2024 HLPF Thematic Review
Expert Group Meeting
7 May 2024

Conference Room 6, United Nations Headquarters

Meeting Summary for Session on SDG 16[1]

1. Introduction

The theme of the 2024 High Level Political Forum (HLPF) is "Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions". The 2024 HLPF will have an in-depth review of Sustainable Development Goal 1, End poverty in all its forms everywhere; Goal 2 End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture; Goal 13, Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts; Goal 16, Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels; and Goal 17, Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

The HLPF in July 2024 will be the first HLPF under the auspices of ECOSOC after the 2023 SDG Summit – the HLPF convened under the auspices of the General Assembly in September 2023. The 2024 HLPF will support the implementation of the Political Declaration and other outcomes of the SDG Summit for advancing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The Forum will provide an opportunity to translate the political guidance and commitments from the SDG Summit into tangible policy guidance and practical actions, which is particularly timely with the upcoming Summit of the Future taking place on 22-23 September 2024 and the planned adoption of a Pact of the Future.

In preparation for the review of SDG 16 and its role in advancing sustainable development across the 2030 Agenda, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Sustainable Development Goals (UN-DESA-DSDG), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in collaboration with other partners, organized an Expert Group Meeting (EGM).

The EGM was organized back-to-back with the SDG 16 Conference, held on 6 May 2024, which informed the conversations. Participants included 30 specialists on peace and security, access to justice, rule of law, good governance, transparency and access to information, corruption, trafficking in persons, statelessness, discrimination and inclusion, violence against children, peacebuilding and environmental law, among others. Experts represented academia, international organizations, civil society organizations and local governments. The meeting was designed to bring together multi-disciplinary experts working on SDG 16 to consider how peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions can

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[1] The recommendations expressed in this report are a summary of the contributions made by experts in the meeting and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations.

contribute to the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda and how other various sectors can contribute to the achievement specifically of SDG 16.

2. Stocktaking and challenges

With six years to go to 2030, progress towards achieving the SDGs is off track and SDG 16 is no exception. Lack of progress on Goal 16 affects the achievement of all the other SDGs, as peace, good governance, effective institutions, access to justice as well as freedom from fear and violence, are critical enablers of sustainable development. Governance has been identified as "an essential lever of the systematic transformations needed to achieve all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)", as highlighted in the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) 2023.

Progress towards SDG 16 is slow and in some cases has been reversed. Efforts towards preventing and reducing violence, access to justice for all, inclusive governance and peaceful societies show signs of stagnation or regression. For instance, conflict and violence are on the rise; human rights infringements continue to be recorded in many countries; the rule of law is backsliding; civic space is shrinking; and access to justice continues to be elusive for large portions of national populations, especially the most marginalized.

For example, the available data on violence against children is deeply alarming. By the end of 2022, 43.3 million children, including 17.5 million child refugees and asylum seekers, were displaced due to conflict and violence, exposing them to heightened violence and crime.[2] In 2021, intentional homicides reached the highest level observed in the past two decades, with approximately 458,000 intentional homicides.[3] Violence-related cases have a crucial gender dimension, with globally nearly 89,000 women and girls killed intentionally in 2022 – mostly by intimate partners.[4] While men are the predominantly the victims and perpetrators of homicide generally, women are predominantly the victims inside the home. Little progress has been achieved to date in ensuring access to justice for all (target 16.3). The proportion of unsentenced prisoners remains at around 30 per cent of the global prison population and overcrowding in prisons is reported by almost half of countries with relevant data.[5]

Corruption continues to be an issue in all regions. One measure of corruption used for the global SDG indicators, the prevalence of bribery as reported by individuals and firms, remains alarmingly high, with reported prevalence rates surpassing 20 per cent in many countries.[6] In addition, corruption continues to undermine the delivery of public services – and trust in institutions – and poses serious challenges to environmental governance and particularly the environmental rule of law, especially in developing countries. It also enables some of the most serious drivers of biodiversity loss, wildlife trafficking and deforestation.[7]

Despite these challenges, there are also promising indications of progress towards the achievement of the SDG 16 targets. There has been some progress on target 16.9 on birth registration. The proportion of those whose birth is registered increased from 71.2 percent in the period 2010-2016 to 77.2 in 2022.[8] However, the birth of almost one quarter of children under the age of 5 worldwide was not registered, denying legal identity and access to social services to the most vulnerable. While there was a decrease in the overall number of victims of trafficking in persons from 2019 to 2022, it is challenging to assess the overall size of the challenge due to the fact that many victims remain undetected. The percentage of child victims detected increased from 28 per cent in 2014 to 35 per cent in 2021.[9] Access to information is critical for enabling citizens to exercise

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[2] Annual report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, 2023, A/78/214.

