



**ECOSOC  
Partnership  
Forum**



## **2024 ECOSOC Partnership Forum**

30 January 2024

### **SDG Action Segment**

---

### **Goal 16 - Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions**

04:15 PM – 05:15 PM,  
Trusteeship Council Chamber,  
UNHQ

### **Summary**

Organized by **UNEP, UNESCO,  
UNODC, UNDP, OHCHR, SDSN,  
Volunteers Major Group, NGO  
Major Group**



# SDG Action Segment for Goal 16

Organized as part of the 2024 ECOSOC Partnership Forum

## Summary and recommendations for action

### Background

The world is witnessing increasing insecurity with conflicts and violence erupting at an intensity that is having devastating effects on both people and the planet. The ongoing climate emergency, growing distrust in public institutions and multilateralism, and the fragility of the global economy are only adding fuel to the fire, intensifying insecurity for so many.

With only six years left in the 2030 Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are lagging. [A mere 15% of the SDGs are currently on track.](#) Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16) is showing a particularly negative trend, whereby [human rights commitments are not being met, violence is increasing, the nature of conflict is evolving, civic spaces are shrinking, inequality is hindering inclusive decision making, and corruption is eroding the social contract.](#)

[Intentional homicide peaked in 2021. Trafficking in persons appears more hidden than before with an 11% deduction in the detection of victims between 2019-2020.](#) In addition to the devastating personal consequences, the global economic impact of violence was \$17.5 trillion in 2022.

In addition, [corruption continues to undermine the delivery of public services and poses serious challenges to environmental governance \(and particularly the environmental rule of law\), especially in developing countries.](#)

Access to information is also a critical piece of SDG 16. Citizens need to be enabled to exercise their voice to effectively monitor and hold their governments to account. In 1990, only 14 countries had laws that guaranteed the rights of citizens to access public information. While in 2022, this number reached 135 laws, the need to improve legal frameworks and their implementation continues to be essential.

Protection is another important issue. In many cases, activists exercising their legally recognized rights of access to information and rights to participate in public decision-making are subjected to harassment and unlawful arrests. Threats and restrictions to civic space, [as well as attacks against human rights and environmental defenders,](#) is alarmingly high all around the world.

Environmental rule of law, for example, is essential for effective governance. It requires both science-informed, as well as culturally sensitive, legal frameworks. Recent trends show integration and decentralization in environmental governance, with positive implications for environmental rule of law.

In the lead-up to the 2024 HLPF, where SDG 16 is being reviewed, member states and the international community are encouraged to accelerate efforts on peace, justice, and inclusion. SDG 16 is a cornerstone in this integrated framework, at a time when “structural injustices, inequalities, and emerging human rights challenges are putting peaceful and inclusive societies further out of reach.” Without peace and justice, there will not be a full accomplishment of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

## Objectives of the segment

Galvanize momentum towards the implementation and acceleration of SDG 16 as an enabler across the 2030 Agenda in the lead up to the 2024 High-level Political Forum.

Set the scene on progress and setbacks on SDG 16.

Demonstrate how concrete action on peace, justice, and inclusion can drive progress across the SDGs and strengthen multilateralism.

Make recommendations for the Summit of the Future on Peace and Sustainable Development.

## Key Messages and Policy Recommendations

Achieving SDG 16 requires strong multi-stakeholder partnerships, integrated solutions, and proactive leadership from countries and member states. A **whole-of-society approach, with enhanced cooperation and coordination**, is essential, involving governments, the private sector, civil society, youth, and international entities. We need to work together to:

Address the deep-seated causes of inequality and exclusion captured in SDG 16 to achieve progress on an inclusive, human-rights based approach to sustainable development.

Invest more in strengthening national statistical systems to produce accurate, reliable, and disaggregated data which would inform national and local policies on peace, justice, and inclusion.

Strengthen the capacity of national institutions to detect and monitor trends, of different forms of corruption, and to include gender and cultural aspects as relevant factors in the implementation of national information systems and anti-corruption policies.

Ensure the existence and implementation of access to information laws that guarantee inclusion, disability rights, and gender equality, as well as access to the internet, which is crucial for access to information in the digital age.

Strengthen protective regulations and mechanisms, including independent national human rights mechanisms, in favour of human rights defenders and professionals who help ensure public access to information.

Enhance efforts to tackle drivers of biodiversity loss and pollution, including corruption, wildlife trafficking, and deforestation, and promote an inclusive approach to addressing the climate crisis, which recognizes the intersectionality of social and environmental justice.

Transform education and lifelong learning to allow both cognitive and noncognitive learning to be a driver of peace and sustainable development across nations; and prioritize the educational needs of migrant and refugee youth by implementing policies that ensure equal access to education opportunities.

Engage youth, including from migrant and refugee communities, activists, peacebuilders, volunteers, human rights defenders, and environmental activists as leaders, agents, and participants at all steps of decision-making.

## **Resources**

For examples of partnerships, initiatives, and evidence of why SDG 16 matters and how to scale up global efforts please refer to the list of resources provided on the webpage.