7. Evaluating Progress Towards SDG 16: Effective Governance and Sustaining Peace

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INTRODUCTION

In September 2015, Member States of the United Nations adopted a new global development framework entitled "Transforming Our World: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development." It officially came into effect on 1 January 2016 and will run through 2030. The ambition and scope of the 2030 Agenda is reflected in its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their 169 targets that will be the road map for the efforts of 193 Members States and the United Nations system over the next 15 years.

The 2030 Agenda presents a radical new approach to transforming our world, focusing on the integrated pillars of sustainable development: economic, social, environmental. It is universal, includes issues such as inequality and peace and security, and aims at leaving "no one behind". It also includes within the framework key elements on democratic governance, peace, security, justice, tackling corruption, promoting participation, access to information and other human rights and institutional capacity which were not part of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) framework. SDG 16 encapsulates much of this approach and represents a significant additional dimension of sustainable development by comparison with the MDGs. It is likely that this new approach will take different forms adapted to culturally diverse, complex and evolving realities on the ground.

SDG 16 is not only a valuable and important aspiration in its own right, it is also an important enabling goal for the entire sustainable development agenda. The 2030 Agenda will require action to secure peace, deliver justice, promote inclusive participation in decision-making and consolidate effective, accountable and inclusive institutions if the priorities in the Agenda as a whole are to be realized: eradicating extreme poverty for all people everywhere; ending all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere; combatting corruption to increase domestic financial resources; ensuring equal opportunities and eliminating discriminatory laws; securing healthy lives and promoting well-being for people at all ages; integrating climate change measures into national planning;

strengthening environmental governance; and enhancing local and national resilience to disasters.

With such a complex and interconnected agenda, there are also many obstacles to be overcome, both political and technical. These include the lack of capacity or methods on the part of government agencies for implementation, a lack of available data for measuring progress, monitoring and reporting, a lack of space at local level for people to help find solutions to their own problems, and lack of space for civil society and the private sector to promote coherent solutions.

CHALLENGES FOR MEASURING AND MONITORING SDG 16

Unlike many other thematic areas of the 2030 Agenda, producing national data on peace, justice and the effectiveness of institutions is a relatively new area of engagement for national and international actors alike. Few international standards exist for the production of governance statistics, and few countries have experience in producing such statistics. As such, out of the 23 indicators officially adopted to monitor SDG 16, only a quarter (6 out of 23) can readily be measured by countries (classified as Tier 1 indicators).[135] The rest either do not have an established methodology (Tier 3 indicators) or when they do, data are not regularly produced by countries (Tier 2 indicators).

Proper monitoring and accountability of the 2030 Agenda, in particular on SDG 16, will depend on a significant increase in investments towards improving the availability of quality, reliable and timely disaggregated data, as mandated by the 2030 Agenda. While monitoring is often considered one of the last steps in the policy cycle, the 2030 Agenda makes it clear that preparing monitoring systems should take place before implementation, by asking governments to develop national indicators and a monitoring system as a priority. Doing this provides countries with an opportunity to "ground" the global agenda in national realities and to make sure it reflects their own development priorities. In turn, these systems can be used to monitor the implementation of existing national plans and budgets where this is not yet happening consistently. Since SDG 16 is an enabler goal for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, the benefits of establishing a monitoring system early on are greater.

In recent years, significant progress has been made in defining goals, targets and indicators related to peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice and effective, inclusive and accountable institutions. Basic standard methodologies have been developed, for example, for victimization surveys, violence against women, homicide, crime trends, mortality statistics, human rights and rule of law. There are also considerable ongoing data development activities on governance and justice, which can build on global data collection activities and global methodological advances. Nevertheless, concerns have been raised by some stakeholders

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135 To facilitate the implementation of the global indicator framework, all SDG indicators are classified by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDGs (IAEG-SDGs) into three tiers on the basis of their level of methodological development and the availability of data at the global level. See "Tier Classification for Global SDG Indicators" at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/tier-classification/.

about the measurability of peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice and effective, inclusive and accountable institutions. The issue of what are the best indicators is still controversial, and very likely many supplementary indicators will be defined at country level.

