

# MAINSTREAMING SDG16

## Practical Approaches to Mainstreaming SDG16

Wednesday, 31 March 2021, 9:00 – 11:00 ET / 13:00 – 15:00 GMT

### Executive Summary



The first convening in a series of virtual learning sessions hosted by the Transparency, Accountability & Participation (TAP) Network and the [Global Alliance for Reporting on Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies](#) (The Global Alliance) focused on [“Practical Approaches for Mainstreaming SDG16”](#). *To encourage open sharing and learning amongst peers, this workshop operated under the Chatham House Rule. Any speakers that are identified below have consented to being named in the notes below.*

*The Workshop focused on the following key guiding questions for discussion:*

- *What are the biggest challenges that the SDG16 community faces when it comes to mainstreaming SDG16 into national programming and actions?*
- *What are some positive examples of where governments, institutions and/or civil society stakeholders have successfully mainstreamed SDG16 into national programming and action? And what are some of the lessons learned from these examples?*
- *What does the SDG16 Community need to do to further support countries in mainstreaming SDG16, including through the VNR processes or the SDG16 Thematic Reviews through the HLPF?*
- *How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the VNRs, and follow-up from these processes? How can governments and stakeholders ensure that SDG16 remains a priority in SDG implementation going forward?*

#### **1. Introduction and Welcome**

The moderator, Peter van Sluijs of CSPPS, welcomed participants to the first workshop of the Mainstreaming SDG16 Learning Series. John Romano, Coordinator of the TAP Network, provided a brief introduction and overview of the objectives of the workshop. The series, based on the recently launched [Mainstreaming SDG16 resource](#), aims to foster learning and a sharing of experiences with peers working on the VNR process, its follow-up and implementation. This workshop aimed to allow an exchange of experiences surrounding the VNR process, particularly regarding challenges faced and potential solutions that were developed.

#### **2. Mainstreaming SDG16 in first VNR Cycle – Challenges, Gaps and Lessons Learned**

The Moderator briefly reviewed participants’ responses on challenges facing the SDG16+ community, completed by participants before the webinar. Responses revealed that the biggest challenges that the SDG16+ Community faces when it comes to mainstreaming SDG16+ into national programming and actions are (1) Lack of capacity, awareness and resources amongst government representatives, as well as from other stakeholder groups and the general public;

The image shows a circular graphic of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 16th goal, 'Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions', is highlighted in a larger, darker blue circle at the top left of the ring.

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(2) Moving beyond short-term political commitment – the challenge of institutionalizing responses and obligations; (3) Ensuring long-term political will, while prioritizing action-oriented commitments in the short-term; (4) Bridging connections between national commitments and efforts and the local level, where service delivery occurs; (5) Ensuring that SDG16 is seen as contributing towards the achievement of other SDGs, and using this to bridge collaboration across ministries and sectors of society; (6) Bringing together official and non-official (disaggregated) data, and improving data quality, accessibility; (7) The decline of accountability and civic space.

### ***i. Dr. Diani Sadiawati, Senior Advisor of the Minister for Institutional Interrelations, Indonesia Ministry of Development Planning***

Dr. Sadiawati, the development expert leading for the VNR of Goal 16 in Indonesia, gave insight into her experience supporting Indonesia's third VNR in 2021. Dr. Sadiawati shared experiences on mainstreaming SDG implementation into the National Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP) to ensure a strong commitment to the implementation of SDG16 over the next five years at the national level. Further, the 5 year development plan is used as the guideline for sub-national Provinces to formulate Regional Medium Development Plan which also mainstream SDGs target and indicators. The 2020 – 2024 MTDP integrates all 124 targets out of 169 targets of the 2030 Agenda. She acknowledged SDG16 as a powerful implementation tool as the enabler for the realization of the broader 2030 Agenda, including reducing poverty, minimizing inequalities, and improving the delivery of public services.

Indonesia has been regarded as one of the fifteen countries with the highest standard of SDG reporting in the Goal 16. Various factor are contributing the success report of Goal 16; women participation, strong example with an annex that includes detailed disaggregated data on women and youth over a number of years for several SDG16 indicator, and fairly as well as transparent on the institutional barrier to achieve SDG16. In addition, Indonesia government also assure the inclusive formulation of VNR process through online and in-person consultations of all stakeholders, including over 100 civil society organizations, were able to provide inputs into the VNR. The process also shows the government commitment to always provide inclusive and no one left behind principle. Dr. Sadiawati emphasized the importance of working closely with colleagues in the statistics agency to overcome barriers to disaggregated effective data creation and collection.

