Major Groups and Other Stakeholders' sectoral papers on SDG 16

MGOS presented their sectoral papers to DESA few months ago. Many included their views on SDG 16. Listed below are those views that can be used to at the Rome Conference by the MGOS representatives and other colleagues from MGOS participating in the Conf.

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

NGO Major Group

Call to Action - Sustainable Development Goal 16

1. Ensure respect for fundamental freedoms, including association, expression, and assembly, which are required for a free and vibrant civil society;
2. Integrate rule of law, violence prevention, and governance-oriented approaches throughout sustainable development efforts and priorities;
3. Uphold the independence and integrity of justice systems and the legal profession, which are essential for upholding and maintaining the rule of law, public confidence in strong institutions, the fair and effective enforcement of laws, and the fair administration of justice without discrimination;
4. Expand public understanding of and respect for the rule of law, and promote the right to access information, public awareness campaigns, civil society's role in ensuring government accountability, and independent and pluralist media;
5. Ensure meaningful access to justice systems at every level, recognizing that additional actions are needed to create enabling environments for marginalized populations — women and girls, children/youth, LGBTQI persons, persons with disabilities, racial/ethnic, religious and caste minorities, indigenous people, migrants, refugees, and displaced persons — and to ensure and empower their full and equal access to justice mechanisms, including legal aid, legal protections to prevent discrimination, inclusive participatory processes within justice system, remedies, and victims' services;
6. Continue to support and accelerate efforts to identify, measure, monitor, and report on indicators, including supplementary and complementary indicators, for SDG 16;

7. Support through policy and financial resources intergroup conflict resolution, informal justice mechanisms, and reconciliation mechanisms in accordance with law;
8. Ensure proper legal and official recognition for people from vulnerable communities like stateless people, caste-based discriminated communities, refugees, and others to ensure access to services and justice for these communities;
9. Promote peace, rule of law, justice, and inclusiveness in all aspects of international development, including through international cooperation and support for inclusive, meaningful, and integrated consultative processes for policy planning, decision making, and implementation at all levels;
10. Develop accountability mechanisms at the national level to address human rights complaints and cases.

Challenges and Progress in Achieving SDG 16

Strengthening peaceful societies, strong institutions, and access to justice are at the core of SDG 16, and they have profound relevance throughout the SDGs as a whole. The 2030 Agenda is dependent upon an unerring focus on the responsibility to achieve a peaceful, inclusive, and robust future, guided by the rule of law.

Peaceful Societies

The rule of law and human rights go hand-in-hand for ensuring individual and collective security and for combating escalating global threats, such as attacks on democratic institutions of governance, terrorism, violence (16.1), organized crime (16.4), human trafficking (5.2, 8.7, 16.2), forced labor (5.2, 8.7; 16.2), and illicit arms and financial flows (16.4). Increasingly, starvation is being used as a weapon against communities, exacerbating conflicts and tensions and threatening human lives, especially among marginalized people. Rule of law and human rights-based approaches can play a critical role in conflict prevention, conflict de-escalation, post-conflict transitions, transitional justice, peacebuilding, and responses to natural disasters (1.5, 2.4, 14, 15), climate impacts (13), and public health threats (3). Such strategies and approaches need to be integrated into international, regional, and national action plans. We urge Member States, financial institutions, donors, and other entities to provide adequate resources for effective implementation of action plans (17.2, 17.3, 17.9), to strengthen transparency and accountability (16.6), and to enhance coordination across government and civil society on priorities, resources, implementations, and evaluations (17.16, 17.17).

Among the actions to promote women's participation in peace processes and address the disproportionate impacts of conflicts on women, we encourage further progress in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 national action plans.

Integrating rule of law solutions in new approaches to forced migration can address drivers of forced migration and displacement (10.7). A global conference of international and national

officials, NGOs, and experts from the humanitarian, academic, and legal communities last year explored the drivers, risks, and challenges surrounding the recent flows of refugees and migrants worldwide and the specific issues in countries of origin, transit, and destination.

Strong Institutions

Some Member States have achieved measurable success in promoting good governance by enacting reforms to build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions (16.6). Yet, the overall global performance for rule of law declined for the second year, particularly in the areas of independent and impartial judiciary (16.3, 16.6), a free press (16.10), and legislative oversight of governmental powers (16.6)[1]. We urge Member States to reaffirm their commitment to these areas of SDG 16.