Measuring SDG 16 is technically difficult, political and contested and this can make it difficult to reach agreement on indicators and the most legitimate sources of data for those indicators. The targets within SDG 16 also require using both objective and perception-based indicators. Population surveys can be expensive and subject to bias but both perceptions and experience survey-based data are especially important for understanding governance dynamics.

In countries with limited experience with measuring the effectiveness of governance, the levels of peace and security and the extent of human rights enjoyment, deepening engagement on monitoring can be sensitive and there may apprehension on the part of the government to measure areas and share the data publicly. In some cases, there is a perception that such transparency can trigger instability. In countries affected by conflict, statistical systems and administrative structures are very often without the infrastructure or the capacities to be able to monitor SDG 16 targets. In other contexts, there may be concerns about the independence of the statistics office in being able to collect and report data. In terms of new approaches, there may be concerns on the part of government that SDG 16-related data produced by non-State sectors is not legitimate and is biased.

THE UNDP NATIONAL SDG 16 MONITORING PILOT

Considering the significant measurement challenges across country contexts, UNDP with partners identified the need for a pilot initiative to help answer a number of questions related to SDG 16 monitoring: How can governments translate this new global commitment into tangible improvements in people's lives? How can governments measure what truly "matters" at country level? What type of SDG 16 data are needed to inform national plans and budgets, and what type of SDG 16 data are likely to influence discussions on the implementation of this ambitious goal? Finally, how can "progress" on SDG 16 be measured in a way that really gives a sense of how life is changing for ordinary citizens?[136]

The pilot project was implemented throughout 2017 by UNDP, in collaboration with the Open Government Partnership and with financial support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), to support inclusive processes and methodologies for monitoring SDG 16 in six countries, namely El Salvador, Georgia, Indonesia, South Africa, Tunisia and Uruguay. Additionally, the project included harnessing information from Mexico,[137] which was not part of the pilot initiative but simultaneously developed a similar methodology in coordination with the aforementioned countries.

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136 See Acuña-Alfaro, Jairo, "Monitoring the implementation of SDG 16 for peaceful, just and inclusive societies." Our Perspective, UNDP, 4 April 2017.

137 Mexico's initiative was supported by the Ministry of Public Administration and presented to the Specialized Technical Committee of the Information System of the SDGs (CTEODS) and the National Institute of Statistics (INEGI).

The main objectives were threefold:

1. Develop and implement an inclusive monitoring methodology that includes both government and civil society;

2. Make the monitoring process open and transparent and ensure that data are publicly accessible;

3. Using this inclusive approach to SDG 16 monitoring, propel SDG 16 *implementation* by engaging stakeholders not only in monitoring but also in identifying solutions to the challenges revealed in the reporting.

More generally, the pilot initiative sought to identify what types of institutional arrangements work best for a broad array of national stakeholders to collaborate effectively around SDG 16 monitoring, and what types of methodologies can be used to provide a comprehensive picture of progress, such as national scorecards combining the three categories of indicators listed above. It was intended that the multi-stakeholder monitoring approaches could be emulated by other governments as they prepare to report on SDG 16, which will be a core focus of the global SDG review at the 2019 high-level political forum on sustainable development.[138] There were several key principles guiding the UNDP approach to the pilot and to the methodology that each country applied. These included:

- Monitoring should be nationally owned, country-led and build on country data;

- In mainstreaming the SDGs, the indicators for monitoring should be contextualized, nationalized and localized;

- Local capacities for production and dissemination of data and statistics must be addressed as part of sustaining a monitoring system;

- Indicators and data should capture and include marginalized and vulnerable groups to ensure that no one is left behind;

- Indicators and data should be disaggregated by sex, age, geography, income, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability and other characteristics relevant in national contexts;

- Innovation and partnerships with non-traditional data stakeholders should be actively pursued;

- The process for establishing a monitoring framework for SDG 16 should be inclusive and engage a broad range of stakeholders;

- Monitoring should be sustained and integrated with policymaking processes.

