

GOVERNANCE FOR PEACE:

Strengthening Inclusive, Just and Peaceful Societies Resilient to Future Crises

I. Institutions Matter for Sustaining Peace and Peacebuilding

1. Building peace is about much more than ending war. It is about putting in place the institutions and trust that will strengthen the social contract and carry people forward into a peaceful future.¹ In 2019, the world saw a wave of protest movements sweeping across six continents and different development settings alike – from Harare to Port-au-Prince, Beirut to Bogota, Catalonia to Cairo, and in Santiago, Jakarta, Tehran, Baghdad, and New Delhi. Although to varying degrees, all had one trigger in common: public frustration against an unresponsive State or, more specifically, ineffective state institutions that had lost the public's confidence.

2. This confidence continues to be eroded in response to government action in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in many countries. The enormity of the situation brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic invites – or rather forces – us to reflect on the nature and effectiveness of not just our health systems, but also our systems of governance. As many of our countries are facing unprecedented challenges from COVID-19, the strain on our governments has been extreme, and the impact on people all over the world continues to grow. A Gallop poll in Western Europe and the United States recently found that more people trust medical professionals than their governments for the COVID-19 response.²

3. Despite the onward trend of democratization globally, the challenges faced in inclusive governance responses to the COVID-19 pandemic are compounded by an increase in democratic erosion with countries experiencing governance and rule of law deficits having doubled in the past decade. Across the globe, COVID-19 response efforts are disrupting and transforming governance practices in fundamental ways. These are putting severe strains on governance systems and relations and are undermining human rights.

4. Global trends reflect increasing levels of corruption, weakening judicial independence, ineffective service delivery, weak public sector capacities, shrinking civil space and reductions in clean elections.³ For the first time in four years, the number and complexity of violent conflicts rose in 2019, all reflecting a severely weakened social contract and plummeting trust in Government. Today, more than 70 million persons are forcibly displaced as a result of persecution, conflict and violence, double the level of 20 years ago and 2.3 million persons more than just 1 year ago. An estimated 166 million children (1 in 4) remain unregistered without proof of legal identity and an estimated 237 million children under age

¹ UN (2009), Secretary-General's remarks to the Security Council, SG/SM/12376-SC/9713, 22 July 2009, available at <https://www.un.org/press/en/2009/sgsm12376.doc.htm>

² Gallop, Trust in Government Lacking on the COVID 19 Frontlines, March 20, 2020

³ International IDEA (2019), The Global State of Democracy 2019: Addressing the Ills, Reviving the Promise.



5 worldwide lack a birth certificate, impacting their right to legal identity and necessary access to key public services.⁴ These trends are further compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic.

5. By 2030, more than half the world's poor are expected to live in countries impacted by fragility and violent conflict.⁵ Indeed, more than half of the global population expresses mistrust in government institutions with a growing sense of inequity.⁶ Only 18% of fragile and conflict-affected states are on track to meet Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) targets related to unmet basic needs, especially at the local levels where institutions struggle due to lack of capacity, resources or priority.⁷ A global pushback on human rights combined with increasing levels of inequality and fragility have jeopardized hard-won progress, increasing the urgency for the public sector to be reinforced as the guarantor of the common good for all⁸.

6. The UN recognizes that accountable and inclusive core governance and rule of law institutions and processes both nationally and locally are strong catalysts for the UN Secretary-General's 2030 and Sustaining Peace agendas as guarantors of just, peaceful and inclusive societies that leave no one behind. Achieving sustainable development and/or a lasting peace is not possible without the State committing to nurturing a resilient social contract with its citizens that is deeply embedded in the priorities and needs of local communities.⁹ This commitment relies on the presence of a robust and inclusive governance infrastructure wherein the machinery of government is equipped with effective, responsive and accountable institutions capable and empowered to deliver necessary public services to those furthest behind and (re) build public trust in Government at the local levels.

