Virtual Learning Series on "Mainstreaming SDG16"
"Mainstreaming SDG16 to Realize the Principle of 'Leaving No One Behind'"
Thursday, 6 May, 8:30 AM -10:00 AM EDT

Summary

1. Introduction and Welcome

The moderator, Saionara Konig-Reis, Programme Manager, Data & Accountability Programme, Danish Institute for Human Rights, welcomed participants to the second workshop in a series of virtual learning sessions hosted by the Transparency, Accountability & Participation (TAP) Network and the Global Alliance for Reporting Progress on Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies (The Global Alliance).

John Romano, Coordinator of the TAP Network, provided a brief introduction and overview of the objectives of the webinar. 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 webinar focused on the topic: "Mainstreaming SDG16 to Realize the Principle of 'Leaving No One Behind."

Guiding Questions
1. How can SDG16+ be leveraged as an 'enabler' for Leaving No One Behind, and reach the furthest behind first?
   - What practices, examples or lessons from governments, civil society and other stakeholders can illustrate this, and how have they used SDG 16 to advance these objectives?
2. How do we know which groups are being left behind?
   - What are some useful practices that can help identify (and measure) particularly groups that risk being left behind? How can the SDG 16+ framework be helpful in this regard?
3. What groups are commonly left behind, and why?
   - How are these groups being left behind in view of SDG 16+ - and efforts to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies? What applicable lessons can be drawn from the COVID-19 pandemic, and crisis response efforts?
4. How can the VNR process be leveraged to promote inclusion and participation?
   - What examples exist of VNR processes that effectively account for LNOB principles? How can we safeguard these principles when mainstreaming SDG 16 into national plans and strategies?
5. How can "spotlight or shadow reports'' be used to strengthen accountability?
   - How can these civil society reporting mechanisms facilitate greater inclusivity in formal HLPF processes, and more broadly, further the principle of LNOB?

---

2. Leveraging SDG16 to Leave No One Behind – Practical examples of how governments and stakeholders have taken forward efforts to advance both SDG16 and the principles of LNOB

a. *Dr. Maher Johan, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Planning, Iraq*

Dr. Maher Johan provided a member-state perspective of Iraq's experience in the VNR process and its efforts to leave no one behind in government consultations at the national level.

Dr. Johan noted that the Government of Iraq integrated the SDGs into the National Development Plan (2018 - 2022) and Iraq Vision 2030 due to a belief that ensuring good governance, in particular enhancing citizens' confidence in the state, strengthening community participation in priority setting and decision-making, and ensuring equal opportunities among citizens, is critical for achieving development.

Three governorates were piloted to localize SDG targets and indicators, based on local needs and priorities. These pilots focused on community consultations, effective participation of local academics, private sector, and NGOs, including youth, women and vulnerable groups. An innovative approach was undertaken involving NGOs in deriving informal data on SDG16 Indicators using Social Media Platforms.

Dr. Johan noted that containing the COVID-19 crisis and mitigating its impact on vulnerable groups is the responsibility of the State. However, solidarity between development partners, civil society and the private sector, can play a critical role in enhancing social protection and security. In particular, Dr. Johan stressed the role of young people in Iraq as engines of change towards a new social contract. Giving the local communities the opportunity to actively engage in sustainable development is a potential solution for the central government to build a resilience through community-based sustainable development for the future of the country.

b. *Micah Grzywnowicz , Program Manager, 2030 Agenda, Multilateralism, Norms and Governance at Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation*

Micah Grzywnowicz stressed the importance of addressing contextual specificities and nuances when discussing leaving no one behind to ensure meaningful policy guidance. Micah proposed a holistic approach to development that addresses people's intersecting identities and the groups most likely to being left behind. To better understand these realities and develop more reflective policy, we must first fill the gaps in our data to adequately reflect the complexity of people's identities. This valuable data, often left out of reports and VNRs, can shine the light on root causes of inequalities to guide policy and forge equal access in institutional structures that leave no one behind. Filling the data gap, however, requires political will and substantial resources to build statistical capacities. "Quality Data, especially when disaggregated in an inclusive way, can reveal so much and help us understand who is left behind and why".