Dr. Sadiawati identified two main challenges towards mainstreaming SDG16:; (1) ensuring data availability and reliability in measuring progress, and (2) integrating nonstate actors in the planning and implementation process. Aside from that, with current condition of Covid-19 pandemic that become global health crisis, Dr. Sadiawati also mentioned that the pandemic gives impact to national priorities in which the government anticipated and make some adjustment on the National Annual Workplan 2021.

### ***ii. Jyotsna Mohan Singh, Coordinator at the Asia Development Alliance***

Ms. Singh provided insight on [Asian countries' VNR reporting](#) from the perspective of civil society. The VNR process is a chance to share experiences and challenges at the national level and should be an inclusive process with equal participation for rights-holders/civil society. In analyzing VNRs in Asia Pacific, Ms. Singh pointed to some promising trends, such as the inclusion of language on undertaking a human rights based approach and leaving no one behind. However, many discouraging trends and challenges remain in regards to the VNR process, including:

- 1) lack of state capacity to make adequate interlinkages in policy formulations;
- 2) issue of adequate data and lack of citizen-led/microlevel data taken into account;
- 3) shrinking civic space and, in some cases, purely symbolic civic participation (seen in India, Malaysia, Bhutan, Afghanistan);

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- 4) lack of political will (DPRK, Myanmar);
- 5) enforced disappearances and a crackdown of rights (Nepal, Pakistan).

Ms. Singh believes solutions lay in elevating civil society voices and linking the SDGs and human rights at the grassroots level i.e. [localizing the SDG agenda, particularly SDG16](#). This is particularly challenging given the lack of awareness and relevance of the 2030 Agenda at the local level and for key social movements. It is imperative to localize the SDG at every level to counter these backsliding trends.

### iii. Discussion

An interactive discussion was initiated using a poll to gather insights on the guiding question “**What are the biggest challenges that the SDG16 community faces when it comes to mainstreaming SDG16 into national programming and actions?**” The Word Cloud below shows participant responses, with the size of the words indicating their frequency in the responses.



With regards to the [challenge of data](#), a participant noted that data is the means to achieve the ends, rather than a roadblock like political will might be, for example. In response, it was noted that obtaining data is an inherently political process that requires an outsider perspective and/or nonofficial data sources to contextualize the data. For example, the data on corruption and transparency reported by the state itself isn't as reliable as a third party without direct vested interests involved. Additionally, data reporting is action-oriented in that it reveals gaps, a prerequisite to developing solutions and establishing a baseline to monitor progress and successes. The process of data collection therefore requires trust between state and nonstate actors. Data is political because it gives voice to citizens and includes them in the conversation. Furthermore, given the political nature of SDG16, data collection is even more complicated.

It was noted that budgeting/allocation of funds is a concrete measurement of political will that goes beyond discourse. Reflecting from the perspective of a global network, this participant also shared that the “SDG bubble” within governments is usually not inclusive of non-state actors, and there continues to be a disconnect between the language/discourse within the global SDG16 community and the national/local grassroots level.

### 3. Case Studies and Innovative Approaches to Mainstreaming SDG16

*Prior to introducing the next speakers, an interactive discussion was initiated using a poll to gather insights on the guiding question: **What have you done differently this year around mainstreaming SDG16 in response to COVID-19?***

#### i. Daniel Zavala Porras, Diplomatic Minister for the Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the UN.



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i.

Mr. Zavala Porras spoke of the political and institutional challenges to mainstreaming SDG16, particularly given the “intangibility” of SDG16-- also connected to the issue of Data. Costa Rica has taken concrete steps to mainstream peace, justice, and inclusion at the national level, including, for example, recognizing peace as a right, instituting a human rights-based national curriculum at public schools, inaugurating the Ministry of Peace institution as a part of the ministry of justice in 2009.

Nevertheless, difficulties and challenges to realizing progress lay in institutional coordination between agencies and across stakeholders both at and between the national and local levels. The creation of institutions within the architecture of the state and with a built-in system of coordination is a concrete commitment that pushes back against the obstacle of intangibility. Mr. Zavala Porras underscored the importance of leaving no one behind and focusing policies on the most vulnerable.

