

## LINKING SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT THROUGH GOOD GOVERNANCE OF SDG 16

---

### INSTITUTIONAL LEAD

**The Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance**

### MODERATOR

**Hans Born**

Assistant Director, Head of the Policy and Research Division, The Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance

### OVERVIEW

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development acknowledges the central role of effective, accountable and transparent institutions in contributing to peace, justice and the prevention of violence in the context of sustainable development. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16, and its related targets (Agenda 16+), is the SDG most closely associated with the peacebuilding agenda. National security sectors that are both effective and accountable in a framework of democratic control, the rule of law and respect for human rights are core elements of achieving the good governance ambitions of SDG 16. Under SDG 16+, all countries are responsible for delivering on their obligations to ensure safety and justice for their populations. In meeting these obligations, each state will need to redouble its efforts to ensure that public and national security are provided in an effective and accountable way. Many states, particularly those in transition from war to peace, will need international support in pursuit of SDG 16+. Based on the work of the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF) in long-term support to national human rights institutions, this session focused on the role these institutions play in supporting states to achieve SDG 16, specifically targets 16.6 and 16.7.

### FOCUS AND OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the session were (a) to explore linkages between security sector governance and SDG 16 from the point of view of ombudsman institutions, (b) to comparatively assess current engagement of ombudsman institutions with the 2030 Agenda, and (c) to discuss the road ahead for ombudsman institutions, in particular their involvement in the 2030 Agenda. The session focused on practical experiences working for independent oversight bodies. The overall goal of the session was to confirm that independent oversight bodies are key actors in the 2030 Agenda and have a lot of potential to contribute to promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

SDG 16 has a broad target on issues ranging across violence, accountability and justice. Among the target, emphasis can be placed on accountability, grievances and building effective national institutions. The 2030 Agenda serves as a new holistic approach to reaching sustainable development. Citizens' access to good services can be seen as a key aspect of the importance of the SDG 16 targets. Overall, there are good links between SDG 16 and oversight institutions, such as ombudsmen.

The work of ombudsman institutions has developed from managing individual complaints to devising strategies to find patterns, identify weak institutions and concentrate on structural changes to improve good governance. Different institutions and systems share the common goal of developing towards proactive management of complaints. One area for improvement is how

existing data can be used strategically to shift towards preventative action and to address emerging issues before they become severe.

A key challenge is to sensitize the public to the ombudsman institutions and its capabilities. Awareness of ombudsman institutions could be used to enhance the work towards SDG 16 and the 2030 Agenda. Wider awareness might further restore faith in institutions, which is an important contribution to prevention of conflict and destabilization.

In conflict contexts, transparency, accountability and access to services might be limited. One solution to this is to advocate for laws that establish the public's right to information. The right to information further links with educational outreach, to improve the public's awareness and accessibility to services.

Lack of financing limits further progress and sustainable policy reforms. To enable further work on identification of structural problems and research, donors could contribute to achieving sufficient funding.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Make greater effort to use the data that ombudsman institutions possess on current grievances with public institutions, especially within reporting on SDG 16 and its subtargets.
- Raise awareness of the role that ombudsman institutions can, and already do, play in contributing to the good governance elements of SDG 16. Increase efforts to explore their full potential in contributing to SDG 16.

### **SESSION QUOTES**

'The more unhappy the government is with the ombudsman institution, the better the job of the institution.'



This session report was produced onsite at the 2019 Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development hosted by SIPRI and the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The report aims to reflect the session discussion. The views, information or opinions expressed do not necessarily represent those of SIPRI, the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs or other institutes associated with the session.