c. *Mandeep S. Tiwana, Chief Programmes Officer, CIVICUS*

Mandeep Tiwana provided global level insights on how SDG 16+ and LNOB are intrinsically linked. Mr. Tiwana began by discussing the importance of the inclusion of SDG16+ in the 2030 Agenda, which effectively separated the SDGs from the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) as a universal, holistic global partnership, rather than a development framework imposed from the Global North to the Global South. He provided examples of encouraging progress that have been made towards inclusivity and LNOB, but stressed that gaps and challenges remain. The protection of civic space and fundamental freedoms is the foundation for LNOB because speaking truth to power is the main vehicle to catalyze change, realize the 2030 Agenda, and ensure no one is left behind. The CIVICUS Monitor is one powerful example of how civil society can hold governments accountable to their commitments.

d. *Musa Ansumana Soko, Executive-Director, Youth Partnership for Peace and Development*

Musa Ansumana Soko provided reflections from civil society on experiences engaging with the SDGs in Sierra Leone, particularly with the government on SDG16+. He maintains the important role SDG16+ has played in practice towards holding the government accountable to the commitments of the 2030 Agenda and the principle of LNOB, which hinges on meaningful and inclusive civil society engagement at every level of planning, implementation, monitoring and review. CSOs in Sierra Leone, for example, identified concrete recommendations and actions that the government should prioritize to advance national level efforts to leave no one behind.

e. *Julia Kercher, UNDP Senior Expert on Governance and Peacebuilding*

2

Julia Kercher from UNDP provided an overview of the tool "What is a Good Practice? A framework to analyse the Quality of Stakeholder Engagement in implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda", launched by UNDP and UN DESA in January 2021.

One of the central aspects of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is the significant role that stakeholders have been assigned in their implementation, follow-up and review. Six years into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, several countries' strategies to engage stakeholders are still in the early stages. Many stakeholder engagement practices are strong in some ways but weak in others, with little guidance available for a systematic analysis. The COVID-19 pandemic has added to the challenges of engaging stakeholders in implementation efforts. Now, it is more important than ever to ensure that there is dialogue to guide government action and maintain social cohesion.

This Stakeholder Engagement framework will enable governments and SDG 16+ stakeholders to examine and strengthen the quality of their stakeholder engagement practices at different stages of the 2030 Agenda cycle, including considering the impact of COVID-19. This framework is a helpful tool to help improve stakeholder engagement practices, foster dialogue, and support the sharing of lessons learned and good practices.

3. Interactive Discussion

Following the interventions, the moderator initiated an interactive discussion using a poll to gather insights on key guiding questions from the audience:

1. *Please outline three words that describe the biggest challenges/threats to achieving the principle of 'Leave No One Behind'*

2. *Please rate the following statements on a sliding scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.*
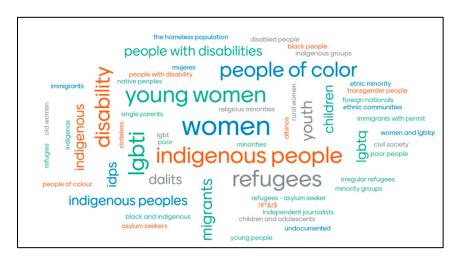
MAINSTREAMING SDG16

Mainstreaming SDG16 to Realize the Principle
of 'Leaving No One Behind'

Global Alliance
Reporting Progress on Peaceful,
Just, and Inclusive Societies

TAP NETWORK
Transparency, Accountability &
Participation for 2030 Agenda

3. *Please list three stakeholder groups that in your view are most often left behind in your country*

4. <u>Wrap-up and Summarizing Key Insights</u>

In closing, the moderator summarized some key points from the discussion, including:

- The need to create political momentum with government actors to secure political commitments and financial investments to LNOB.
- Inclusive decision making-processes, with the people who are most likely to be left behind at the table and in decision-making positions, are essential to ensure that policies respond and address people's needs and safeguard the rights of all people.
- Discrimination is a key barrier to LNOB, that can affect the ability for different groups to participate in political and decision-making processes and enjoy their rights and freedoms.
- The collection and use of disaggregated, quality data that captures people's multiple and intersecting identities is imperative to provide a holistic understanding of who is being left behind.
- International organizations such as the UN have a critical role to play in supporting civil society organizations to safeguard the rights of all people.

For more information about the Global Alliance/TAP Network "Mainstreaming SDG 16" Virtual Learning Series please visit the SDG 16 Hub.