[3] UNDESA. 2023. Report of the Secretary-General on Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Special Edition.

[4] The highest yearly number recorded in the past two decades. UNODC – UN Women, Gender-related killing of women and girls (Femicide/Feminicide), Global estimate of female intimate partner/family-related homicides in 2022.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] https://www.unep.org/resources/publication/environmental-rule-law-tracking-progress-and-charting-future-directions

[8] Global Progress Report on Sustainable Development Goal 16 Indicators: A wake-up call for action on peace, justice and inclusion (UNODC, OHCHR, UNDP 2023).

[9] Global Progress Report on Sustainable Development Goal 16 Indicators: A wake-up call for action on peace, justice and inclusion (UNODC, OHCHR, UNDP 2023).

their voice to effectively monitor and hold their governments to account. In 1990, only 14 countries had laws that specifically guaranteed the rights of citizens to access public information. In 2022, this number reached 135 countries with laws or regulatory frameworks.[10] However, despite the increase, the implementation of these laws poses challenges in many countries.

In the case of SDG 16, data gaps remain a challenge for assessing progress on the various targets in a meaningful manner. This year, for the first time, data is available on all goal 16 indicators, although for some the country coverage continues to be limited and more investment is needed to expand data availability. On average, across all SDG 16 targets, only 40 percent of countries have reported data for at least one year since 2015, limiting the information that could drive evidence-informed policies to accelerate progress towards SDG 16.

Experts stressed that the 2030 Agenda demands a data revolution so that we can measure progress. Experts noted the adoption last year of "Governance Statistics" as a new domain in the classification of official statistics by the UN Statistical Commission as a huge step forward in advancing statistical capacities on key SDG 16 areas. From a nascent area in 2015 when the Praia Group of Governance Statistics was created to where we are today, it means that countries now have an internationally agreed framework under which National Statistical Systems and all actors can collect and conceptualize governance data and initiate operationalizing it.

In relation to data, it was also noted that many of the challenges captured in SDG 16 go unreported for a number of reasons, including for the fact that too often legal problems do not go through formal institutions, such as police or the justice system. Some participants suggested that an additional indicator for SDG 16.3 on the number of people with unresolved justice needs could be very useful. In some cases, individuals are not aware that their problem is legal in nature or they do not feel comfortable reporting their problems. A few SDG 16 indicators are related to illicit issues and therefore hard to measure by definition. Too often, authorities knowingly underreport the problems of certain marginalized groups or with certain issues, such as violations against LGBTQI+, human rights or environmental defenders, stateless persons and internally displaced people.

Discussions were also placed in the context of existing and upcoming intergovernmental agreements. At the SDG Summit in September 2023, countries reaffirmed the need to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies that provide equal access to justice for all and that are based on respect for human rights, on effective rule of law and good governance at all levels and on transparent, effective and accountable institutions.[11] The Political Declaration recognized that efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts and foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies have often been fragmented and insufficient.[12] It further emphasized the need to continue to integrate the SDGs into national policy frameworks and develop national plans for transformative and accelerated action, and make implementing the 2030 Agenda and achieving the SDGs a central focus in national planning and oversight mechanisms.[13] The Political Declaration also emphasized the need for strong action to bridge the digital divides and spread the benefits of digitalization, as well as to ensure that human rights are protected both online and offline.[14]

In general, the importance of a human rights and gender-based perspective was highlighted throughout the meeting's interventions. In addition to implementing the SDG Summit outcomes, some experts called for the need to "re-integrate" human rights and the commitments on peaceful, just and inclusive societies into the current intergovernmental discussions and stressed the need to have a long-term perspective when looking ahead to the Summit of the Future and the Declaration for Future Generations.