 The NGO Major Group is deeply concerned with the growing incidences of arbitrary arrest, detention, harassment, and violent attacks committed against judges, lawyers, others in the legal profession, human rights and environmental defenders, and members of the press (16.10.1) who serve essential roles in upholding and advocating for an independent and impartial judiciary, equal access to justice, effective legal assistance, and the protection of fundamental rights. We call on Member States to respect, protect, and guarantee independent and impartial judiciary, to adhere to the rule of law, and to investigate all such incidents, hold perpetrators accountable, and provide effective remedies for victims.

 Several initiatives and national reforms responsive to SDG 16 implementation are strengthening good governance practices. These initiatives bring together governments and civil society organizations, to support Member States in their efforts to create and deliver on action plans for inclusive, transparent, and accountable governance (16.6). Transforming those action plans into concrete policy commitments and actions to fight corruption at all levels (16.5) is vital to building strong institutions, upholding the rule of law, ensuring respect for human rights, and enabling sustainable economies.

 To empower people and achieve truly inclusive societies, we urge Member States to strengthen efforts to ensure no one is deprived of access to public services and justice (16.3, 16.6.2), full and equal participation in society (16.7, 16.B), individual rights, and enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment (1, 3, 6, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16.1). For a truly inclusive society to exist, policies and practices must ensure that not one person is left behind.

 Inclusiveness depends upon the protection of human rights, including the right to access information (16.10); the fundamental freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and association (16.10); and non-discrimination (16.B). The majority of Member States now have laws and

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[1] World Justice Project, *WJP Rule of Law Index 2019*, https://worldjusticeproject.org/our-work/research-and-data/wjp-rule-law-index-2019

policies to ensure the right to access information and are increasingly launching e-government initiatives and open data projects to proactively make information available[2]. We commend such efforts and encourage further actions to fully ensure effective public access to information, including online (9, 16.10, 17.8), and as related to human rights and sustainable development (4.7). We encourage Member States to respect independent national human rights institutions and their role to support strengthening human rights and the rule of law as consistent with international human rights treaties and international norms (16.A).

Partnerships must be based in inclusiveness and meet the interests of sustainable development and community well-being while safeguarding against promotion of private interests and conflicts of interest. Throughout the world, inclusive capacity building projects build strong institutions and strong societies (16.6, 16.7, 17.17). Some convene public and private stakeholders to build participatory strategies to strengthen water governance, including for climate adaptation and mitigation; while others promote cooperative approaches to foster sustainable environments, reduce environmental harms, increase renewable energy, and address conflicts over natural resources, including their potential impacts on migrants, displaced persons, women, children, older persons, youth, indigenous peoples, and other vulnerable populations (7.2, 11, 12, 13.B, 16.7.1).

Access to Justice for All

Ensuring access to justice for all (16.3) is essential to effectuating a comprehensive and fair rule of law. Enhancing justice systems can help resolve disputes related to economic, social, cultural, and environmental issues of sustainable development and provide a more predictable and stable environment for businesses and investors. Protecting an independent and impartial judiciary and independent legal profession is essential to ensuring equality before the law without discrimination, protecting against abuses of power, and upholding the rule of law.

Sustainable changes to expand access to justice must leave no one behind. Formal and informal justice systems and legal empowerment frameworks should incorporate human rights-based strategies to ensure inclusiveness, with particular attention to women, racial/ethnic, caste, religious minorities, persons with disabilities, and other disadvantaged groups who face persistent barriers to justice (16.B).

The NGO community calls for and stresses the importance of legal identity for all, including birth registration, by 2030 or before (16.9). NGOs have worked in coalitions to advocate for legal identity for all in order to empower vulnerable populations living in persistent poverty (1, 16.9). Additionally, in refugee camps, migrant settlements, and in communities where displaced persons have settled, NGOs are providing formal and informal education and integration

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[2] Open Knowledge International, *Global Open Data Index*.

opportunities to promote peace-building and are raising awareness of the right to legal identity and its importance increasing access to public services and livelihood opportunities.