7. The importance of addressing institutional capacities to ensure peaceful transitions from fragility and conflict to a stronger social contract and economic growth cannot be overstated. We need to reassert the central role of an effective, responsive and capable public sector in responding to society's needs, building resilience and dealing with crises when they arise. Violent conflicts and crises, much like the COVID-19 pandemic, shatter the capacity of core governance and rule of law systems and institutions to cope with, recover from and prevent future crises, leaving the public progressively more vulnerable to increased inequality and exclusion. Violence is also more likely when a combination of security, economic and political stresses operate in an environment characterized by weak institutions that lack capacity to carry out their core governance functions to deliver services, accountability to the

⁴ Global Alliance for Reporting on Progress on Peace, Justice and Inclusive Societies (2019), "Enabling the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda Through SDG 16+: Anchoring Peace, Justice and Inclusion". And UNICEF (2019), Birth registration for every child by 2030: Are we on track? December 2019, available at <https://www.unicef.org/media/62981/file/Birth-registration-for-every-child-by-2030.pdf>

⁵ World Bank (2019), World Bank Group Strategy for Fragility, Conflict, and Violence 2020-2025.

⁶ Edelman (2020), 2020 Edelman Trust Barometer, available at <https://www.edelman.com/trustbarometer>

⁷ ODI (2018), SDG Progress: Fragility, Crisis and Leaving No One Behind

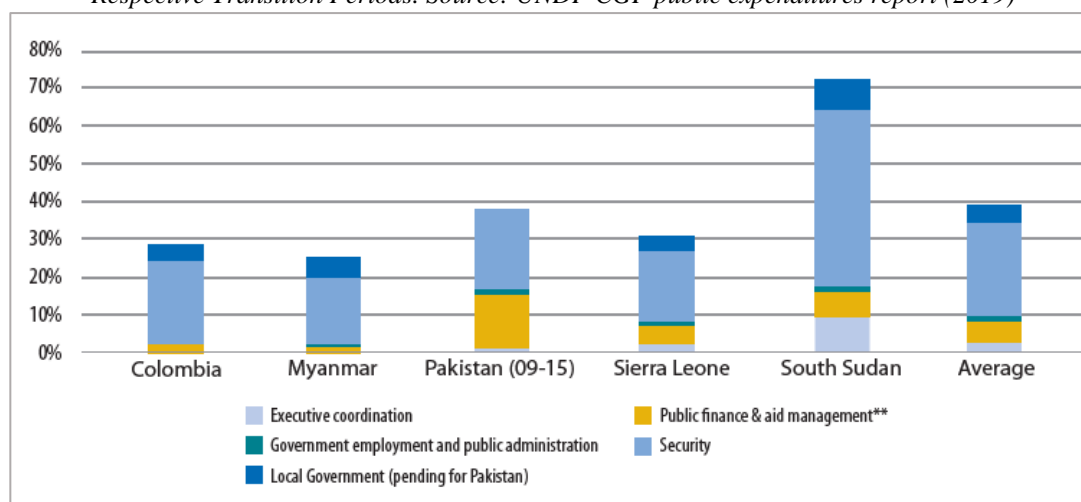
⁸ Secretary-General's remarks to the UN Human Rights Council: "The Highest Aspiration: A Call to Action for Human Rights", 24 February 2020

⁹ OECD (2008), Concepts and Dilemmas of State Building in Fragile Situations from Fragility to Resilience

public, and/or the legitimacy to mediate relations between citizen groups and between citizens and the State.¹⁰

8. In addition to the lives lost, violence cripples economic growth, destroys much-needed infrastructure, stretching already malfunctioning institutional capacities to their breaking point and forcing governments to divert public resources away from service delivery towards more security with lasting consequences in worsening state provision of basic services and exacerbating horizontal inequalities, especially for millions of the world's most vulnerable people, costing billions of dollars in damages and lost potential (see figure 1). In such conditions, the State apparatus is often either unable or unwilling to manage or mitigate risks of future fragility and instability, including those linked to social, economic, political, security or environmental and climate factors.¹¹

Figure 1: Average Core Government Functions Spend as % of Total Government Spending Throughout Respective Transition Periods. Source: UNDP CGF public expenditures report (2019)



II. Goal 16 Prioritizes Addressing Governance and Rule of Law Deficits to Enable Peace

9. Recognizing that responsive, inclusive and accountable governance lies at the heart of achieving the SDGs and sustaining peace, the UN's attention to strengthening governance and rule of law institutions and processes has its anchor in Goal 16. Goal 16 breaks new ground in development thinking: this is the first time that peaceful, just and inclusive institutions are being addressed in an explicit global development goal with detailed targets. Goal 16 recognizes that in order to reduce violence and prevent future crises, there is a strong need to focus on (re) building the institutions, structures, processes, and attitudes necessary to create and sustain a viable peace in society.¹² SDG 16 plays a central role in the context of COVID-19 - as a framework to help organize, prioritize and legitimize effective crisis response efforts.