A question was posed to Mr. Porras on the general public’s reaction to the creation of these institutions in Costa Rica. Mr. Porras noted that the former President that created the Peace ministry was very popular - the public’s favorable reception of the institutions can be attributed to the longstanding commitment to peace and the state’s push towards extending access and awareness to rural areas, which often pose a challenge in leaving no one behind.

### **ii. Patrick Bwire, CECORE Uganda**

Mr. Bwire provided a civil society perspective to approaches to mainstreaming SDG 16. Ahead of Uganda’s VNR in 2020, CECORE partnered with GPPAC to develop [a study to review Uganda’s progress on SDG16](#) that would feed into the VNR and the CSO Report and eventually the Post-VNR CSO Agenda. These findings show that while the commitment is there, seen particularly in the creation of a coordination framework, even the government acknowledges stagnation in progress on SDG16. Mr. Bwire notes that this trend is concerning given that SDG16 is the foundation for the implementation of the entire agenda.

In terms of [innovative approaches to counter the stagnation](#), CECORE was featured in the Voices of SDG16+ campaign at the 2020 HLPF to bring awareness to the collective work taken by national and grassroots civil society in Uganda to send the message to “localize global agendas and globalize local voices.” Civil society also gathered following the VNR as a part of the national dialogue. The main challenges outlined were:

- 1) a disconnect in localization,
- 2) lack of awareness and ownership,
- 3) obstacles to obtaining diverse data. In response, they set forth a national action plan that outlined plans to strengthen the mainstreaming process and infrastructures for peace.

The main strategy of this plan centered on an SDG Localization Model to raise awareness at the local level and empower grassroots activists.

### **iii. Discussion**

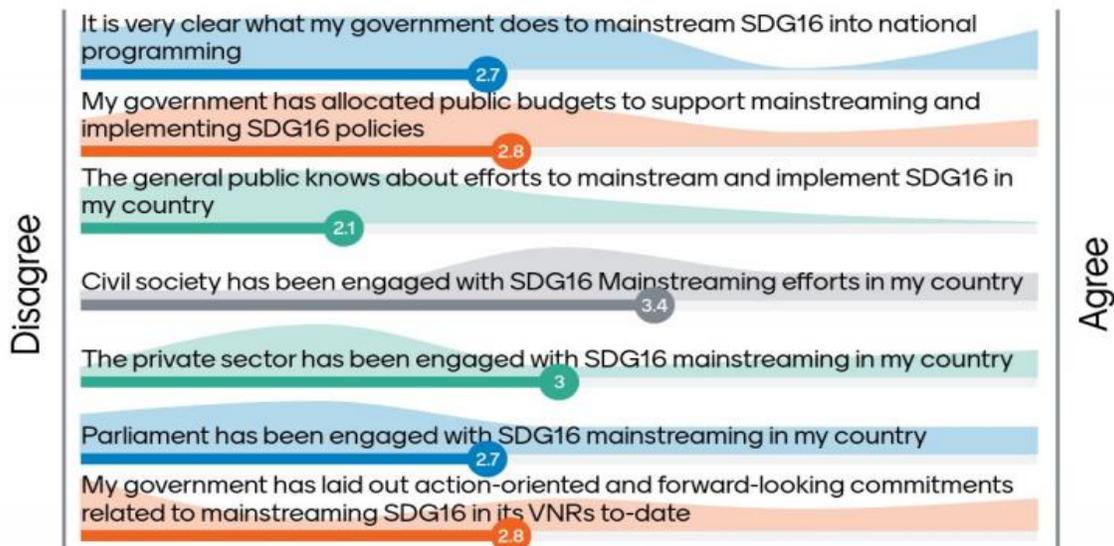
*An interactive discussion was initiated using a poll to gather insights on the guiding question:*

**Overview of Interactive Responses via Mentimeter: “Rate how you agree/disagree with the following statements:”**

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Following all the speaker’s interventions, the moderator opened the floor to discussion on best practices and innovative approaches to mainstreaming SDG16.

The challenge of the digital and physical divide was raised, particularly in regards to Indonesia and its 17,000 islands. Dr. Sadia Wati responded that Indonesia developed an action plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that takes into account both digital and physical accessibility. In areas with poor internet infrastructure public officials carried out in-person, socially distanced consultations.

The workshop closed with an interactive discussion using a poll to gather insights on the guiding question to wrap up the workshop asking about **key takeaways from the workshop or any potential areas where further support could be needed**. Responses included: multi stakeholder collaboration, inclusive CSO participation, and localization at the grassroots level, the importance of public awareness.