Monitoring and Implementing SDG16+:
The Relevance of Non-Official Data and Indices for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Date: Thursday, 5 March 2020
Time: 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm
Where: Conference Room 1, United Nations Headquarters, New York

Background: Four years into agenda 2030, there remain significant (official) data gaps across SDG 16. While there has been progress in addressing the large number of Tier 3 indicators (in 2017 there were 8 indicators that lacked an internationally agreed methodology) now all indicators have been reclassified to Tier 2 – an agreed methodology but with less than 50% of countries reporting data. A key finding from the 2019 review of SDG 16 at the HLPF is that critical gaps continue to persist in terms of the coverage and the quality of data available on all targets under Goal 16. Further, analyses of SDG 16 progress captured in VNRs shows that lack of reliable data remains one of the top challenges for all countries.

The SDG16 Data Initiative (DI) was launched in July 2016 by a consortium of partner organizations¹ that seeks to support the open and holistic tracking of the commitments made by all 193 UN Member States captured in SDG16+. The SDG16 DI was created to respond to the gap in terms of comprehensive data on SDG16 issues, especially civil society generated data, open global monitoring and improved availability of data for civil society actors. The partnership created and maintains an interactive website (www.sdg16.org). The SDG 16 DI is an important partnership within a broader network of multi-stakeholder initiatives, the Praia City Group on Governance Statistics and the Global Alliance for Reporting, that all share the same objective – to ensure that the SDGs and SDG 16 will enable evidence based action and measurable progress on peace, justice and inclusion in societies.

Thematic focus: SDG16 is about the importance of a governance-informed development. However, it is particularly challenging for open data collection. Other politically sensitive data are not included in the agreed set of global indicators, although they would help to describe trends and achievements in implementation.

Non-official data, as highlighted by SDG16 Data Initiative (SDG16 DI), independently address gaps in data availability, through innovative methodologies and can reduce capacity strain on NGOs through strategic partnerships. Critically, non-official data can provide accountability to governments, ensuring perceptions and needs of marginalized groups are accounted for.

This objective of the session is to advance the monitoring and implementation of SDG16+ with new data and guidance for policy makers and civil society. It will provide an opportunity to share tools, approaches and knowledge

products that have been developed and tested by civil society, by member states and by UN agencies that will help to fill critical evidence and data gaps in understanding progress on SDG 16.

The session will be divided into two parts. The first half of the session will analyze the main outcomes of the SDG16 DI and provide an overview of the type of data collected and shared through the interactive website SDG16.org, which allows users to compare progress across time and context, understand the strengths and weaknesses of different indicators and data sets, and identify gaps in data availability. Speakers will present the experience of the SDG16 DI in monitoring progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on the basis of the Annual Global Reports produced by the partnership in 2017-19 (available online at http://sdg16report.org). Since it assesses global progress towards realizing the 2030 Agenda’s commitment to peaceful, just and inclusive societies, the Annual Global Report is an opportunity to benchmark progress over the past year and explore key trends in-depth.

The second part of the session will explore partnerships that bring together both official and non-official data to measure and monitor progress on peaceful, just and inclusive societies. The session will focus on challenges and opportunities to improve the quality, availability and use of governance, security and justice data through partnerships between official and non-official entities at country level. An inclusive approach to coordination and partnership is critical for addressing data gaps especially as in many cases data already exists in multiple domains but it is not being utilized. Civil society involvement, jointly with government institutions, can contribute to reliable, good quality comparable data and civil society can also reduce the capacity strain on NSO through strategic partnerships with official data collectors.

Issues for discussion

- The importance of perception and experience-based indicators in a people-centered agenda, to mainstream gender and diversity and leave no one behind
- The value of partnerships that combine the expertise and experiences of the different communities of practice that work on SDG16 (peace, justice and accountable institutions) in order to contribute to complementing official indicators (global indicators as well as regional and country specific indicators) with non-official data, so as to capture important and often neglected dimensions of SDG16+ targets.
- The need to invest in country-level data on the basis of an understanding of a country’s SDG 16+ data ecosystem.
- The need to build partnerships and engage both data producers and data users in this conversation. How to build trust in data, how to promote more openness in data and how to facilitate data literacy among citizens.

Possible recommendations for action

- Non-official data sources should be included alongside official data sources in the global, regional and national monitoring of SDG16 implementation.
- More inclusion of civil society in monitoring and reporting processes - especially those representing local and marginalized voices - who understand and engage with SDG16+ and its targets, indicators and data.
- Partnerships involving public sector and civil society data providers should be established to increase mutual trust and improve the knowledge for evidence-based public deliberation and policies.
- Member States, particularly National Statistical systems need to recognize the important role of civil society in providing quality innovative methodologies, data and resources, and integrate non-official data into monitoring processes.
- Custodian agencies for different indicators should be required to come up with clear methodologies for assessing whether States have achieved those indicators.
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Programme

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<td>The Global State of Democracy Indices</td>
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<td>Freedom of Information &amp; Media: Independent monitoring of progress on SDG16.10</td>
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This event will be photographed, webcast (live streamed) and recorded. By registering or accepting to participate, you grant us permission to use your image or voice and statements in our event coverage material for use externally our media outlets, such as International IDEA’s websites and social media platforms.

To RSVP, please click here.
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