Interlinkages across the Sustainable Development Goals

Peace (SDG 16) has been identified as a high priority, but it too depends upon progress being made across the Sustainable Development Goals. Wars, internal conflicts, and community violence not only damage institutions, justice systems and rule of law, but also harm societies and social structures (SDGs 10, 11, 12), increase poverty (SDG 1), make people more vulnerable to disease, malnutrition, and hunger (SDGs 2 and 3), interrupt education (SDG 4), and leave millions without livelihoods (SDG 8). Furthermore, wars disrupt ecological systems (SDG 13), affecting ecosystems and biodiversity (SDGs 14 and 15), and natural resources (SDG 7), including access to clean water and food (SDGs 2, 6, 14 and 15). Conflicts –like natural disasters—also have a disproportionate impact on women and girls, indigenous peoples, children and older person, persons with disabilities (SDG 5) and ecologically vulnerable groups, exacerbating existing inequalities within and among countries (SDG 10). Conflicts are also characterized by the displacement of refugees and migrants, trafficking of women, girls and children. In addition, when a State or its people are the victims of conflicts, progress in social and economic development rolls backward. Moreover, conflicts are often related to a vacuum in political leadership that is filled by criminals, military rule and non-state actors bearing arms which then causes safeguards against corruption to be weakened at all levels so that international partners (SDG 17) do not have a stable political environment to help those who are most in need. Thus, while as one NGO put it, "Peace is like water—it is gives life to nature and human beings—and without it, nothing can survive," the achievement of peace depends on bringing about an overall more sustainable world where human rights for all and respect for our environment are equally observed.

Women's Major Group

WMG Key message on SDG16: *Militarized economies must shift to economies guided by human security of all -- women and girls, indigenous, LGBTI, disabled, refugee, and other marginalised communities across the lifespan -- for just, equitable, and nonviolent governance. Governments must prevent attacks and ensure safety and leadership of women human rights defenders, peace activists, and environmental defenders. Portability and progressivity of rights should be ensured.*

Overview

Research shows that gender equality is the number one predictor of peace[1] and feminist movement
building is the number one predictor of policies on reducing violence against women.[2] However, today, the world is spending money on violence and war rather than gender justice and peace.

In 2018, there was a $1.7 trillion arms trade. However, in 2014-2015, only 5% of aid on peace and security targeted gender equality as a primary objective. Meanwhile, the number of forcibly displaced people has increased by over 50 per cent between 2007 (42.7 million) and 2017 (68.5 million) as a result of persecution, conflict, or generalised violence.[3]

According to a 2018 Institute for Economics and Peace report,[4] the economic cost of violence globally in 2017 was $14.7 trillion (12.4 % of global GDP or $1,988 per person), a 16% increase since 2012.The single largest contributor to this (37%) was military expenditure, followed by internal spending on security (police, judicial, and prison system outlays) (27%). The production and use of weapons negatively affects the environment, often impeding use of land and water by poisoning natural resources or physically blocking access to resources. Military activities further destroy land and resources, either intentionally as a method or tool of warfare, inadvertently in the acts of war, or in the aftermath of conflict, with particular impact on at risk groups. Environmental watchdogs have noted that the US military is the single larger global polluter.

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[1] Hudson, Valerie et al. (2014), "Sex & World Politics." Columbia University Press, quoted in the UN 2015 Global Study on Women, Peace and Security. Available: https://www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/UNW-GLOBAL-   STUDY-1325-2015%20(1).pdf

[2] Laurel Weldon and Mala Htun (2013). "Feminist Mobilisation and Progressive Policy Change: Why Governments Take Action to Combat Violence Against Women" Gender and Development, 21(2)

[3] UNHCR. (2017). Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2017. Available: https://www.unhcr.org/en-   us/statistics/unhcrstats/5b27be547/unhcr-global-trends-2017.html

[4] IEP. (2018). The Economic Value of Peace 2018. Available: www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Economic-Value-of-Peace-2018.pdf

The current crisis-response approach to conflict and violence is not sustainable. Realizing SDG16 on peaceful, just, and inclusive societies requires a power shift that re-centres work on equality, development, and peace around voices, human security, and rights of women and those most marginalized. This requires not just technical fixes, but structural transformation that moves from institutionalizing war governance to institutionalizing peace governance, for people and planet.

Impacts on women and girls/ gender equality

Current militarised approaches to peace and security consistently exclude and undermine women's participation, protection, and rights, and systematically undermine opportunities for long term and sustainable peace.

Between 1990 and 2017, women constituted only 2 percent of mediators, 8 percent of negotiators, and 5 percent of witnesses and signatories in all major peace process.[5] In Syria, women civil society have led rebuilding of communities through track 3 mediation to reconcile communities and designed plans for a post-conflict Syria based on nondiscrimination and women's human rights. Yet, women continue to be tokenized in formal peace negotiations.

