

# Key findings

## 1 Political and financial investment is needed to accelerate progress on SDG 16+



- SDG 16+ will be challenging to meet by 2030. **Visionary and committed national leadership is essential** to accelerate progress on SDG 16+ and transform societies to prevent conflict, address inequalities, reduce injustices and be more inclusive.
- **SDG 16+ can enable other SDGs** if governments embrace full ownership of the process and invest in the enabling and accelerating role of SDG 16+. Failure to invest in SDG 16+ will risk worsening violence, injustice and exclusion, reversing development gains across all SDGs, including education, health and climate action.
- **Measuring progress in achieving SDG 16 is politically, technically and financially possible** and will enhance implementation. However in many countries, **institutional mechanisms at the national and local levels to gather data and monitor policy efforts and impact are weak**. Partnerships between national statistical systems and regional and local governments, civil society organizations, youth organizations and academia as well as the private sector and international organizations can enhance a country's ability to gather, analyze and use data on SDG 16+ targets and indicators.

### BOX 1. Honduras: The Infosegura project

The Infosegura project, supported by UNDP and USAID, is helping six Central American countries to strengthen institutional mechanisms at the national and local levels to gather data to plan and develop policy efforts. Infosegura supports national entities in the collection and management of security-related information for eventual use in the development and monitoring of evidence-based policies on citizen security.

Prior to 2014, data on citizen security in Honduras was fragmented and inconsistent. There was no agreed official data on homicides or other types of crimes. The InfoSegura project changed this. Beginning in 2014, it supported the establishment of citizen security data-validation working groups, coordinated by the Inter-Institutional Technical Coordination Unit (UTECI), Secretariat of Security. These working groups include representatives of public

entities responsible for data collection on citizen security (Police, Prosecutor’s Office, Forensic Medicine, Municipal Observatories of Violence and others) as well as from academia (namely, the National Observatory of Violence of the Institute of Democracy, Peace and Security.)

The Inter-institutional validation working groups standardize and agree on official national data pertaining to 11 indicators measuring citizen security at the national and municipal levels. The validation process has broken silos, bringing together public entities and enhancing the role of citizen oversight through the participation of academia and civil society. There are currently specialized groups on homicides, violent deaths and domestic violence.

Policymakers can access reliable, consensus-based and transparent data to make timely, evidence-based decisions to tackle crime. There is a special emphasis on producing data on persons in situations of vulnerability such as women and young people.

This process has contributed to the reform of the National Police Law at the national level and motivated the creation of 30 municipal Observatories for Coexistence and Citizen Security across the country, as well as the creation of the Center for Research and Analysis of Coexistence and Citizen Security (CEACSI).

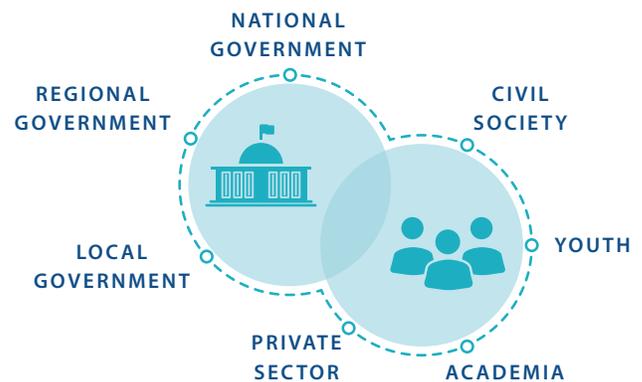
15 successful actions against violence taken by local authorities, based on information provided by the working groups, are highlighted in the publication “From Data to action – all the stories count.” For example, in San Manuel Cortés, data revealed specific places where homicides were occurring. The municipality transformed those areas into safer urban environments, reducing homicides rates.

Guatemala has requested technical assistance from the government of Honduras to start a similar data validation process.

Source: UNCT Honduras

## 2 SDG 16+ implementation requires a ‘whole of government’ and ‘whole of society’ approach

- National governments stress that they cannot tackle the entire 2030 Agenda alone. **A ‘whole of government’ approach to localizing and achieving the SDGs is required.** This would involve not just national government agencies and State institutions but also the adoption of the SDGs across local and regional governments and institutions to make them a reality for communities. Indeed **local approaches to achieve the SDGs** should inform national priority-setting.
- **A ‘whole of society’ approach with broad and meaningful engagement and consultation with stakeholders across all sectors of society** is key to ensuring that no one is left behind. This approach is most effective when institutionalized within formal structures and at different levels of government. **Multi-stakeholder partnerships and platforms involving actors from government, civil society, youth, academia and the private sector are a critical mechanism for the achievement of SDG 16+.** Targetted efforts are needed to build capacities and an enabling environment for such collaboration.