¹⁰ World Bank (2011), World Development Report: Conflict, Security Development; OECD (2008), Concepts and Dilemmas of State Building in Fragile Situations from Fragility to Resilience.

¹¹ UNDP (2019), Do Fragile and Conflict-affected Countries Prioritise Core Government Functions? Stocktaking Public Expenditures on Public Sector Institutions to Deliver on 2030 Agenda.

¹² IEP (2018), Positive Peace Report 2018

10. The centrality of Goal 16 sits at the intersection of the SG's two priority agendas: the 2030 Agenda and sustaining peace that are complementary and mutually reinforcing. Inclusive, accountable and responsive governance systems underpin the ability of Governments to identify, drive, and direct national and local priorities, strategies and activities for sustaining peace in a responsive and inclusive approach to development and peacebuilding. The ambition of SDG 16 calls for the active support of the UN, as an important actor of this collective development effort.

11. Inclusive institutions can serve as a catalytic accelerator that triggers positive multiplier effects across all the SDGs as they all must rely on functional, responsive and accountable institutional systems and mechanisms for effective and inclusive implementation.¹³ This is particularly true in the context of COVID-19 as inclusive and responsive institutions are needed for effective crisis response. With the SDGs grounded on human rights standards and principles, state institutions are responsible for delivering people-centred and rights-based delivery of services, which can be critical for securing peace in the long term. For example, Paris Principles-compliant National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), part of SDG 16, can have an enabling and catalytic impact on the realization of the SDGs and preventing human rights abuses. More broadly, there is a strong demand from governments and stakeholders for the UN to help strengthen core governance capacities for translating the SDG commitments to more peaceful, just and inclusive societies into reality.



12. Goal 16 is both an outcome and an enabler of sustainable development¹⁴. Goal 16 cannot be separated from the other SDGs, including in but not limited to fragile and crisis-affected contexts. Without strong institutions that can ensure peace, justice and inclusion, ending poverty (Goal 1), ensuring education (Goal 4) and healthcare (Goal 3), ending gender-based discrimination (Goal 5) and ensuring equality (Goal 10) will be difficult or even impossible to achieve on their own. Effective COVID-19 response, for instance, requires inclusive, responsive and accountable institutions in the health sector. For example, in the **Central African Republic**, UNDP's support to strengthening the capacities, responsiveness, and accountability of the Ministry of Health to (re) establish core governance systems and processes to deliver inclusive health services equitably to the entire populations serves as a critical enabler of the Government's implementation of SDG 3 health targets.

¹³ UN (2019), Review of SDG implementation and interrelations among goals Discussion on SDG 16 – Peace, justice and strong institutions; UN (2019), Report of the Secretary-General on SDG Progress 2019

¹⁴ UN (2019), Review of SDG implementation and interrelations among goals Discussion on SDG 16 – Peace, justice and strong institutions



III. Global Progress on Building Just, Peaceful and Inclusive Governance and Rule of Law Institutions

13. The UN is committed to supporting countries to achieve Goal 16 and strengthen the social contract by addressing deep-rooted grievances and improving inclusive, accountable and responsive core governance institutions. This includes enhancing citizen security, strengthening the rule of law and ensuring access to justice for all, boosting capacities of national and local core governance institutions, building systems of accountability in public spending, addressing endemic corruption and enhancing transparency, strengthening inclusive delivery of public services at the local levels, and fostering inclusive citizen engagement and participation in political decision-making.