Political economies of war invest in corporate and state power at the expense of people and planet. Civil society shadow reports found that arms sales from Germany[6], Spain[7], Sweden[8] were linked with gender based violence and violence against women (SDG 5) in Brazil, Cameroon, Colombia, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Namibia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates. Civil society reports also found that arms transfers from the United Kingdom,[9] Sweden,[10] and France[11] violated obligations on economic, social and cultural rights in Yemen including on health (SDG 3), education (SDG 4), and housing (SDG 11). Environmental contamination from nuclear waste has occurred around the world due to the creation, testing, and storage of nuclear weapons, with particular impact on low income minorities with limited political power, such as Latinx and Native American populations at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, in Carlsbad, New Mexico, United States, and populations of nuclear test sites in the South Pacific, Nevada, Kazakhstan, China, India and Pakistan.

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[5] UN Women (2018) Facts and Figures: Peace and Security. Available: www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace- and-security/facts-and-figures#_Notes

[6] ECCHR and WILPF. (2017). The Impact of Germany's Arms Transfers on Women. Available: www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Publications/CEDAW-Germany.pdf

[7] WILPF (2017). Spanish Arms Trade and Risk Assessments. Available: www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/att/ATTCaseSpain_Final.pdf

[8] WILPF. (2016). The Swedish Arms Trade and Risk Assessments: Does a Feminist Foreign Policy Make a Difference? Available: www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Publications/swedish-arms-trade.pdf

[9] WILPF (2016). "Explosive Weapons and the Right to Health, Education, and Adequate Housing: Extraterritorial Obligations of the United Kingdom under CESCR" Available: http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Publications/wilpf-cescr-uk.pdf

[10] WILPF (2016). "Explosive Weapons and the Right to Health, Education, and Adequate Housing: Extraterritorial

Obligations of Sweden under CESCR"
Available:
http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Publications/wilpf-cescr-sweden.pdf
11 WILPF (2016). "Explosive Weapons and the Right to Health, Education, and Adequate Housing: Extraterritorial
Obligations of France under CESCR"
Available:
www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Publications/wilpf-cescr-france.pdf

Structural issues, barriers, and the actors

Feminists have pointed out how unpaid care work subsidizes economies of societies while perpetuating social, economic, and political discrimination against women. The flip side of this is that purveyors of violence are being subsidized by communities. Arms exports continue to be facilitated and subsidized directly, indirectly, through export financing schemes, marketing subsidies, operational support, and payment of initial research and development costs. Military budgets are too often a black box, and military lines are treated as sacrosanct.

Making explicit the global cost of violence and identifying and accounting for (redistributing) responsibility to the source is critical moving from economies of war to economies of gender justice and peace. Strategies for moving in this direction should include: 1) demilitarizing defence,
2) demilitarizing society, and 3) investing in gender equitable and resilient societies. In Colombia, women human rights defenders have called through their "Mas Vida, Menos Armas" ("More Life, Less Arms") campaign for not just demilitarization of the FARC, but demilitarization of society as a whole. In Uruguay after the dictatorship, leaders were able to shift certain positions from military to civilian control, and reduce and control military budgets.

Developed countries must be held accountable on extraterritorial human rights obligations, including around arms transfers with gendered risks and illicit financial flows that reinforce corporate power. Linking up commitments on Women Peace and Security aimed at peace and security that work for women and all people with action on the SDGs will be important if we are to have transformative change that overturns systems of power and privilege for justice and peace.

Human Rights Foundation

The Sustainable Development Goals and 2030 Agenda is the articulation of a new kind of
development for people and planet that must start with existing commitments on human rights, environmental protection, and international law. It was not drafted in a political or legal vacuum, but in the context of international agreements and conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994), and the outcomes from processes on social development, urban

development/cities, disasters, population, Indigenous Peoples, Women, Peace and Security, disarmament, climate change, and from regional bodies. These benchmark decisions come from the backs of hard fought women social movements around the world.