- **For conflict-affected States**, particularly where parts of a territory are outside State administrative authority, **engaging with actors from the whole of society to design and implement development policies is vital.** SDG 16+ not only guides countries on how to shape their institutions to achieve the SDGs, it also **shapes their approach to humanitarian, development and peace actions, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected situations.**

## BOX 2. Mauritania: Local governance participatory mechanisms

The region of Hodh el Chargui in Mauritania borders on Mali, a country that is facing several crises (inter-ethnic conflicts, terrorism, transnational organized crime and climate change). Local communities have been impacted by the humanitarian crisis in Mali. Since 2012, they have hosted more than 50,000 Malian refugees. Hodh el Chargui is also one of the most vulnerable regions in Mauritania, with a lack of basic services and infrastructure.

This situation is fueling tension between host communities and refugees, as well as within local communities. Conflicts arise mainly over access to basic social services and natural resources.

Despite these challenges, local communities are participating in inclusive local decision-making mechanisms in Hodh el Chargui. 49 village committees have been elected by a general assembly of villagers for a period of one year. These committees include a range of marginalized groups such as women, religious leaders, young people, migrants, disabled persons, and refugees. Local populations recognize these committees as their representatives.

Members of the village committees contact local authorities directly to address ongoing security, peace and rights-related issues. Local governments, as well as humanitarian and development actors, recognize the committees as an important partner and involve them in relevant interventions in the villages. The village committees, for example, are increasingly involved in preventing conflicts between refugees and the local population.

The region has the worst child rights indicators in Mauritania: 57% of girls between 0-14 years have been subjected to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), 40.3% women aged 20-49 years were married before 18 years old, only 43.7% children aged 0-5 years are registered at birth and 83,1% of children aged 1-14 years are subjected to violent discipline. The committees prioritize the protection of civilians, including children and women, and the reduction of all forms of violence and exploitation.

The village committees have also played an instrumental role in the registration of refugees living in the Mbera camp, ensuring messages on refugee registration and protection are communicated as widely as possible. The registration exercise will ultimately ensure that all refugee children born in Mauritania receive birth certificates issued by the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

Women, in particular, utilize the committees to solve daily problems and to organise income-generation activities. Given social constraints, it is still difficult for women to travel alone, so solutions that allow women to attend events outside the village are still being sought.

The village committees receive training in conflict prevention, gender-based violence and sustainable management of natural resources. This support needs to be reinforced to enable village committees to contribute extensively to achieving Goal 16.

Source: UNCT Mauritania

## BOX 3. Mongolia: National implementation mechanism

In Mongolia, a parliamentary sub-committee on the Sustainable Development Goals and a Prime Minister-led SDG national committee guide and oversee the process for implementing all SDGs. SDG 16-related efforts are coordinated by the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs (MOJHA). THE MOJHA has created a monitoring and evaluation system that supports efforts to gather data, especially regarding the most disadvantaged and marginalized groups in Mongolia. A 2017 assessment mapped how data and information

is created, analyzed, used and shared in this country. It also demonstrated key data gaps.

During the MDG era, Mongolia adopted a 'ninth' MDG on enhancing human rights and democratic governance, which prompted the inclusion of a "governance module" in the regular Household Socio-Economic Survey'. The survey module was discontinued on completion of the MDG era, although the quarterly data that was gathered provides insight into the sort of data that might prove relevant for measuring Goal 16 today.

Source: UNCT Mongolia

### 3 SDG 16+ is instrumental in protecting fundamental freedoms and ensuring that no one is left behind

- **With shrinking civic space across the globe, many civil society actors are faced with barriers to inclusion and participation both on- and off-line. This includes threats to the personal safety of human rights activists and defenders**, who are often prevented from participating meaningfully in development planning and policymaking processes. This trend risks excluding from policymaking the needs and voices of the most vulnerable in society, including women, children, youth, refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced and stateless people.
- **Governance institutions and decision-making processes rooted in a human rights-based approach to development are critical to the achievement of SDG 16+ and to ensuring that no one is left behind.** Bold reforms in making governance institutions more people-centered, responsive, effective and accountable in line with SDG 16+ principles will increase the resilience of societies to conflict by better integrating minority and marginalized voices. Institutions must not only be accountable and transparent, but also more participative, inclusive, responsive and representative. They must operate in accordance with the rule of law and human rights principles of non-discrimination and equality.