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[10] A steady path forward: UNESCO 2022 report on public access to information (SDG 16.10.2)
https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000385479.locale=ru.
[11] General Assembly of the United Nations, Political Declaration of the SDG Summit, para. 20. https://undocs.org/A/RES/78/1.
[12] Ibid, para. 26.
[13] Ibid, para. 38 s.
[14] Ibid, para. 38 c.

3. **Multiple crises and recovery**

The COVID-19 pandemic, ongoing conflicts, climate disasters and debt crises have significantly hindered progress towards SDG 16. The pandemic exacerbated existing vulnerabilities and inequalities, impacting access to justice and governance. Conflict and violence, including rising homicide rates and trafficking in persons, have further destabilized communities and hindered development efforts.

Experts also highlighted the further complexities to existing challenges, stressing the evolving nature of violent conflicts; trafficking in persons appearing more hidden than before; firearms tracing remaining insufficient thereby preventing countries from significantly reducing financial and arms flows; and corruption and existence of weak institutions allowing transnational organized crime, including terrorist and firearms trafficking networks, to flourish. Terrorist organizations have sold women and girls in open markets of prostitution to fund their criminal activities, and in 2022, one piece of research found a 300 per cent global increase in internet searches of sexually exploitative terms relating to Ukrainian women. The reproductive trafficking of women and children, in the form of commercial surrogacy, is also gaining traction culturally and legally.

Since SDG 16 was last reviewed in 2019, other global challenges have also further deepened. Experts mentioned deep uncertainties, increasing polarization, widespread dis- and misinformation and declining trust in public institutions as challenges for not only SDG 16 attainment, but for implementation of the SDGs at large.

4. **Policies and actions to maximize synergies, mitigate trade-offs and drive transformation**

Participants discussed several innovative solutions and ongoing initiatives that could accelerate progress towards SDG 16. Dedicated time was allotted for discussions on interlinkages between SDG 16 and the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Tackling data challenges
The importance of tackling challenges related to monitoring and data collection came through the discussions in all sessions, as experts reflected that many indicators still lack broad reporting. It was stressed that enhanced collaboration between national statistical systems, civil society organizations, academia and national human rights institutions can contribute to reliable, good quality, comparable data while maximizing existing resources. Several recommendations were made to enhance monitoring and review of SDG 16.

Ensuring quality reliable data on SDG 16, including by utilizing unofficial data – Experts reflected that the distinction often made between official and unofficial data is not always helpful, as the important issue is the existence of credible, reliable, quality data that is open and accessible to all stakeholders and that is country-produced and owned. National statistical systems are the primary entities mandated at national level to produce, compile and report data for the global SDG 16 indicators. In the SDG era, National Statistical Offices frequently have the coordinating role of broader data ecosystems. In some countries, this includes the coordination of unofficial data producers or unofficial operations. More inclusive data will require the contribution of stakeholders in the data production process to ensure alignment with the needs and priorities of all population groups.

Experts stressed that integrating a variety of data sources is crucial to monitoring SDG 16. Unofficial data sources play a critical role in addressing gaps not covered by official indicators (examples mentioned, included, for instance, the CIVICUS Monitor Methodology, the Open Budget Survey, the World Justice Project Rule of Law Index, or International IDEA's Democracy Tracker, Halfway to 2030 Report on SDG 16+). It was noted that CSOs play a significant role in sourcing non-official data. Non-traditional data sources play a key role in democratizing information and data by making it more accessible and representative of diverse groups and perspectives. There is also a recognized need for more and better survey-based data (see, for example, the SDG 16 Survey Initiative), including perception and experience-based statistics. Qualitative assessments are valuable as they provide depth and context that quantitative data alone cannot offer.

Experts noted, at the same time, that there are pitfalls and potential negative impacts in utilizing some non-traditional data sources, such as social media. Caution must be exercised, for example, to ensure that the non-traditional data sources are not used for surveillance that could harm vulnerable groups.

