

The HLPF and an Annual Thematic Review of SDG16

*This briefing from the Global SDG16+ Community aims to inform consultations on the Zero Draft of the HLPF/ECOSOC Review resolution. It outlines the **grounds for the HLPF to review SDG16 on an annual basis as part of the HLPF's Thematic Review and provides suggested language for inclusion in this draft resolution.***

Background

We are presently off track to meet the vision as outlined in the 2030 Agenda to “[build a just, equitable, tolerant, open and socially inclusive world in which the needs of the most vulnerable are met.](#)” In light of the pandemic, there is a heightened gap between the stated ambition of the 2030 Agenda and where we are headed based on current trajectories to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

At an international level, the SDG16+ community of 40 countries and over 100 partners is committed to meeting the aspirations set out in the SDG16+ targets for peaceful, just and inclusive societies. SDG16 is a critical enabler of progress towards the entire 2030 Agenda, with the most significant and transformative impact across multiple goals and targets.

Therefore, the annual review of SDG16+ is a critical linchpin for governments and society to “build back better” and demonstrate measurable progress on peace, justice, and inclusion ahead of the second SDG Summit in 2023. Without continuous progress towards peace, justice and inclusion at all levels, none of the SDGs can be delivered in full.

HLPF 2022 and 2023

The themes proposed for review in 2022 and 2023 presented are inextricably linked with SDG16, focusing on women’s empowerment, human rights, governance, strong institutions, environmental sustainability, and the principle of Leaving No One Behind. This is in line with the strong links SDG16 has with other goals, directly consistent with the integrated and indivisible nature of the 2030 Agenda. An annual thematic review of SDG16 at each HLPF will help ensure that Member States and the international community retain focus on issues that serve as critical enablers of progress towards all SDGs. Maintaining this focus on SDG16 will provide a critical platform for exploring solutions-oriented approaches to achieving the entire 2030 Agenda – particularly with the focus on “building back better” from the COVID-19 pandemic. SDG16+ has strong links with SDG5 (gender equality and empowerment), SDG10 (inequality), SDG 13 (climate action), central to the better future promised by the 2030 Agenda and resonate especially strongly with young people.

The 2022 and 2023 sessions will also provide a valuable opportunity to discuss the implementation of the 2019 SDG Summit’s political declaration. SDG16 aligns with the ambition of [2019 Political Declaration of the SDG Summit](#) to “combat inequalities within and among countries, build peaceful, just and inclusive societies, respect, protect and fulfil human rights and achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls; and to ensure the lasting protection of the planet and its natural resources”. World leaders also committed to ten actions that all align with SDG16, especially (a) Leaving no one behind; (b) Mobilizing adequate and well-directed financing; (c) Enhancing national implementation; (f) Reducing disaster risk and building resilience (g) Solving challenges through international cooperation and enhancing the global partnership; and (d) Strengthening institutions for more integrated solutions.

Finally, this proposal for reviewing SDG16 at every HLPF was included in the drafts of the HLPF Review resolution from 2020, co-chaired by Georgia and Benin, with broad support from Member States. It also has broad support from civil society networks and groups, and has been referenced in multiple reports including the [Rome Civil Society Declaration on SDG16](#). The global business community has also shown its support for a greater focus on SDG 16 through a [Statement from Business Leaders for Renewed Global Cooperation](#)’.

Language Recommendations

Specific language suggestions on specific paragraphs of Annex II on the HLPF Review as follows:

Paragraph 6. The high-level political forum on sustainable development shall continue to review a subset of Goals and their interlinkages, including with other Goals, at each session to facilitate an in-depth review of progress made on all 17 Goals throughout a four-year cycle. Means of implementation, including with respect to Goal 17, **and Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies with respect to Goal 16** shall be reviewed annually;

Paragraph 8. For the remainder of the current cycle of the high-level political forum under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, the sets of Sustainable Development Goals and areas/systems to be reviewed in-depth shall be:

- i. **For 2022:** Goals 4 (education), 5 (gender equality and women's empowerment), 14 (oceans), 15 (terrestrial ecosystems), **16 (peace, justice and inclusion)** and 17 (Means of implementation and Global Partnership);
- ii. **For 2023:** Goals 6 (water), 7 (energy), 9 (infrastructure/industry), 11 (cities), **16 (peace, justice and inclusion)** and 17 (Means of implementation and Global Partnership);

Why SDG16+?