The HLPF should recognise that a rights-based approach to sustainable development is not an option, but an obligation. As the HLPF has a mandate of sharing and peer-learning, utilizing the existing human rights review mechanisms presents an opportunity to transform the Sustainable Development Agenda from burgeoning rhetoric into rights realization. In this way, we will ensure that women's voices are not only heard, but answered and incorporated into all processes. This is the essence of accountability. In addition, public-private partnerships should not be advanced unless they are accountable to citizens, ensuring ex-ante and ex-post compliance with human rights, gender equality, and labour and environmental standards, through a legally binding corporate accountability mechanism.

Progressivity of rights

Goal 16 offers the opportunity to guarantee human rights and to aim towards progressivity of rights. Target 16.9 aimed at providing legal identity for all should be a starting point to ensure portability of rights to migrant population. In the same manner, this target should be the point of entry to guarantee human rights for LGBTI population: the right to identity goes hand in hand with the acknowledgement of citizenship and the legitimate exercise of rights, such as employment, social protection, marriage, adoption, housing and many others. This is linked to target 16.B referred to the Means of Implementation for this Goal, addressing the promotion and enforcement of non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development.

In this context, now more than ever, target 16.10 (Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements) is core to ensure human rights defenders have full guarantee of their human rights, dignity, freedom, safety and liberty. This is more relevant now because there is arise of criminalization of political activities and dissent: human rights defenders involved in agrarian, environmental or labor struggles are being prosecuted, arrested, falsely charged with inciting to rebellion, accused of terroristic activities, murdered, or disappeared.

**Recommendatio
ns**

The HLPF should recognise that a rights-based approach to sustainable development is not an option, but an obligation. Ensuring policy coherence must be aligned based on existing commitments.[12]

In the short term, take action to #MoveTheMoney:

- Accelerate commitments including national and regional action plans on Women, Peace and Security (UN Security Council Resolution 1325) as a key priority for SDG16 in line with CEDAW General Recommendation 30 and Beijing Platform for Action Area E.
- Prevent attacks, criminalisation, and undermining of women human rights and environmental defenders and peace activists, and ensure their safety and leadership
- Ensure portability and progressivity of rights, including for migrant population, LGBTI population and other groups suffering structural inequalities.
- Shift from funding the military to funding human security: invest in social protection over crisis response for just, equitable, and nonviolent governance that work for all women, indigenous, LGBTI, disabled, refugee, and other marginalised communities across the lifespan
- Strengthen coordination and accountability to reduce current expansion of militarized security and strengthen peace governance and protection of civilians (i.e., in line with Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment).
- Disarm defence by shifting power from military to civilian control
- Ensure extraterritorial accountability including on flows of small arms and light weapons

    (16.2) to strengthen prevention of gender based as well as all forms of violence (5.4, 16.1)

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[12] See, e..g.,: Danish Institute for Human Rights. (2019). SDG - Human Rights Data Explorer. Available:
www.sdgdata.humanrights.dk

in line with the Arms Trade Treaty gender criterion (Article 7(4)), including by strengthening implementation of national action plans on small arms and light weapons in line with the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA).
- Report on military versus social spending for SDGs in line with Beijing E2 and Agenda 21 (22.16)

In the long term, take action to govern for nonviolence and gender justice:
- Regulate to increase accountability for power-holders (i.e. militaries and private military corporations), and free up space for marginalised communities (i.e., women's and social justice movements)
- Institutionalise leadership for peace (i.e., ministries of reincorporation, de-colonialization, peace, women) and support feminist peace movement building and leadership
- Tax expenditures on violence over expenditures on care (i.e., global arms tax)

- Strengthen coordination between political and economic processes from a gender perspective (i.e., international financial institution support for joined-up peace processes and post-conflict peacebuilding for gender equality)
- Stop militarisation of development aid (i.e., militarisation of OECD-DAC ODA rules) and promote development justice (debt forgiveness /reparations)
- Promote cultures of peace by strengthening nonviolent, non-stereotypical, and gender equitable media and education

Conclusio

The Women's Major Group calls on the international community to take action for an ambitious implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including for peaceful and inclusive societies for all.

Realising the transformative vision of the 2030 Agenda requires creating political rather than technical shifts. It requires moving from current failed approaches and towards nonviolent, equitable, justice based, and feminist alternatives that support the participation, rights, livelihoods of those most marginalised and the planet we live in.

Delaying action for women and girls is not an option. The time is now for women's leadership and a women's rights and peace agenda for every women and every girl of every age, place, ability and status, and for all of us!

