

# 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



## SWEDEN AND PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

### MAIN MESSAGES

- **Enabling just and democratic societies.** A just and democratic society requires good conditions for everyone to participate and influence public decisions that have an impact on their lives. In order to facilitate this, it is fundamental that governments ensure human rights and fundamental freedoms, not least freedom of expression, opinion and information, and both empower and support people in vulnerable situations as well as civil society actors. The best foundation for peaceful and inclusive societies is democratic processes and institutions characterized by transparency and accountability that provide rule of law, gender equality and access to justice for all. These societies have the capacity to prevent and manage conflicts and to combat corruption and organised crime.
- **Ensuring equal rights for all.** Democratic and peaceful societies need to apply a rights-based approach and work towards respect for human rights, while simultaneously focusing on those who are subject to discrimination as well as the measures needed to ensure protection and safety. The rules-based global order and multilateral system play a key role in applying a rights-based approach.
- **Sustaining peace through inclusiveness and by addressing drivers and root causes of conflict.** Gender equality and inclusion of children and young persons is key to prevent and end violent conflict. Addressing the situation for marginalized persons helps prevent armed conflict. In order to successfully promote peace, the underlying causes and drivers of conflict need to be considered, and ways to tackle them. Such underlying causes may include the marginalisation of certain groups, such as women, persons with disabilities, the elderly, young people and children and the emerging challenges posed by climate change and environmental degradation.



# SWEDEN ON TARGET FOR SDG 16: PROMOTING JUST, PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES AT HOME AND THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

Sweden has enjoyed more than 200 years of peace. Peace, democracy, human rights and the rule of law are at the core of the 2030 Agenda and Sweden fulfils a number of the targets under SDG 16. Sweden is, and will continue to be, a strong voice that stands up for and protects human rights, democracy and the rule of law globally.

## Sweden at work nationally

In 2016, the Government adopted the 'Strategy for national human rights action'. Targeted strategies or action plans for different groups, such as children, people with disabilities, LGBTI people and national minorities, have also been adopted. Moreover, Sweden has decided to incorporate the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) into Swedish law.

New funds have been provided to raise the level of ambition on enabling the Sami people to retain and develop their culture. Sweden has also developed a national plan to combat

racism, similar forms of intolerance and hate crime. One priority is preventing and combating honour-related violence and men's violence against women. The occurrence of violence in different forms poses a continuing challenge. Regular consultations are held with civil society to draw on its expertise. Dialogue and cooperation with civil society are key to the implementation of SDG 16.

Other factors threatening peace and stability, such as organised crime, have prompted major investments in the Swedish Police Authority and the Swedish Security Service. Addressing these crimes requires the early

identification and prevention of money laundering and terrorist financing. The Financial Action Task Force, an independent intergovernmental body, has indicated that Sweden's work in this area is progressive. The Government has given twelve government agencies greater opportunities to exchange information to address the threat of organised crime. For Sweden to continue as a well-functioning, peaceful, democratic and developed society, the country must explore various methods to prevent and combat different forms of violence, including violent extremism.

A free and independent media, which can conduct its work safely, is crucial to democracy. Threats to journalists, propaganda and disinformation can disrupt the role of the media in holding power to account, which in turn can lead to corruption. The Swedish Agency for Public Management has been tasked with intensifying work to detect and prevent corruption.

## Sweden at work globally

Sweden has a long tradition of supporting and promoting democratic governance, peacebuilding, conflict prevention, human rights and multilateral cooperation, and believes that delivery on SDG 16 is fundamental to the achievement of the entire 2030 Agenda. The link between violent conflict and poverty is strong. The countries most unlikely to meet the Sustainable Development Goals are those in conflict. The increasing occurrence of natural disasters and negative impacts of climate change also tend to cause more damage in countries affected by conflict, and escalate conflicts.

Equal rights for all and the principle of non-discrimination are at the core of a human rights based approach. Swedish support to civil soci-

ety, governments, institutions and the multilateral system is aimed at combating inequalities, improving the situation of victims of discrimination, and strengthening conditions for the full enjoyment of human rights by everyone. A vibrant, pluralistic and independent civil society is essential for democracy, respect for human rights, and secure, just and inclusive societies.