14. While hard-won gains in governance are rarely quick or linear, support to governance is a worthy investment for sustaining peace and preventing future crises, while also providing the foundation for achieving better results on the SDGs by 2030.¹⁵ Indeed, peacebuilding and economic recovery cannot be achieved without investing in functioning core governance institutions that can help leaders plan, prioritize, monitor, and deliver tangible, visible, and rapid peace dividends to the public. The UN's commitment to bolstering and boosting inclusive, responsive and accountable governance systems has been sustained in the midst of armed conflict in extremely volatile situations such as areas of **Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Libya, the Central African Republic, Colombia** and **South Sudan**. The UN has provided assistance in developing national capacities, systems and institutions to initially weak interim or coalition governments in fragile and post-conflict settings, as well those in transition contexts, including those impacted by the Arab Spring or the more recent protest movements such as **Tunisia, Egypt, Sudan, and Lebanon**.

15. The UN system has worked hard to harness closer strategic and operational policy and programming coherence in strengthening governance systems with a diverse set of partners, including national Governments, multilateral and regional organizations, international financial institutions (including the World Bank), civil society, women's groups, and youth organizations, to name a few. Our work has been centered around four interlinked principles of engagement, including reinforcing national ownership and local priorities; developing country-specific responses that are conflict sensitive and prevention-focused; ensuring effective delivery of tangible peace and development results on the ground; and catalyzing UN system wide coordination and coherence on addressing critical governance deficits in affected countries.

16. A particularly critical UN partnership for Goal 16 and governance promotion is the UN development pillar's collaboration with the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) in supporting countries to implement governance activities on the ground. To date, this partnership has focused on enhancing coordination on key peacebuilding priorities at headquarters, although more emphasis is being placed on strengthening the capacities of national and local authorities at

¹⁵ FES (2019), Investing in Governance - Accelerating progress towards peaceful, just and inclusive societies, available from <https://www.fesny.org/article/investing-in-governance/>



the country level. In 2018, for instance, the PBF supported a number of priority core governance areas including security sector reform, rule of law, transitional justice, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; political dialogue; democratic governance; state capacities and extension of State authority among others.¹⁶ UNDP continues to be one of the highest delivering PBF implementing partners across all the UN agencies globally.¹⁷

17. In **Madagascar**, in coordination with the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, the PBF supported good governance and anti-corruption initiatives, including the launch of the country's first anti-corruption hub in the capital, established through UNDP's implementation support, and the adoption of new transparency and accountability measures within public services. In **Honduras**, UNDP implemented a \$1.7 million initiative funded by the PBF, in collaboration with DPPA and OHCHR, to facilitate a national dialogue on key peacebuilding priorities following requests from the Government of Honduras, other political actors and civil society groups. The parties reached consensus at the working level on 169 points that addressed the core issues behind the protests, including electoral and constitutional reforms and human rights provisions, many of which the National Congress is expected to approve in 2019.¹⁸ In **Togo**, UNDP and UNICEF have jointly implemented a \$2.7 million project to prevent the escalation of tensions following electoral violence in 2017 and unresolved issues from previous truth and reconciliation processes. The project targeted communities through confidence-building measures with security actors, reducing children's involvement in violent protests, providing support to regional human rights centers and building the conflict-resolution capacities of local community members.

18. UN policy and programming coherence has grown on strengthening national and local governance capacities through joint analysis, planning and implementation, where possible, as a central element of the UN's broader governance and peacebuilding efforts. Rooted in the Secretary-General's sustaining peace agenda, UNDP and PBSO lead the *UN Interagency Platform for Strengthening Core Government Functions in Fragile and Crisis-affected Settings* with members including DPPA, DPO, World Bank, UNHCR, UNICEF, DESA, UNCDF, UN WOMEN, UN Habitat. The Interagency Platform convenes all UN governance and fragility capacities to jointly assess, plan, and deliver assistance to restore and/or strengthen core governance institutions at the national and local levels across the spectrum of development contexts where institutional capacities to govern equitably, responsively and in a transparent manner are either dysfunctional, deteriorating, completely disrupted or are increasingly fragile.