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138 The high-level political forum discusses a set of SDGs and their interlinkages at each annual session, with a view to facilitating an in-depth review of progress made on all the Goals over the course of a four-year cycle. SDG 16 has been slated for an in-depth review in 2019, along with SDGs 4, 8, 10 and 13 (with SDG 17 to be discussed each year).

Three steps in the SDG 16 monitoring project methodology:

The monitoring methodology tested in the course of this pilot initiative was adapted to suit each country's context, priorities and relative experience with governance monitoring. For instance, Indonesia and Tunisia built on their previous experiences with illustrative measuring of governance,[139] initiated in the run-up to the adoption of SDG 16 (2014-2015).[140]

While national adaptations of the proposed monitoring methodology were encouraged, countries consistently proceeded in three distinct stages:

1. **Selection of indicators and baseline data collection,** in consultation with national statistical offices and drawing from international SDG 16 data platforms and national (official and non-official) data sources;

2. **Multi-stakeholder consultations and review of progress**: Joint review by government and civil society of the proposed indicator framework and of indicator results, and joint formulation of broad policy recommendations;

3. **Periodic scorecards:** Periodic tracking of progress using the selected indicators, identifying and addressing data gaps and formulating specific policy recommendations for each target (see illustrative sample scorecard on page 203).

Selection of indicators and baseline data collection:

Three categories of indicators[141] can be used when developing national SDG 16 monitoring systems to provide a more comprehensive picture of the specific challenges faced by any given country in implementing SDG 16:

1. Global SDG indicators, as officially adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission;

2. Other relevant internationally comparable indicators;

3. Country-specific indicators developed either by government through the national statistical system or by non-official data producers such as civil society, research institutions or the private sector.

Multi-stakeholder consultations and review of progress:

The second phase of the pilot project focused on the spirit of inclusive multi-stakeholder consultations for government and civil society to jointly review the proposed indicator framework, and to take stock of SDG 16 progress as measured by the selected indicators. These consultations were also aimed at obtaining multi-stakeholder input towards the

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139 http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/final-report-on-illustrative-work-to-pilot-governance-in-the-con.html.

140 See UNDP, Final report on illustrative work to pilot governance in the context of the SDGs', 2016, http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/final-report-on-illustrative-work-to-pilot-governance-in-the-con.html.

141 This classification of indicators was developed for the purpose of this review. It is not related to the official tier classification for global SDG indicators adopted by the IAEG-SDGs, nor does it represent any other official classification of SDG indicators.

formulation of legal, policy and programmatic recommendations for the implementation of SDG 16. While not all governments had involved non-State actors in their initial design of a national SDG 16 indicator framework (phase 1), they all did so when came the time to assess the robustness of the proposed framework and to analyse the baseline situation as measured by the chosen mix of indicators.

Periodic scorecards:

In this third phase, pilot countries designed scorecards and analytical assessment frameworks to track indicators as well as to identify and address data gaps. They also used indicator results to identify a number of policy, legislative and programmatic recommendations to accelerate progress on individual SDG 16 targets.

Lessons learned from the pilots:

The final report of the pilot project, "Monitoring to Implement Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies" (UNDP 2017)[142] summarizes five key lessons important for countries interested in replicating a similar approach:

1. **The national SDG 16 monitoring methodology with its three phases has proven to be a useful way for countries to prepare for implementation and in some cases to report on their SDG 16 commitments in the high-level political forum.** The pilot initiative has already prompted El Salvador and Uruguay to report on SDG 16 in their 2017 voluntary national reviews at the 2017 high-level political forum.

2. **Periodic monitoring is vital.** A one-off baseline-setting exercise will not go very far in triggering policy action for the implementation of SDG 16. Setting up systems that ensure regular reporting on progress is essential if countries are to design effective national SDG 16 strategies and track their implementation over time.

3. **Inclusive and participatory consultations are challenging but unavoidable.** In this new era of public policy formulation where a variety of State and non-State stakeholders expect to be "co-creators" of policies and their associated programmes, the policy formulation process matters as much as policy content.

4. **Data and indicators as a conversation starter.** Platforms, portals and scorecards are useful tools to kick-start and/or deepen national discussions around SDG 16 and what it means in a given national context. Scaling up partnerships with the private sector, civil society, academia and other non-official data producers/stakeholders to complement official statistics where gaps exist strengthens broader engagement in national discussions and national ownership.