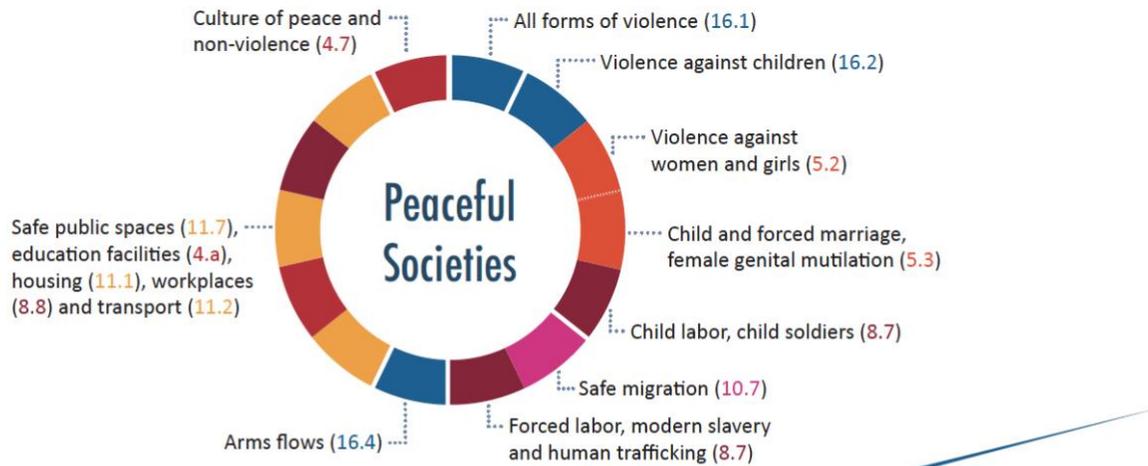
More than [half a million people die from violence each year](#). Half of the [world's children](#) and at least a third of its [women](#) are victims of violence. More than [five billion people lack meaningful access to justice](#). 1.5 billion people have criminal, civil, or administrative justice problems that they cannot solve, with unsolved justice problems costing countries between [0.5% and 3% of their GDP](#). Conflict-affected countries are at extremely high risk of being left behind by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. [80% of lethal violence](#) occurs outside areas affected by violent conflict, acting as a formidable barrier to development for the people and communities who are worst affected.

The COVID-19 pandemic reinforces such trends and threatens all countries' economic, social, and political fabric towards achieving the 17 Global Goals. An estimated [1.6 billion of the most vulnerable workers](#) in global labor markets have lost their capacity to earn a living wage. This is in sharp contrast to the [ten richest men in the world](#) who have seen their combined wealth increase by half a trillion dollars since the pandemic began. Women, children, and vulnerable communities are most at risk. The pandemic endangers at least 85 million additional children worldwide to some form of abuse. The crisis adds [13 million child marriages](#) over the next ten years due to the long-term impacts of COVID-19.

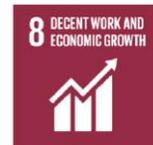
The pandemic has also brought justice systems' resilience into sharp focus, with resources being diverted away from the justice sector towards more immediate public health measures. Justice services such as the courts, hotlines, crisis centers, legal aid and social welfare services are being scaled back or operating differently due to restrictions in many countries.

Poor governance is a threat to the delivery of all dimensions of the 2030 Agenda. In many countries, levels of trust in institutions are low, undermining the basis for the collective action needed to tackle the long-term challenge of building a more sustainable future. The unquestionable rise in levels of inequality is a challenge to sustainable development. It is a growing source of political grievance that undermines democracy, fosters political instability, and undermines our ability to overcome challenges, such as the long-term social and economic consequences of the pandemic. We cannot achieve our goals for people, the planet, prosperity, and peace without effective, accountable, and transparent institutions.

At a time of flux where billions lack justice, live in fear of violence, and at risk of being left behind, we must place SDG16 at the heart of the Decade of Action and Delivery for the SDGs. **This is why it is essential, now more than ever, that SDG16 must be reviewed at the HLPF every year**




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



This statement is supported by the SDG16+ Global Community



[The 16+ Forum](#) is a multi-stakeholder platform and partnership of 12 member states, the g7+ and the World Federation of UN Associations (WFUNA), designed to share and amplify best practices in SDG 16+ implementation at regional, national and local levels, and across a wide community of stakeholders - governments, civil society, the UN, regional and international organizations, academia and the private sector.



[The Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies](#) are a group of 38 UN Member States and over 100 international organizations, global partnerships, civil society and businesses. Hosted at the NYU Center for International Cooperation, we work to accelerate action to implement the SDG targets for peace, justice and inclusion (SDG16+).



The [Transparency, Accountability & Participation \(TAP\) Network](#) is a broad global coalition of over 250 civil society organizations from over 90 countries working to advance SDG16+ and accountability for the 2030 Agenda. The TAP Network serves as a platform for joint advocacy, learning, collaboration and capacity building on SDG16+ and accountability across its diverse membership.



The [Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding](#) (CSPPS) is a global network of 800+ civil society organisations (CSOs) supporting peacebuilding and conflict prevention efforts in over 25 fragile and conflict-affected settings. Jointly, we strive for more peaceful, just and inclusive societies.



[The Global Alliance for Reporting Progress on Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies](#) is a coordinating platform for UN Member States, private sector, civil society and UN Agencies to promote and strengthen evidence-based reporting, monitoring and measurement of Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16).