Enhancing data partnerships, including with civil society – An inclusive approach to partnership is critical for addressing data gaps especially as in many cases data already exists in multiple domains but it is not being utilized. An increasing number of countries are undertaking comprehensive mappings of their SDG 16 data ecosystem and are using data from a wide variety of sources for efforts such as the Voluntary National Reviews. A good example is the partnership approach of the Praia City Group which brings together national statistics offices, civil society, UN agencies and international organizations to advance standards on governance statistics, and there are an increasing number of partnerships between national human rights institutions, civil society and national statistical offices. Another example is the High-impact Initiative FutureGov launched at the SDG Summit in September 2023 that brings together UN DESA, UNDP and other partners to provide technical assistance, channel resources, facilitate intergovernmental learning and serve as a knowledge platform for strengthening public sector capabilities.

Civil society organizations can be key for reliable and quality data on SDG 16 and for capturing a more comprehensive picture of SDG 16 issues from the ground up. CSOs often have closer ties to local communities and can provide insights that might otherwise be overlooked or inaccessible to governmental and international agencies. The involvement of CSOs in SDG 16 data collection helps create more inclusive data narratives that reflect the diverse experiences of all community segments, including the most marginalized. These narratives are crucial for shaping policies that are truly inclusive.

Inclusion of marginalized groups – Marginalized groups, including those based on gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnic group, people of colour, disability status or others (LGBTQI+ community, stateless populations, refugees, migrants) often remain invisible in SDG 16 data. This data invisibility undermines progress towards justice and inclusivity, as this invisibility can perpetuate their exclusion from policymaking and hinder the development of inclusive policies. At the same time, experts stressed the need to ensure that collection of data does not harm participants. This is particularly important for certain marginalized groups who might be vulnerable to retaliation or other negative consequences from data exposure.

The role of young people was also repeatedly addressed by experts, in monitoring and implementation of SDG 16 at large. Young people are not just future leaders, but active agents of change and contributors today. It is crucial to empower youth with genuine decision-making roles, rather than symbolic inclusions. The discussion stressed the importance of supporting youth-led initiatives with adequate resources and embracing digital platforms for effective mobilization, "meeting youth where they are."

Investing in prevention

The prevention of violent conflicts was highlighted as a major priority due to the immensely destructive nature of violence and for its potential to drive positive development outcomes. Several experts stressed that energies should be focused on preventing conflicts before they escalate into violence, in a holistic manner. In a world faced by complex challenges, by addressing root causes and building effective and inclusive institutions, conflict prevention efforts can help create resilient societies capable of withstanding and peacefully resolving disputes. One example experts highlighted are the Alternative Dispute Resolution centers in Somalia, which the International Development Law Organization has supported.

It was noted that often the challenge with conflict prevention is the fact that absence of violence can be harder to monetize, and the benefits can more easily stay hidden or only materialize over the long run. More work should be done to make the benefits of prevention more visible through research and awareness raising.

Examples of preventative measures mentioned include tackling the root causes of instability through provision of equitable basic services, mitigating and adapting to climate change, including through sustainable management of natural resources, and creating early warning systems and community-based dialogues with an emphasis on dispute resolution. Conflict prevention should enhance social cohesion by addressing grievances and fostering dialogue among different community groups, reducing the likelihood of violence at

all levels. The establishment of permanent dialogue and grievance mechanisms can play an important role in that regard.

Experts stressed the need to enhance gender equality and women's empowerment throughout the discussions, and highlighted women's and girls' roles as powerful agents for conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

Leveraging interlinkages

The interlinkages between SDG 16 and the economic, environmental, and social dimensions of sustainable development emphasize the need for integrated approaches to achieve the SDGs. Experts stressed that peaceful, just and inclusive societies provide the foundation for sustainable economic growth, environmental protection and social equity, creating a virtuous cycle that supports long-term sustainable development.

Regarding the economic dimension, it was noted that transparent and accountable institutions based on the rule of law foster a stable environment for economic activities. Experts highlighted the increasing sophistication and transnational nature of corruption, stressing the necessity of leveraging modern technology for tracking and combating it effectively. Furthermore, the discussion illuminated the close relationship between discrimination and limited access to economic opportunities, underscoring the imperative for comprehensive and inclusive strategies to promote equality and prosperity and eliminate discriminatory laws. The urgent need to tackle the root causes of conflict and instability was also stressed, with linkages between state's failure to deliver basic public goods, jobs, health care and reduce extreme poverty and inequalities noted as examples.