5. **Policy development and implementation are the ultimate goal.** When designing indicator frameworks and associated data collection strategies and when

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142 See http://www.undp.org/content/dam/norway/undp-ogc/documents/Monitoring%20to%20 Implement%20SDG16_Pilot%20Initiative_main.pdf.

filling out national scorecards, stakeholders should not lose sight of the end-goal: SDG 16 data should trigger both action by policymakers and tangible improvements in people's lives.

IMPLICATIONS OF MEASURING AND MONITORING SDG 16 FOR STRENGTHENING NATIONAL EVALUATION CAPACITIES

Monitoring SDG performance, and especially for SDG 16, is not sufficient. Indicators cannot explain how or why change occurred or its significance to different stakeholders such as parliamentarians, citizens, civil society and government policymakers. Evaluation is critical therefore for understanding the results achieved, both positive and negative, and for providing analysis and evidence for reform of national policies.[143]

Evaluation capacities and the engagement from the evaluation community are also critical for dealing with the integrated and interlinked nature of the SDGs. The need for integrated implementation was already among the most important lessons to be learned from the MDGs. With the inclusion of targets for SDG 16 relating to inclusive, just and peaceful societies, the interaction between individual targets is ever more relevant and impactful. SDG 16, with its emphasis on reducing violence, improving governance and institutional capacity, and responsiveness, is foundational for the achievement of several other SDGs and is considered a key enabler for many other SDGs. In some instances, failure to advance progress against SDG 16 targets may undermine the possibility of implementing other SDGs and their individual targets. The SDGs collectively form a complex network of interlinkages and interdependencies of great relevance to designing and implementing workable national SDG plans.

Understanding and exploiting interlinkages, with the support of evaluators, will constitute a critical aspect of developing impactful national plans and strategies for SDG achievement. Evaluation can play a critical role in understanding interlinkages including for the more complex SDG 16. Evaluation practices can draw on methodologies from systems thinking and complexity science to examine whether and how outcomes and impacts are achieved in these highly complex and contextually-dependent circumstances.[144] Tools that enable evaluators to better describe and analyse the boundaries, interrelationships and perspectives involved in complex situations such as soft systems methodology and critical system heuristics causal loop diagrams, system dynamics and outcome mapping are especially important for managing the integrated nature of the SDGs. For SDG monitoring, it means establishing frameworks that will contribute to the evidence base of the strengths of positive and negative interlinkages, providing the evidence base of progress or regress across SDG targets areas and how a particular target in one SDG is contributing to or limits success in other SDG targets.

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143 Thomas Schwandt, Zenda Ofir, Dorothy Lucks, Kassem El-Saddick and Stefano D'Errico, 'Evaluation: a crucial ingredient for SDG success', International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) Briefing, July 2016.

144 Ibid..

In this regard, a key priority moving forward is to ensure that evaluation capacities and systems in international organizations and national authorities have a robust and deep understanding of all the dimensions of SDG 16 targets and their interlinkages with other Goals. Without a solid foundation in SDG 16 and its interlinkages, evaluation capacities and systems will have more limited potential to drive further understanding of the complexities of the SDGs, and what is required for progress in realizing the transformative aspects of the 2030 Agenda.

SNAPSHOT OF A SCORECARD: URUGUAY

In **Uruguay,** the Uruguayan Centre for Information and Studies (Centro de Informaciones y Estudios del Uruguay (CIESU)) designed scorecards compiling the above-mentioned three types of SDG 16 indicators, namely global indicators (i.e., official SDG 16 indicators), supplementary indicators (i.e., global SDG 16 indicators slightly adjusted to optimize measurement in the Uruguayan context) and complementary indicators (i.e., additional, country-specific SDG 16 indicators measuring aspects not addressed by global indicators). Since supplementary indicators are only a "variation" of global indicators, CIESU decided to display these two types of indicators in the same table, while complementary indicators were presented in a separate table. Trends in the evolution of indicators over time are tracked with ascending, neutral or descending arrows. The global tier classification was extended to national indicators, and a colour code was used to classify indicators as Tier 1 (green), Tier 2 (yellow) and Tier 3 (red). Finally, a narrative describes the main actions taken to accelerate progress on each target and lists the responsible actors.

