

As governance crises worsen COVID-19 impact, is SDG 16 the key for recovery?

High Level Political Forum (HLPF) Side Event

Global Policy Roundtable | 6 July 2021 | 7:30 am – 9:00 am EDT

Concept Note

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic is “heightening risks across the board. Humanitarian needs are growing. Decades of progress on Sustainable Development are at stake. And social unrest is increasing, thus deepening security risks. Many of the countries in the Global South have been left hanging without financial practical resources. Some middle-income countries face a crushing debt burden as they try to respond.”

- António Guterres, United Nations Secretary General

COVID-19 has set back advances made across all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This includes any progress made so far on SDG 16, which aims to foster **peace, justice and inclusion**. Without progress on SDG 16, achieving other parts of the 2030 Agenda will be even more difficult.

Effective, transparent and responsive governance is inextricably linked to achieving the 2030 Agenda. Without safety and security, it will be difficult to facilitate access to education for all. Without equal access to public services and addressing corruption, many marginalized groups will be denied health services. Without access to justice, disputes related to housing or employment can go unresolved.

The COVID-19 crisis has only highlighted this further as governance failures have resulted in increasing inequalities, deteriorating trust in public institutions and significant obstacles to accessible services, including health services. An **appropriate distribution, use and oversight of power** is critical for sustainable development. An effective recovery from COVID-19 requires understanding how the balance of power is changing at local, national and global levels. SDG 16 attempts to address some of these power imbalances and is therefore key for recovery from COVID-19.

We must therefore step up our work to end violence, uphold the rule of law, and strengthen inclusive institutions.¹

Bringing together the latest research and expertise on the subject, with perspectives from the Global South, this roundtable will:

- a) **distinguish** what is helping or hindering countries from achieving SDG 16;
- b) **determine specifically** how efforts toward more peaceful, just and inclusive societies are integral to defining COVID-19 recovery; and
- c) **unpack** the interlinkages between SDG 16 and the rest of the 2030 Agenda.

¹ Sustainable Development Goals Report 2019: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2019/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2019.pdf>

Purpose and Objectives

The event will connect policy makers, researchers and other stakeholders to debate the following questions:

1. What are emerging trends on SDG 16 (peace, justice and inclusion), with a particular focus on the Global South? How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected progress on this Goal in different contexts?
2. Peace, justice and inclusion can support progress on the 2030 Agenda as a whole, including on health, the economy and the environment. What do we know about these 'SDG 16 interlinkages' and how can we use them pro-actively as levers to inform recovery?

The event will showcase relevant findings from research collaborations such as:

- Emerging trends on SDG 16 from regional roundtables and thematic e-discussions aimed at amplifying research and perspectives from Latin America, Asia and Africa. Led by Southern Voice.
- SDG 16 interlinkages across the 2030 Agenda. Led by the German Development Institute/Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE).

Proposed Agenda Outline

The agenda will be moderated by Mr. Arvinn Gadgil, Director of the UNDP Oslo Governance Centre, and will include a high-level opening followed by the presentation of research findings.

- **7:30 am – 7:40 am: Opening**
 - H.E. Adaljiza Albertina Xavier Reis Magno | Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste
 - Ambassador Mona Juul | Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations
- **7:40 am – 8:25 am: Global Roundtable Discussion**
 - Ms. Natasha Palansuriya | Senior Researcher, The Centre for Poverty Analysis
 - Dr. Adedeji Adeniran | Director of Governance and Education Research, Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa
 - Dr Carolina Tchintian | Director of the Political Institutions Program, Centre for the Implementation of Public Policies for Equity and Growth
 - Dr. Anita Breuer | Senior Researcher, German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE)
- **8:25 am – 8:35 am: Respondents**
 - Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the United Nations
 - Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations
- **8:35 am – 8:50 am: Q&A and Discussion**
- **8:50 am – 9:00 am: Closing**
 - Ms. Andrea Ordóñez | Director Southern Voice
 - Mr. Haoliang Xu | UNDP Bureau for Policy and Programme Support

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