Volunteers Group Alliance

Volunteers around the world are working to ensure just societies and to build strong institutions. A recent survey of pro bono legal services in 75 countries reports that lawyers from around the world are volunteering their time, energy and expertise to provide access to justice and uphold the rule of law. A survey of 64,500 lawyers in 75 countries found that these lawyers provided 2.5 million hours of pro bono work in 2015, helping ensure that lack of financial resources is not a barrier to a just society.[1]

Singapore's 2018 VNR states '[p]ro bono legal services are provided through a partnership between the Government, the Law Society of Singapore, various volunteers, and volunteer welfare organisations.' The support has resulted in a fourfold increase in the number of Criminal Legal Aid Scheme applicants who received full representation or unbundled legal services between 2014 and 2017.[2]

In Sierra Leone, community volunteers supported by local partner Fambul Initiative Network for Equality and VSO have worked to harmonise local gender-based violence laws with national laws and gain support from local leaders, leading to a significant increase of referrals of gender-based violence cases to the local courts and the reduction of cases that are 'settled' within the local community. [3]

In Northern Ireland the Small Steps Programme of Volunteer Now, Ulster University, and Sport Northern Ireland promotes awareness of the law and the importance of active citizenship to children aged 10-11 by exploring the themes of lawfulness, personal responsibility, citizenship, and the law. Sessions were delivered by 30 trained volunteers to approximately 450 children in 16 primary schools in disadvantaged areas.

Education and Academia Stakeholder Group

Justiciability of the right to education as a practice for democracy (SDG 16)

Education can play a critical role in supporting peace, reconciliation and democracy. This requires equitable access to education at all levels, including for historically disadvantaged groups, and appropriate curricula. There is a need for increased attention to ensure education systems help to build peaceful and sustainable societies. This includes integrating education for peace and conflict prevention, as and when appropriate, across the entire education system.

The right to education must have judicial and quasi-judicial guarantees that allow people to claim it whenever it is violated or threatened. The justiciability of the right to education is a democratic exercise that guarantees access to justice in this vital issue for sustainable development. At the same time, as the GEMR 2019 states, better education is also needed for law enforcement officers to achieve SDG16 on justice for all9.

According to the Brussels Declaration, for the right to education to be fully realized it must be effectively implemented at the national level through the ratification of international human rights law and the adoption of solid constitutional provisions, legislation, and policies. 10,11 Enforcement mechanisms must also be in place so when this right is violated, in order for the right-holder is able to have legal recourse before certain international and regional human rights mechanism. Ensuring a legal course for these rights requires independent and impartial law courts, ombudsman or administrative tribunals, and if the claim is upheld, to be granted a remedy which can then be enforced12. These legal practices and outcomes should be based on the principle that the right to education "will be exercised without discrimination of any

kind"13.

The weakness of inbuilt accountability mechanisms is still a concern and may primarily affect those people who have been historically marginalized14. Conversely, the accessibility of legal mechanisms for reaching effective remedies to the violation of educational rights has proved to be an answer for the enforcement of these rights and promoting accountable and inclusive societies for sustainable development, as stated in SDG 16.

TOGETHER 2030

Action recommendations on SDG 16

Prohibit all forms of violence in all settings is an urgent call to Governments and ensure national legislation aligned with international human rights standards. More specifically, violence against children is directly addressed by this Goal in its target 16.2. It adversely impacts children's development, health and education, and increased their risk of poverty, deprivation and exclusion. Not addressing violence against children jeopardizes the achievement of several SDGs and Targets.

Governments need to invest in what works to prevent violence. In particular, evidence based solutions should be delivered through strong child protection systems, guided by policy solutions that mobilize multi-sectoral responses, and backed by investments that enable their application at scale necessary to reduce prevalence of violence against children.

Strengthening national and international norms on peace, justice and governance institutions including on the entire gamut varying from progressive taxation, corporate exemptions, financial transparency and protection of human rights defenders. This needs to be backed by coordinated efforts to build institutional capacities to ensure implementation and building mechanisms for participatory inclusive decision-making involving citizens in policy formulation, participatory monitoring and accountability.

National governments should commit to peacebuilding activities and also regional governments should support national government by building local capacities in the areas of peacebuilding and resilience

National Governments and their Parliaments should be requested to endorse the call for a proposed UN Parliamentary Assembly (UNPA) so that citizens of the world can have a direct & legitimate voice at the UN. More and better space for Parliamentarian involvement in this year's HLPF should be created.