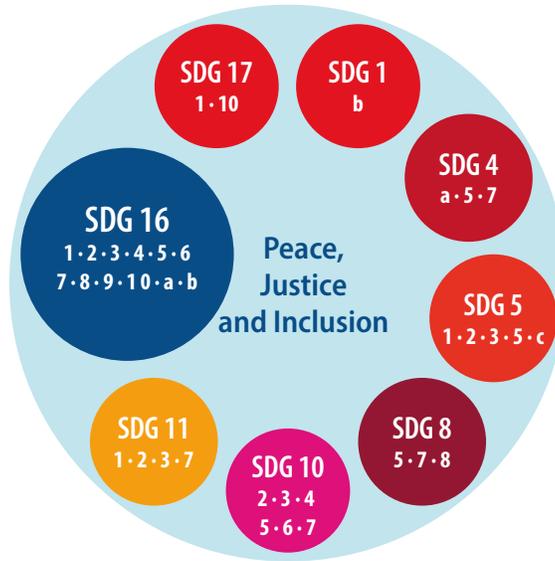
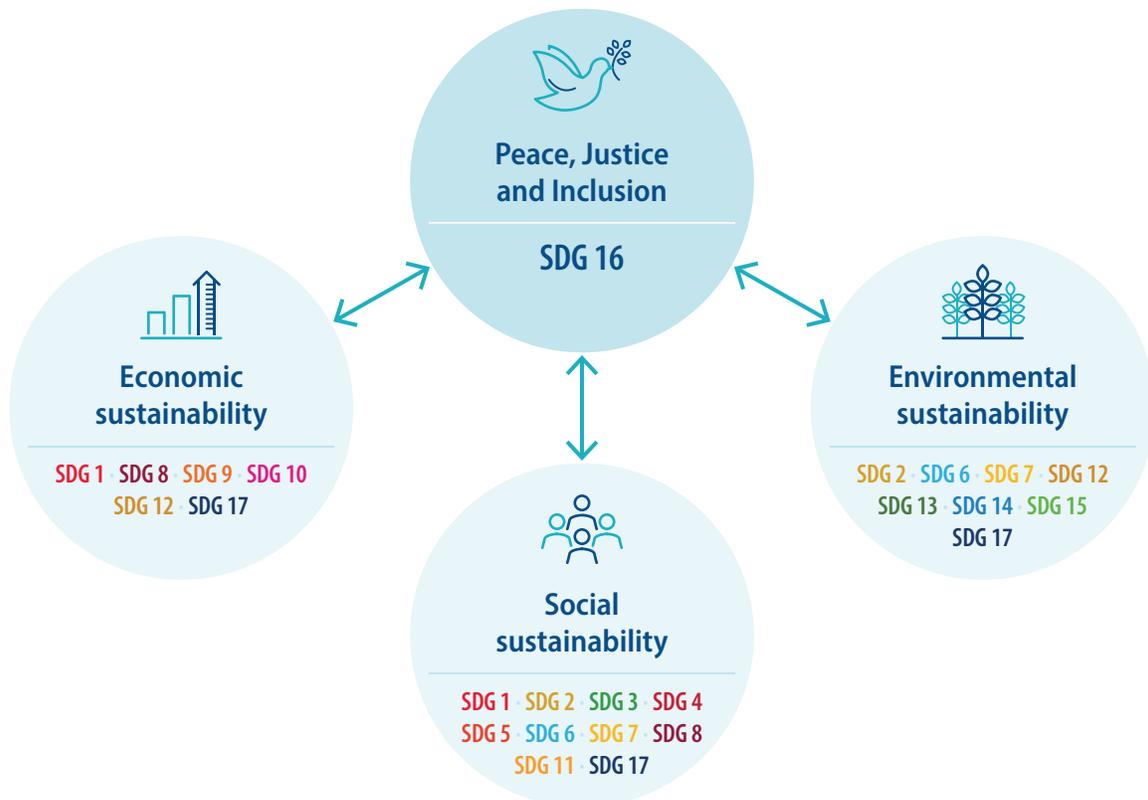


FIGURE 4. SDG 16 Interlinkages: How do peace, justice and inclusion help or hinder other Goals and vice versa?



Endnotes

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