19. In **Yemen**, where 80% people depend on humanitarian assistance, support to core government functions has been a critical element to sustain institutional capacity for health, water, sanitation and education sectors. UNDP, UNICEF and WHO jointly developed and

¹⁶ UN (2019), United Nations, General Assembly, Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund, 9 April 2019, available from <https://undocs.org/A/73/829>

¹⁷ Multi Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) office (2020), Gateway on Peacebuilding Fund, available from <http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/PB000>

¹⁸ UN (2019), United Nations, General Assembly, Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund, 9 April 2019, available from <https://undocs.org/A/73/829>

proposed funding for payment of incentives to preserve or restore critical life-saving services, particularly in priority districts where service delivery is close to a complete collapse due to the ongoing conflict. This was informed by a UNDP and World Bank-led country desk exchange with DPPA on restoring core government functions priorities in Yemen. In **Somalia**, UNDP partnered with the World Bank as part of a flagship *Capacity Development Programme* to support the Somali government in restoring core government functions, specifically its civil service and aid management institutions, helping the country move forward from decades of humanitarian assistance towards stronger public sector institutions that can deliver services to local populations. In **Libya**, UNDP, UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), World Bank, WHO and donor partners came together as a collective to share and agree on critical emerging priorities for strengthening resilient core governance functions at the national and local levels, focusing on public sector service delivery, civil service and payroll management, local governance and stabilisation needs, and public financial management for economic recovery within the context of the peace process.

20. Multi-stakeholder initiatives occupy a central role in support of the multifaceted Goal 16, and UN Agencies have joined up on many fronts to strengthen implementation and monitoring of SDG 16. A key partnership initiative on SDG 16 evidence is the Praia City Group on Governance, Peace and Security Statistics that brings together 70+ countries' national statistics offices with UN and civil society experts to advance measurement standards and provide statistical capacity development to countries including countries affected by instability and conflict.¹⁹ Another initiative is the Global Alliance for reporting progress on peaceful, just and inclusive societies, a SDG 16 coordinating platform for UN Member States, private sector, civil society and UN Agencies and entities including UNODC, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNWOMEN, UNOHCHR, UNDP and UN Global Compact to promote and strengthen evidence-based reporting, monitoring and measurement of SDG 16. Recognizing the critical importance of monitoring and reporting to drive action on the SDGs, the Global Alliance helps countries gather evidence from all parts of government, civil society, youth, and the private sector and determine the action needed for transformative change.

21. Anchored in the principles of the UN reforms, partnerships to support responsive governance institutions and meaningful participation in processes for delivery on the entire 2030 Agenda have strengthened across the UN system. Examples of partnerships and multi-stakeholder platforms anchored in Goal 16 include but are not limited to the Voluntary National Review (VNR) processes and follow-up at national and local levels,; Rule of Law and Human Rights Accelerator Initiative; the Tri-Partite Partnership to Support National Human Rights Institutions between UNDP, OHCHR and the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions; UNDP Youth '16x16' initiative; the UN Legal Identity Agenda Task Force; the Steering Committee for the Praia Group; and the Global Alliance for Reporting on SDG 16+.²⁰

¹⁹ See Praia City Group Handbook on Governance Statistics (2020) - http://ine.cv/praiagroup/handbook/handbook_governance_statistics.pdf

²⁰ The Global Alliance for Reporting Progress on Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies (2019), Enabling the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through SDG 16+: Anchoring peace, justice and inclusion

