



SDG 16 CONFERENCE

Peace, Justice & Inclusive Societies



SDG 16 Conference 2025

Advancing Peace, Justice and Institutions for Sustainable Development

Monday, 12 May 2025

United Nations Headquarters, New York



United Nations

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs



Permanent Mission of Italy
UN - New York



International Development
Law Organization

CONCEPT NOTE

SDG 16 Conference 2025

The Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) are convening the **SDG 16 Conference 2025**, on Monday, 12 May 2025 at the UN Headquarters in New York, from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

The SDG 16 Conference 2025 will bring together representatives of governments, international organizations, civil society, academia, women, youth and other key stakeholders. In the context of the 80th anniversary of the United Nations and building on the outcomes of the previous five editions, the Conference will provide a platform for showcasing tangible examples of how investing in SDG 16 delivers measurable, practical dividends for governments and people, enabling them to efficiently achieve their development priorities. The Pact for the Future, adopted at the Summit of the Future in 2024, emphasizes the importance of strengthening efforts to build peaceful, just, and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels, while

upholding human rights and fundamental freedoms, as outlined in Action 7. This year's Conference will help identify priorities for action while reflecting on how relevant elements of SDG 16, including peace, justice and strong institutions, can contribute to advancing progress on these key objectives. The Conference will also aim to bring insights into key intergovernmental events to be held in 2025, the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development in June-July, the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the Food Systems Summit Stocktaking Moment in July, and the World Summit for Social Development in November.

Objectives

The objectives of the SDG 16 Conference 2025 are to:

- Provide an inclusive platform for engagement on SDG 16 implementation, bringing together diverse stakeholders to share concrete experiences and good practices;
- Highlight trends, challenges and opportunities for accelerating SDG 16 action, contributing inputs to the 2025 session of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) and exploring how elements of the Pact for the Future can be advanced through SDG 16;
- Raise awareness and interest amongst stakeholders about the key role of SDG 16 in enabling and supporting progress on all the SDGs, with a particular focus on the SDGs under HLPF review in 2025;
- Connect insights from the Conference to key events, including the Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit for Social Development in 2025; and
- Highlight the critical role of all-of-government and all-of-society engagement, alongside the need to mobilize further actions and partnerships to advance progress on SDG 16 and the broader 2030 Agenda.

Format

The SDG 16 Conference 2025 will be a one-day meeting, consisting of:

- A high-level opening session;
- Three interactive panel sessions, each focusing on a different dimension of SDG 16;
- The presentation of the updated Rome Civil Society Declaration on SDG 16+; and

- A closing session.

The Conference is expected to feature 20 to 25 lead speakers and several hundred participants. Member States and stakeholders will engage interactively within the time allocated in the programme to present national perspectives and experiences.

The Conference will be in person only. It will be webcast on UN Web TV.

Outcome of the Conference

The main messages and key recommendations from the Conference will be consolidated into a short outcome document prepared by the co-organizers. The document will be submitted by the Permanent Mission of Italy as an official input to the HLPF. Additionally, the document will aim to inform key events, such as the Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit for Social Development in 2025. A substantive report of the Conference will also be issued. In keeping with the tradition of past SDG 16 Conferences, it is also foreseen that civil society will present an updated “Civil Society Declaration on SDG 16+” during the event.

Participation and organization

In line with previous editions, the Conference will bring together speakers and participants, including Ministers and other high-level officials from Member States and international organizations, as well as experts and practitioners working on SDG 16 among civil society, think tanks, academia, youth and women leaders. Attendance will be open to all UN Permanent Missions in New York and to registered participants.

Languages and documentation

Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in the six official languages of the UN, namely Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

The documentation for the Conference will be in English and will be available online through the Conference website.

Background

SDG 16 encompasses targets related to peaceful and inclusive societies, rule of law, access to justice, fight against corruption and organized crime and effective, transparent

and accountable institutions. SDG 16 is a fundamental prerequisite to progress towards sustainable development, as well as an enabler of all other SDGs.

Since 2019, the Government of Italy has hosted five global SDG 16 Conferences co-organized with UN DESA and IDLO. Over the years, the Conferences have provided a global platform for all SDG 16 stakeholders – including governments, civil society, the UN system and intergovernmental organizations and academia – to address the transformative contribution that SDG 16 can make in accelerating progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The outcomes of the Conferences have informed reviews of progress at the HLPF.

There is significant interest in the SDG 16+ community in continuing to regularly take stock of trends, challenges and opportunities in the various dimensions of SDG 16, as well as promoting its role as a key enabler of SDG implementation.

The HLPF in July 2025 will review SDGs 3, 5, 8, 14 and 17. The theme of HLPF 2025 is “Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for leaving no one behind”.

In September 2024, world leaders adopted the Pact for the Future to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs. The Pact, which includes a Global Digital Compact and a Declaration on Future Generations, addresses key issues such as peace and security, sustainable development, climate change, digital cooperation, human rights, gender equality, youth and future generations, and the transformation of global governance. Action 7 commits to strengthening efforts to “build peaceful, just and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels and uphold human rights and fundamental freedoms”.

The Conference on Financing for Development in June-July 2025, the UN Food Systems Summit Stocktaking Moment in July and the World Summit for Social Development in November 2025 will offer valuable opportunities to explore critical synergies between SDG 16, financing for development, food security and social inclusion. The SDG 16 Conference 2025 will provide an opportunity to discuss how actions related to governance, peace and institutions (SDG 16) can underpin efforts to mobilize resources for sustainable development and strengthen social contracts, fostering inclusive and resilient societies.