



# West Africa

## Localizing the 2030 Agenda: People Connecting Development and Peace

### Background information

The achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) depends more than ever on the ability of local and regional actors to promote integrated, inclusive, and sustainable development. Localizing the 2030 Agenda is a process to empower local stakeholders and leverage their comparative advantages by mobilizing their specific economic, cultural, social, and creative resources. It is aimed at making sustainable development more responsive and relevant to local needs and aspirations.

West Africa is at an important crossroads. The region has tremendous potential to advance in peace and sustainable development. It has demonstrated unique capacities for prevention and response, including in The Gambia where the country averted potential instability following the elections in 2017, and Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea, countries that successfully overcame the Ebola crisis. It is a region where current peace and development gains need to be protected and the people creating positive change need to be supported.

At the center of this initiative, an Exchange Forum entitled: "Localizing the 2030 Agenda: Building on What Works" took place on 27-29 October 2019 in Banjul, The Gambia, the Forum—the first of its kind in the sub-region—aimed to stimulate an exchange of ideas on accelerating the SDGs at the local level amongst a diverse group of leaders from national governments and municipal authorities, to the UN system, bilateral and regional entities, entrepreneurs and local champions from Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Senegal, and Sierra Leone.

### Goals and objectives

The key objectives of the programme are to: (i) gain awareness of existing transformative initiatives by local champions across sub-region that are addressing key obstacles to sustainable development at the local level; (ii) generate potential partnerships among national, regional, bilateral and multilateral partners and local champions to scale up successful initiatives; and (iii) enable policymakers and UN officials at the global level to gain a practical understanding on how to operationalize the SDGs at the local level through the application of human security.



**DURATION**  
May 2019 – December 2020



**UN IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES**  
International Peace Institute (IPI),  
UN Human Security Unit (HSU)



**OTHER KEY PARTNERS**  
The Government of The Gambia,  
the Senegalo-Gambian Permanent  
Secretariat, the UN Country Team  
in The Gambia

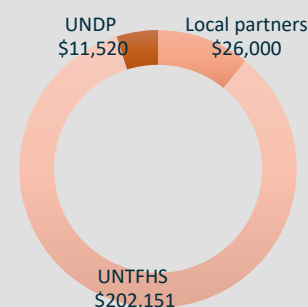


**BENEFICIARIES**  
8 West African countries (Côte  
d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana,  
Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia,  
Senegal, Sierra Leone)



**TOTAL BUDGET**  
US\$ 239,671

#### POOLING OF RESOURCES



# Beneficiaries

The programme benefits the populations of eight countries in West Africa, namely Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Senegal, and Sierra Leone.

## Applying the Human Security approach

Well-suited to the multifaceted challenges faced by communities and governments, human security highlights the interconnectivity of current and emerging challenges and their impact on people's lives and well-being. As such, human security underscores the importance of comprehensive and multi-sectoral solutions that engage a broad range of stakeholders, including local actors, by combining their respective expertise, knowledge, and capacities, and by building synergies for collective action towards sustainable development.

A focus on human security thus allows for strategies to be firmly grounded in the local context; celebrating and drawing upon the leadership, innovations, and initiatives that are transforming communities, driving social and economic progress, and ensuring that no one is left behind. Such multistakeholder cooperation can lay the groundwork for developing strategies that transcend short-term gains and transform societies to meet people's hopes for prosperity, peace, and life lived in dignity.

Applying human security to accelerate the SDGs at the local level promotes ownership across all levels of society while also anchoring sustainable development initiatives in communities' existing knowledge, capacities, and traditions. Enhancing connections across levels of governance through people-centered strategies, it creates structures and processes that both protect and empower people and other stakeholders to address local challenges through dialogue, collective action, and a shared vision for the future.

Moreover, making progress toward the SDGs at the local and national levels requires governments and their partners to go beyond shallow forms of coordination toward deeper integration and alignment of their work. Institutionalizing inter-ministerial cooperation and strategies to enhance meaningful engagement with subnational authorities are essential components. Human security creates platforms for integrated action and systematic dialogue within governments and across diverse stakeholders to regularly discuss how they can bring together their respective know-how and resources. The multistakeholder strategies that emerge from this collaboration play an important part in supporting a holistic approach to sustainable development.

Operational programmes in Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Senegal, and Sierra Leone are implementing the model developed through this programme to bring tangible improvements to some of the most vulnerable communities in the subregion.

## Achievements

- In 2019, IPI launched a call for applications to identify local champions promoting sustainable development in their communities. Out of over 350 applications received, 16 champions were selected to participate in the Exchange Forum. Teams of five, including RCO representatives, national government officials, municipal leaders, and two local champions from each of the eight participating countries arrived in Banjul for the Exchange Forum. They were joined by global and regional partners interested in supporting SDG attainment in vulnerable communities.
- Through facilitated discussions and guided explorations, teams shared innovative and successful community solutions, identified key elements for their initiatives' success, and outlined necessary partnerships to scale their efforts. From these discussions, a clear model based on the human security approach emerged to support accelerated SDG action at the local level. This model was transformed into a policy report published by IPI and launched at a virtual side event ahead of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July 2020.
- Building on the policy report, the UNTFHS launched in 2021 seven programmes to accelerate sustainable development locally and support inclusive, contextually relevant COVID-19 response and recovery in the region. While these programmes apply the same model, each reflects the unique characteristics and challenges of its country and community.



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