The rule of law is fundamental to democracy and the protection of human rights. Sweden works to strengthen respect for, and implementation of, the principles of the rule of law, building knowledge and capacity, and ensuring accountability and justice for all. In 2017, Sweden became party to the International Development Law Organisation. Respecting, protecting and supporting the rules-based global order and the multilateral system is key.

Sweden is convinced of the link between inclusiveness, justice and peace, and is committed to the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security, youth peace and security, and children in armed conflict. Sweden has a long tradition of prioritising the prevention of violent conflict and peacebuilding, as well as mediation and dialogue. Sweden has launched the Swedish Women's Mediation Network and a peace process support function at its Ministry for Foreign Affairs, with a clear focus on inclusive peace processes.

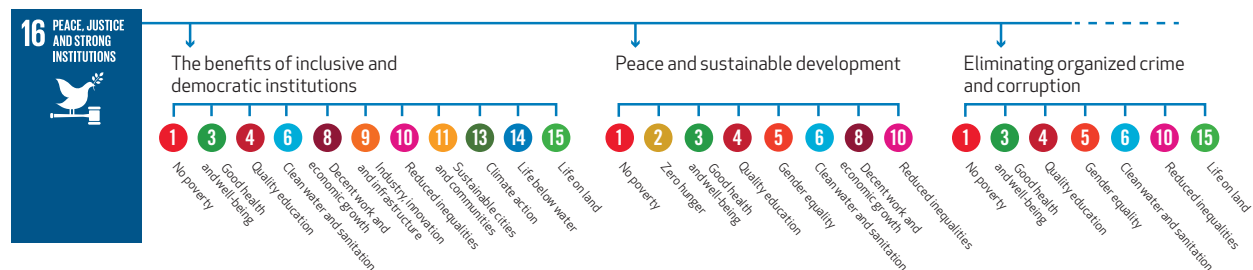
Ensuring respect for the rights of the child and protecting children from violence, both in times of peace and armed conflict, are a crucial part of Sweden's commitments – both nationally and internationally. In 2018, Sweden hosted the 'Agenda 2030 for Children: End Violence Solutions Summit', the first international high-level conference of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children.

Sweden's engagement in international peace operations, including by providing military, police and civilian expertise, contributes to

peace, security and the rule of law by supporting the development of democratic, inclusive, effective and accountable institutions. Through its engagement, Sweden contributes to preventing and addressing organised crime and corruption in fragile and conflict-affected countries.

Joint efforts and engagements to promote disarmament and effective implementation of multilateral agreements on disarmament and non-proliferation contribute to human security and sustainable development. Illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons continues to pose a significant threat to wider development goals. Sweden strongly promotes broad engagement to combat the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons, including ammunition.

## Connecting the dots<sup>1</sup>



Source: Stockholm Environment Institute

SDG 16 is strongly related to the other SDGs. Although a goal in itself, it is also an enabler for other SDGs and the entire 2030 Agenda. Ultimately, it is peace and the quality, inclusiveness and effectiveness of public and social institutions that will determine the ability of states to achieve the SDGs and promote human dignity, welfare and development, and the enjoyment of human rights. Armed conflict, violence, corruption and organised crime are major threats to these processes.

### The benefits of inclusive and democratic institutions

There is extensive evidence that democratic governance and low levels of corruption are vital to reducing poverty (SDG 1) and achieving development. Strong institutions can support public health (SDG 3), quality education (SDG 4), basic infrastructure (SDGs 6 and 9), liveable cities (SDG 11) and decent working conditions (SDG 8). The rule of law and equal access to justice, as well as inclusive, participatory and representative deci-

sion-making at all levels, reduce social inequalities (SDG 10). There is also evidence of a positive correlation between the rule of law and equitable economic development.

