

## **NEGLECTED, IMMEASURABLE AND HYPER COMPLICATED: IS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 16 ON PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES DOOMED TO FAIL?**

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### **THEMATIC FOCUS**

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 is a cornerstone of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: 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. Armed conflict, violence, corruption and organized crime are major threats to sustainable development. At the same time SDG 16 is very broad, is difficult to implement and measure, and there is resistance from some regarding SDG 16 as challenging the sovereignty of states. Is SDG 16 doomed to fail or are there opportunities for success?

### **SUMMARY**

The 2030 Agenda is highly relevant and a useful framework for building peace, development and good governance. SDG 16 is a cornerstone of the 2030 Agenda and important for other goals to be reached.

There are improvements and plenty of successful stories; however, many people are left behind without their basic needs being met. There are many challenges in implementing the SDG16 and several protracted violent conflicts have increased violence and reversed steps regarding several of the SDGs.

The international community is weakened and focusing more on hard security than on human security in peace processes. Moreover, there are too many conferences with grand visions without real action plans. It is necessary to reflect more on the transition from words to actions.

Inclusive approaches to peacebuilding are crucial, and inclusive societies are at the heart of SDG 16. It is important for social, economic as well as political inclusion. However, the concept of inclusion is often generalized and carries different meanings for different actors. It is therefore important to be clearer about what is meant by inclusion, since otherwise there is the risk of the concept being confused and blurred. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) was mentioned as one of many methods for a more inclusive and sustainable society.

There is a need for political solutions but also realistic and creative solutions to step up the implementation of SDG 16. Resistance and challenges to SDG 16 have been ignored, which is reinforcing rather than solving problems. There should therefore be a more reality-based focus that faces the challenges to reach improvements. It is possible to reach SDG 16 on inclusive and peaceful societies. It needs to be accepted that development is not linear: it has backlashes and ups and downs. What is important is that countries are striving to be on the right path and persistent in improving the implementation. Also, the goals and improvements must be seen in its context. The importance of learning from local solutions and that progress is found in creativity and local solutions was emphasized.

Moreover, the goal of inclusion was discussed: is it a means or an end? The long-term focus was emphasized. Ad hoc solutions are not enough. The focus must be on creativity and durability of how to reach inclusive societies. There is a need for a more coherent agenda with multidimensional focus and multilateral actions. For instance, humanitarian aid is not sufficient for good governance and cannot replace the government, which is a key element of a sustainable peace. The different SDGs must be more integrated and local, and international actors must work together.

Post-conflict societies suffer from both horizontal and vertical distrust. There is deficit of confidence for the government because of bad governance and civil war. It is essential to promote good and creative leaders as well as to facilitate cooperation between the international community and local organizations and civil society actors. It is also essential to interconnect peace and development to reach a sustainable development. Good governance with rule of law and transparent and accountable institutions is the key for a sustainable peace. Trust between communities as well as between citizens and the government is important and must be built in the early stage of the peace process. National and local ownership were emphasized as crucial for sustained development. Leadership was emphasized, on the global, national and local levels. Actions must base on local ownership and context analysis and lessons brought into practice.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

Transparent and accountable institutions are key for peaceful and inclusive societies. There is optimism about the development of SDG 16, but there is a need to step up actions, become more practical and invest in long-term commitment. Achievements need to be taken step by step by committed individuals. It is necessary to step up the financing of the implementation of SDG 16 and consider new security risks such as climate change. A sustainable peace and good institutions are created by individuals who have their societies' best in front of their eyes.



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Honoured to be chairing distinguished panel at @SweMFA @SIPRIorg #SthlmForum on chances for success for #sdg16plus with Somalia's Foreign Minister @ambahmedawad1, @UlrikaModeer from @undp, @TPaffenholz director of @InclusivePeace, @helderdc from the @g7plus, @soder from @FBAFolke

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