It is noteworthy that Uruguay included a specific chapter on SDG 16 in its 2017 voluntary national review presented at the 2017 high-level political forum, while other countries did not. This chapter explicitly referred to the indicator scorecards produced as part of the national SDG 16 pilot initiative, along with a number of recommendations to improve SDG 16 monitoring and implementation:

> *"Recognizing the central character of SDG 16 in the framework of the 2030 Agenda,* ***Uruguay started, together with five other countries, a pilot initiative with the objective of identifying the current situation in a country with respect to SDG 16, and to discuss and propose national-level indicators and establish a national monitoring system for this Goal.****"*[145]

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145 See Uruguay 2017 voluntary national review report available at https://sustainabledevelopment. un.org/content/documents/15781Uruguay2.pdf. Translation of "Al reconocer el carácter central del ods 16 en el marco de la Agenda 2030, Uruguay se embarcó, junto con otros países, en una experiencia piloto cuyo fin es avanzar en la identificación del estado de situación del país en esta materia, discutir y proponer indicadores nacionales, y transitar hacia la generación de un sistema de monitoreo de este objetivo."

URUGUAY SCORECARD FOR SDG TARGET 16.1, SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AND RELATED DEATH RATES EVERYWHERE

GLOBAL INDICATORS	INDICATOR SCORE AND DATE (year)	TREND	SOURCE (geographical reach)	SUPPLE-MENTARY INDICATORS	DATE (YEAR)	TREND	SOURCE (geographical reach)
16.1.1 Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age	7.6 (2016)	↓	Ministry of Interior (national)				
16.1.2 Conflict-related deaths per 100,000 population, by sex, age and cause.	0 (2015)	→	Ministry of Interior (national)				
16.1.3 Proportion of population subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months.				Percentage of population that were a victim of violent robbery in the previous 12 months	5% (2011)	↓	National Victimization Survey (national)
16.1.4 Proportion of population that feel safe walking alone around the area they live.				Proportion of population that feel very or rather safe when thinking about the possibility of being a victim of robbery or assault in his/her residential area.	58,5% (2014)	↑	Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) (regional)

ONGOING ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROCESSES

The establishment of the new Penal Procedural Code (to be implemented during 2017) is a significant reform aimed to have important consequences regarding this target. In addition, the Office of the Attorney General is currently developing the National Inquisitive System of Penal Procedures in Uruguay (Sistema de Información del Proceso Penal Acusatorio de Uruguay (SIPPAU)), with the objective of strengthening coordination with other institutions, including the Ministry of the Interior and the Judicial Branch. Some recent policies from the Ministry of Interior to combat criminality that deserve mention are Problem-Oriented Policing at the preventive level and the High Operation Dedication Programme (Programa de Alta Dedicación Operativa) at the punitive level.

BOTTLENECKS AND CHALLENGES

A first level of bottlenecks and challenge refers to the definition of indicators for the target. In particular, indicator 16.1.3 includes psychological violence, an aspect that is hard to measure. Regarding indicator 16.1.4, the most relevant data are available from non-official sources (LAPOP, for example). Nevertheless, the National Victimization Survey that is currently under implementation (2017) with the support of the National Statistics Institute includes a question on this matter. A challenge would be to ensure the periodicity of this survey in order to capture the evaluation of the indicator over time. Secondly, there are inherent challenges to the implementation of the new Procedural Penal Code. A reform as this requires significant efforts to minimize implementation problems.

RESPONSIBLE IMPLEMENTERS

Ministry of the Interior Judiciary Attorney General	• Implementation of the new Penal Procedural Code • Established a defined periodicity for the National Victimization Survey

NEXT STEPS

To start implementation of the new Penal Procedural Code, the SIPPAU and its coordination with the information systems from the Ministry of Interior and the Judiciary require important efforts by the Government to guarantee its success.

On the other hand, the National Victimization Survey should be produced regularly, with periodic support from the National Institute of Statistics.