Experts stressed the immense direct and indirect economic impacts of violence and homicides, causing death, destruction, displacement and disease. While burdened criminal justice systems bring direct costs, the fear and avoidance caused by violence often reduces economic activities and investment. Moreover, chronic exposure to violence was recognized to be a critical factor perpetuating cycles of poverty, particularly among vulnerable populations, such as children, who often fail to reach their full educational and income earning abilities as a result of trauma. Hence, the pervasive impact of violence not only undermines socio-economic stability but also exacerbates inequalities and hampers opportunities for upward mobility.

Regarding the social dimension, experts stressed particularly the interlinkages between SDG 16 implementation, gender equality and participation of women, youth and other marginalized and excluded groups. Participants reflected on the significant challenges posed by the underrepresentation of marginalized groups, women and girls across all societal realms, spanning economic, political and financial sectors. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by sexual violence and trafficking in persons in its various forms; 71 per cent of detected trafficking victims are women and girls and 94 per cent of detected sex trafficking victims fall into the same demographic. Women trafficked for forced labor also face heightened risks of sexual violence and exploitation. Trafficking for child marriage is also widespread. When looking at how best to implement the required policies, experts identified the need to redistribute resources, a fundamental step towards ensuring that women and girls enjoy equitable access to opportunities and benefits. This commitment to fairness and inclusivity was seen to be paramount in dismantling systemic barriers and promoting true equality in all facets of society. Experts also highlighted the importance of collective quantitative and qualitative data and evidence on all forms of gender-based violence and discrimination against women and girls.

Furthermore, empowering young leaders was recognized by participants as indispensable in driving positive change and ensuring the longevity of collective efforts. Efforts to empower youth should reflect the diversity of youth groups (LGBTQI+, indigenous youth and others). By providing support and resources to scale up the efforts of such groups, we can not only harness the energy and innovation of youth but also lay the foundation for a future rooted in inclusivity, equality and justice.

Regarding the environmental dimension, several speakers referred to the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. However, repeatedly in human history, illegal mining, timber harvest or clearing of agricultural land, for example, has often been facilitated by a lack of rule of law, weak enforcement and monitoring and insufficient data. For instance, in the past decade, according to civil society organizations, around 2,000 environmental defenders have been killed – however, no official data exists, as governments do not often keep track of such violations. Several speakers stressed the connections between climate action, a just transition, peace and security and good governance. For example, there is growing evidence of interlinkages between climate change, food security, energy, water, peace and stability.

Environmental rule of law is vital to our society, for protecting rights and enforcing obligations, especially regarding climate action and justice. The need to refocus justice systems to better protect the planet and its people was highlighted. Experts stressed the need to create a positive cycle among good governance, the rule of law and environmental protection. For example, marginalized communities can be well suited as advisors when it comes to governments enacting policies to protect the environment. This legitimizes institutions against corruption and ensuring the effectiveness of environmental legislation. Additionally, laws that require the documentation of emissions can lead to the transparency of institutions and the awareness of greenhouse gas levels. A cycle in which advocates of law and advocates of environmental protection can jointly support initiatives is crucial in demonstrating that SDG 16 ensures relevant practices that can drive change.

Throughout the conversations on interlinkages, experts highlighted several initiatives and projects that aim at tackling SDG 16 challenges in an integrated manner, such as the Joint Strategy to End Violence against Children 2023–2030, developed by UNODC and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, and the International Development Law Organization's ongoing projects in Kenya on natural resource use, rule of law, gender and climate. Other examples of work leveraging interlinkages include the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies collaboration with Peace in Our Cities network to address urban violence, and the World Justice Project's report Disparities, Vulnerability, and Harnessing Data for People-Centered Justice that explores how gender empowerment and poverty affect justice outcomes. In addition, experts highlighted the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe work on Just Transition and the work of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Environmental Defenders under the Aarhus Convention. The Rome Civil Society Declaration on SDG16+ as well as the Hague Declaration on Equal Justice for All by 2030 were also referred to by several speakers as useful resources in this regard.