Effective and inclusive public institutions also have a positive effect on environmental sustainability (SDGs 6, 13, 14 and 15), as they can ensure that strong environmental regulations are followed and enforced.

Furthermore, when citizens, businesses and civil society are confident that government institutions are effective, it is easier to secure support for the long-term planning, investment and tough decisions that must be taken to bring about transformative change for sustainability.

### Peace and sustainable development

Ending armed conflicts and reducing other forms of violence are among the most important ways of improving basic human welfare (SDGs 2 and 3), since violent conflict can weaken long-term economic development (SDG 8) and worsen poverty (SDG 1) and inequality (SDG 10). Furthermore, armed

conflict can undermine education (e.g. due to school closures or prolonged displacement, SDG 4) and lead to poor access to clean water and safe sanitation (SDG 6). It can also negatively affect security and development in neighbouring countries. Investing in the prevention of violent conflict is therefore crucial.

While most of the direct casualties of armed conflict are men, women are disproportionately affected by indirect impacts associated with displacement, health provision and food security, as well as conflict-related sexual violence, which can continue at high levels even post-conflict. There is a strong link between the level of gender equality and the level of peace in a society. This highlights the need to see SDG 5 as an enabler of SDG 16 and vice versa.

### Eliminating organised crime and corruption

Organised crime and corruption affect the sustainable development agenda in several ways. Both benefit from, and constitute drivers of, violent conflicts. Corruption hits poor and vulnerable groups in society hardest (SDGs 1 and 10), but it also weakens the ability of governments to provide essential health, education, water and sanitation services (SDGs 3, 4 and 6). Drug trafficking, which is dominated by organised criminal networks, can damage health, in particular through the spread of HIV/AIDS from shared needles (SDG 3). Organised criminal networks are also involved in human trafficking and prostitution (SDG 5), arms trade and money laundering, and illegal resource extraction, such as illegal logging and trafficking of endangered species (SDG 15). Progress in eliminating organised crime could have widespread benefits for sustainability.

<sup>1</sup> This section is based on analysis by the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI). For more information on the SEI's SDG work, visit the following website: <https://www.sei.org/sdgs-agenda-2030/>



## Sweden and empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality

Sweden is well placed to implement the 2030 Agenda. The peaceful and democratic conditions that have long characterised our country, our openness to collaboration and cooperation with others, at home and abroad, strong local self-governance and a dynamic business climate have combined to create a solid foundation for peace, sustainable development and the welfare of our people.

However, Sweden is also working hard to address existing inequalities; it is committed to reducing income disparities, providing equal opportunities for people with disabilities, LGBTI people, minorities and newly arrived immigrants, achieving equity in health services and providing equal opportunities for lifelong learning throughout the country. Segregation and housing affordability are growing challenges in urban areas. Despite explicit feminist policies, women and men in Sweden are still not paid equally for equal work. Sweden still has a great deal of work to do.

To tackle these challenges, new partnerships are being formed and there is a growing awareness of the urgency to act now. Swedish municipalities and regions are committed to sustainable development. Large parts of the Swedish business community see sustainability as a competitive advantage. Sustainability is increasingly being integrated into the core of business models and is driving new innovations. Trade unions are pushing for social dialogue and decent working conditions. Civil

society is paving the way through its own efforts and by pushing decision-makers to act. More than ever before, young people are recognised as key to transformative change, and the large and growing number of older people are actively contributing to society in many different ways. The Swedish research community contributes cutting-edge research on sustainable development. More than 60 Swedish government agencies have signed a joint declaration of intent to implement the 2030 Agenda and are now finding new ways to collaborate to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals.

Sweden's ambition is to be a leader in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Implementation involves a step-by-step approach towards a modern and sustainable welfare state, nationally and as part of the global system. Multilateral cooperation is perhaps more important than ever in the modern era. Sweden's development cooperation focuses specifically on supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development. Sweden's ODA amounts to 1 per cent of its gross national income (GNI). Sweden is active in many different international organisations and international financial institutions and wholeheartedly supports the ambitions for reform and modernisation of the UN system so that its operations contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.



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