



## Accelerating SDG16+: Innovative Action & Partnerships to Deliver on the 2030 Agenda

Tuesday, 30 January 2024 | 8:15 AM - 9:30 AM EST | Virtual  
An ECOSOC Partnership Forum Side Event

Focused on SDG16+ in practice and its interlinkages across the 2030 Agenda, [this event](#) brought together over 150 participants, as well as a variety of speakers (noted in detail below) in the context of the [2024 ECOSOC Partnership Forum](#). This event was organized by the Pathfinders for [Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies](#), the [TAP Network](#) and [International IDEA](#), with support from the Global SDG16+ Coalition. The following highlights both overarching messages from the event, as well as specific policy and partnerships takeaways and recommendations.

### Overarching messages:

- **SDG16+ is universal.** There are critical learnings to be shared, used, and implemented across diverse regional and economic contexts.
- **Identification and leveraging of SDG16+ interlinkages across the 2030 Agenda** are critical for policy coherence and efficiency, from a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. Concrete SDG16+ links to climate, education, land, gender, Indigenous rights, and overall accountability and transparency—as captured in policy, plans, and strategies—were highlighted in this event.
- **Multi-stakeholder partnerships**, with joint decision-making, are key to implementation across national and local governments, civil society, networks, and the United Nations (UN).
- Greater emphasis should be placed on **mainstreaming human rights throughout SDG16+** in policy, reporting and analysis, and advocacy.





## Speaker policy and partnerships takeaways:

### Minister Kenyeh Barlay, Minister of Economic Development and Planning, Government of Sierra Leone (Keynote Message)

- SDG16 is an accelerator Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), together with SDG4 on education. This can be seen in Sierra Leone's new seven-year National Development Plan.
- Action on SDG16 is evidenced through various reforms, including as related to: the Legal Aid Board and digitizing the legal system; the establishment of a Human Rights Commission and a National Commission on Democracy and a National Youth Commission—all working to promote national cohesion, inclusion and peace. An Independent Commission on Peace and National Cohesion has also been established.
- Through partnerships with civil society, local actors, and an Interreligious Council, political candidates agreed to peace during the election period and utilized mediators when differences arose.
- Sierra Leone is now the third most peaceful country in Africa and the most peaceful in West Africa ([Global Peace Index](#)), but the country is still vulnerable.

### Paula Fernandez-Wulff, Director General for the 2030 Agenda, Government of Spain

- In implementing the SDGs, Spain is continuing to [build partnerships with civil society](#) and across levels of government through:
  - A Sustainable Development Council that allows civil society input and promotes the localization of the SDGs;
  - A Sectoral Council that facilitates discussions around SDG implementation at the local and municipal levels; and
- Mainstreaming human rights in their 2024 Voluntary National Review (VNR) with help from the Human Rights Commission.
- Other policies in line with SDG16 include a whistleblower protection law, laws promoting government accountability, and an overarching prioritization of violence prevention against youth and children.
- Despite this progress, challenges and opportunities remain in ensuring effective policy coherence in mainstreaming the SDGs throughout government institutions, localizing the SDGs, and ensuring transparency, accountability and participation.



### [Anne Romsaas](#), Chief SDG Adviser, Norwegian Association of Local Government (NALG)

- The NALG works to secure [horizontal and vertical cooperation](#) on the SDGs across municipalities, but VNRs often fail to reflect local realities.
- Five Nordic are collaborating to produce a subnational review of the SDGs with a focus on youth and Indigenous peoples.
- The SDGs create a common language for government, business, academia and civil society, but the SDGs and relevant indicators need to be further translated to local contexts.

### [Elizabeth Hume](#), Executive Director, Alliance for Peacebuilding

- There has been a rise in conflict globally, and the Global North is facing significant challenges, which highlights the universality of SDG16.
- A networked approach for civil society amplifies messaging, pools funding, and allows for greater action and outreach. This is the cornerstone of the Alliance for Peacebuilding's strategy (See: p. 9).
- Conflict prevention needs to be integrated into other sectors through an SDG16 lens.

### [Swati Mehta](#), Program Director, Pathfinders for Justice, NYU Center on International Cooperation

- Solutions and good practices are needed but examples show change is possible through a people-centered approach to justice.
- In Sierra Leone, [recent legislation](#) empowers communities to have a say over all industrial projects on their land. The laws also ensure women's effective participation in land use committees, highlighting the connection between SDG16, SDG5, SDG13, and SDG15.
- Kenya's [Alternative Justice Policy](#) shows that access to justice can be strengthened when partnerships are forged between formal and informal justice systems.
- Multi-stakeholder partnerships are key to deliver results at global, regional, and local levels. Examples include:
  - The [Justice Action Coalition](#) successfully profiled the importance of people-centered justice resulting in the UN secretary-general's report on *Our Common Agenda*—recognizing justice as an essential dimension of the social contract.
  - The Ibero-American Alliance for Access to Justice is an action-oriented regional alliance accelerating the implementation of SDG16.3 in the region with special emphasis on data and innovation, the promotion of a regional normative





- [Mainstreaming human rights throughout VNRs](#) will also be key to increase efficiency and effectiveness of interrelated efforts.

### **Natia Tsikaradze**, Government of Georgia

- Georgia has incorporated the SDGs into its National Development Plan, with a focus on institutions, governance, transparency and accountability (SDG16).
- Reforming the public administration and public service delivery reflects this focus.
- Georgia is mainstreaming the SDGs in all policy documents, especially SDG16.

### **Jyotsna Mohan-Singh**, Asia Development Alliance

- We need to focus more on bottom-up approaches and localizing the SDGs.
- SDG16 is strongly linked to inequalities, and we need to look at redistributive economic justice, environmental justice and gender justice.
- The Summit of the Future should not detract focus from delivering the 2030 Agenda.
- Civil society plays a key role in SDG implementation, but civil society space is shrinking, making SDG delivery even more difficult.

### **Dr. Mojisola Akinsanya**, Women for Peace & Gender Equality Initiative (WOPEGEE)

- In Nigeria, the rise in gender-based violence necessitates a multi-stakeholder approach, involving survivors, grassroots organizations, and philanthropists as partners in approaching SDG16.1 (significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates).
- Pressure from civil society in this regard has led to opportunities to engage with sub-national governments in participatory budgeting, citizen-based monitoring, self-regulation and co-planning.
- These multi-stakeholder efforts have led to more inclusive policies and resources because partners have the adequate knowledge, capacity, and power to articulate their needs and make their voices heard.

### **Henk-Jan Brinkman**, International Development Law Organization

- There are aspects of SDG16 that need continued or increased engagement as related to the Pact for the Future, including: people-centered justice, pushback against military solutions and responses, and halving violent deaths globally.