Supporting local governance and SDG implementation

The role of local and regional authorities in monitoring and implementing SDG 16 was highlighted as crucial. Local governments are often at the forefront of SDG 16 efforts, playing a pivotal role in promoting peace and ensuring effective governance. Local governments should be supported in implementing SDG 16 strategies that prioritize people-centered approaches.

Experts stressed that decentralized cooperation and city-to-city diplomacy can be used to share good practices, resources and innovations that support the effective implementation of SDG 16 at the local level. Local governments should be encouraged and supported to develop local strategies for peacebuilding and violence prevention through inclusive and participatory approaches.

Local governments can also benefit from support to increase their capacities in reporting data accurately and transparently, such as through the Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs). Indicator frameworks that are tailored to local circumstances while maintaining comparability can facilitate better peer learning and accountability.

5. **Means of implementation: Mechanisms and partnerships to accelerate progress**

The role of partnerships was stressed throughout the conversations, as partnerships among civil society, academia, parliamentarians, youth groups, governments and all other stakeholders can drive progress on SDG 16. These collaborations can help raise awareness about the importance of governance and justice and facilitate the implementation of policies aligned with SDG 16.

Leveraging science, technology and innovation

Science, technology and innovation can play a crucial role in advancing SDG 16. New technologies can, for example, be used for enhancing accountability and transparency, improving access to justice, promoting peace and security through early warning systems and communications, strengthening and making institutions more effective, and for protecting human rights. One concrete example of an emerging technology being used to enhance justice attainment is the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to prepare people with autism spectrum disorder for the court room environment. Another example raised referred to the use of AI to improve administration of electoral bodies.

At the same time, several experts stressed that, while technology can significantly support progress on SDG 16, there are also associated risks that need to be addressed to ensure that technological interventions do not inadvertently cause harm or exacerbate existing issues, such as inequalities.

Regarding associated risks, experts highlighted, for example, questions of privacy and data security. Sensitive personal and legal information can be vulnerable to hacking and unauthorized access, and technologies used for monitoring and data collection can be misused for mass surveillance, infringing on privacy rights and civil liberties.

Use of new technologies, such as AI, can also exacerbate existing inequalities. Unequal access to technology can widen existing social and economic disparities, leaving marginalized groups further behind. AI systems can perpetuate and even amplify existing biases if not properly designed and trained on diverse data sets, corrective mechanisms and populations without digital literacy or access to technology may be excluded from services and participation in governance. For these reasons, speakers proposed that for example persons with disabilities should be invited to test new digital systems from the start.

Experts also raised the issues related to the use of social media and other digital platforms that can be used to spread hate speech, misinformation and disinformation, undermining trust in institutions and democratic processes. To overcome this, media literacy and critical thinking curricula must be implemented by educational institutions. This highlights an interlinkage between long-term attainment of SDG 16 and education, and the UNESCO Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development was mentioned as a useful guidance document in this regard.

It was noted that the global nature of digital data can create complexities in legal jurisdiction and enforcement. Rapid technological advancements can outpace the development of appropriate legal and regulatory frameworks, leading to misuse or inadequate protections. The Global Digital Compact, currently being negotiated, was mentioned as one pathway for a more unified take on development and digitalization. The Universal Safeguards Framework for Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) launched by the Office of the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology and UNDP was also specifically mentioned in this regard.

Capacity development and financing for monitoring

More investment is needed in SDG 16 data collection. Significant efforts are required to strengthen national statistical capacities to provide the necessary data and statistics for monitoring SDG 16. Discussions emphasized the need for securing substantial funding to back initiatives that expand data capabilities, particularly in settings where data gaps are more pronounced.

Capacity building also emerged as a critical need, with a focus on enhancing the technical skills and capabilities of those involved in data collection and analysis. Developing these skills ensures that stakeholders can effectively interpret and utilize data to inform policy decisions and track progress towards achieving SDG 16. Financial and technical support for non-official data initiatives, such as those led by CSOs or local community groups, is essential. This support helps capture diverse perspectives and experiences, particularly from marginalized groups.

Linking the availability of financing directly to policy impact and progress towards SDG 16 can incentivize further investments. Demonstrating the tangible benefits of investment in data and capacity building can help secure continued financial support from both domestic and international sources.