- **National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) can play multiple roles in ensuring no one is left behind.** They are catalysts for sustainable development, helping to address inequality and discrimination in all its forms. They contribute to data collection and analysis processes that are more inclusive. They facilitate access to justice, redress and can remedy complaints. They promote human rights standards and the SDGs in business conduct, conflict prevention and peacebuilding. They provide a platform for dialogue in societies that are transitioning towards peace and justice. They help build trust between government institutions and people to promote transparent, participatory and inclusive national processes of SDG implementation and monitoring. They can also play an oversight role over the implementation of the SDGs to ensure that SDG planning, implementation and reporting is aligned with human rights standards and with a focus on “leaving no one behind.”



- **Significant investment is required in reliable disaggregated data to ensure that policy and programmes reach marginalized and vulnerable groups and others who are “left behind.”** Data collection systems are weak when it comes to systematic coverage and data disaggregation, especially at the local and regional levels. Many SDG 16+ methodologies and national practices are State and citizen-centred, and therefore leave out people without citizen status, including the estimated 3.1 million asylum seekers, 25.4 million refugees, and 3.8 million plus stateless people worldwide. It is essential to expand the use of different data sources, including people-generated data, in addition to exploring new partnerships between data actors to further develop the national capacities for data collection, analysis and dissemination. The data revolution, and the potential of big data and artificial intelligence brings promising opportunities, but must be used responsibly.

#### **BOX 4. Denmark: Including civil society to ensure no one is left behind**

Denmark has created a multi-stakeholder approach to the 2030 agenda, seeking to improve the inclusion of civil society in the implementation of the SDGs.

At the national level, the Danish Government launched an Action Plan for implementation of the SDGs in 2017. The goal was to ensure the integration of sustainable development principles into domestic policy and into the daily workings of the national government. 37 measurable targets were established, with one or two indicators each, so as to enable continuous monitoring of progress on implementation. The first yearly progress report on the 37 targets was sent to parliament in June 2018. Nine of the indicators addressed SDG 16. As it drafted the Action Plan, the Government included perspectives from civil society and a range of stakeholders during preliminary meetings.

The Ministry of Finance was appointed as key coordinator of the overall national implementation of the SDGs. Individual ministries are responsible for implementing the SDGs into their portfolios and each of the 169 global targets has been assigned to a lead line ministry. Furthermore, the Danish Parliament has established a cross-party network for Agenda 2030 with representation from all political parties. The Parliament’s Standing Finance Committee has also formed a task-force to align the national budget with the 2030 Agenda.

In order for the SDGs to be achieved on a national level, cooperation is required across municipalities, regions, and the national government. Denmark’s multilevel and decentralized approach ensures that people with local knowledge and expertise will be

driving implementation. The Municipality of Copenhagen, for example, has created its own Action Plan within the framework of the national Action Plan. This plan sets out 14 goals for the city targeting SDG 16.6, 16.7 and 16.10.

The Government supports an independent and knowledgeable civil society, both to review its work on sustainable development and to strengthen its governance institutions. This entails producing annual reports on the implementation of the SDGs by Statistics Denmark and by making educational material about the SDGs available to the public.

The Danish Government has also pursued a very inclusive strategy, engaging civil society in achieving the SDGs by promoting public assessment and debate of Denmark’s implementation of the SDGs. An example of these civil society initiatives is The World’s Best News (WBN). WBN is a multi-stakeholder initiative initiated by Danish CSOs in 2015. WBN’s core objective has been to communicate the SDGs, and the measures taken to meet these, to the wider population. This awareness raising has occurred through nation-wide campaigns in partnership with the private sector, Danish youth associations, the Danish Government, and the United Nations.

The principal lesson learned throughout Denmark’s effort is that inclusion of multiple stakeholders at multiple levels builds a solid foundation for achieving the SDGs. Peer review of the implementation of SDGs has strengthened the Danish institutions of governance and strengthened the country’s commitment to the peace, justice and inclusion dimensions of Goal 16.

Source: Permanent Mission of Denmark to the UN

Enabling the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through SDG 16+: Anchoring peace, justice and inclusion (2019).

The Global Alliance for Reporting Progress on Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, available at: <https://www.sdg16hub.org>