22. The UN system has also increasingly come together in partnerships that bolden, strengthen and enhance national ownership of peace, development and governance agenda in fragile and conflict-affected settings. UNDP, UNDESA and UNICEF play a leading role in implementation of the UN Legal Identity Agenda, agreed under the work of the Legal Identity Agenda Task Force, which aims to support Member States to build holistic, country-owned, sustainable civil registration, vital statistics and identity management systems. Central to this concept is assisting Member States envisage one holistic legal identity system from birth to death, where adult national identity registers and national identity card schemes are linked to the core civil register system that registers births and deaths. As a result of these efforts, UN LIA TF and the World Bank recently approved the use of a common operational definition of legal identity at global, regional and country levels, and UNCT implementation guidance is available for an integrated legal identity system in **Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Zambia** as pilot countries.
23. The Global Focal Point for the Rule of Law (GFP), co-chaired by UNDP and the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) brings together UNODC, UNHCR, OHCHR, EOSG, UNOPS, UN Women and others to strengthen rule of law assistance to address and prevent violent conflict, protect human rights and restore justice and security for conflict-affected people based on strong underlying gender mainstreaming and human rights-based approaches. UNDP works in over 40 countries through the *Global Programme on Rule of Law and Human Rights* to support crisis and conflict affected contexts since 2008 to address drivers of violent conflict, foster resilient communities and just institutions. This often includes empowering communities to access security and justice services, enabling more 'people-centered' security and justice institutions that are accountable, responsive and effective, promoting gender justice including women's representation in justice and security sectors, facilitating inclusive and victim-centric transitional justice processes, as well as promoting more effective national human rights systems. At the core of this support is enabling institutions to respond to those who are most marginalized and least able to claim their rights by ensuring that they provide effective services that reach those who are furthest behind.
24. In the **Central African Republic**, GFP partners jointly support the restoration of criminal justice and security institutions, including the operationalization of the national Special Criminal Court to ensure the extension of state authority and to improve an effective criminal justice system. At Headquarters, GFP partners provide support to the Reference Group on the rule of law and the fight against impunity in CAR, chaired by Morocco, to garner political and financial support for the Special Court and other rule of law initiatives.
25. In the **Western Balkans**, UNDP leads a regional initiative - *the Regional War Crimes Project: Justice for the Victims and Missing Persons* - to strengthen cross-border collaboration, including information and evidence sharing as well as mutual assistance in investigations among Prosecution Offices and Institutions for Missing Persons of **Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Serbia**. This initiative currently provides the only platform for regional cooperation between the prosecution services of the four affected



contexts to discuss war crimes cases and has already resulted in improved relations and mutual trust between prosecutors.

26. Increasingly, UNDP, DPPA (PBSO), UNICEF, DPO, UN Habitat, UNCDF and UNHCR are also working in collaboration on elections, local governance and peacebuilding, restoration of core government functions, constitution making, building state capacity to address migration and forced displacement, and the promotion of rule of law, justice and security sector reform. In **Zimbabwe**, UNDP in collaboration with UN partners and the World Bank has supported the development of the Government of Zimbabwe's Transitional Stabilization Programme. For the first time, with UNDP support, elections were held using a Biometric Voter Registration system leading to a searchable soft copy of the voters' roll. Through a widespread voter education campaign, a total of 5.69 million voters were registered, which was 80% of the eligible citizens.

27. In **Somalia**, the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) and UNDP created an integrated constitutional support team, under the leadership of the UNSOM DSRSG, which has provided critical support to the myriad of Somali institutions and actors working to reach consensus on a permanent constitution. Similarly, in **Iraq, Libya, Liberia, and Sierra Leone**, UNDP and DPPA work not only together, but with other UN partners, to ensure strategic, comprehensive and coordinated constitutional assistance is provided. The UN's approach to ensuring inclusive and transparent constitutional processes that are national owned, reflect local priorities and are conflict sensitive increases the likelihood that diverse components of society coming together to support constitution making can "own" the final result as a cohesive collective. Working together to build consensus around mutually agreed and codified "rules of the game" helps promote social cohesion and peaceful coexistence.²¹

28. Across the board, the relationships between the peace and security, development and humanitarian pillars of the UN system are strengthening to support local solutions to governance challenges in the context of forced displacement. UNDP and UNHCR have come together to ensure integrated rule of law and local governance solutions to support refugees and host communities. In the Gambella region in **Ethiopia**, together with UNHCR, UNDP is working with local partners to support legal aid services in five districts and supporting local community peace committees to handle disputes, supporting mobile justice services and working with the police and refugee watch groups to strengthen community-oriented policing. This is complimented by efforts to identify local economic opportunities for refugees and host communities.

29. Ensuring regional cooperation is of the utmost importance to promote accountability for conflict-related atrocities and resolve the fates of the missing. In **Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan**, UNDP and OHCHR are working together to support Central Asian NHRIs to cooperate and share information on key human rights issues in the region, such as protection and promotion of rights of labor migrants, torture prevention,

²¹ UNDP (2020), Strengthening Social Cohesion: Conceptual Framing and Programming Implications, February 2020, available at <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/conflict-prevention/strengthening-social-cohesion--conceptual-framing-and-programmin.html>



cross border conflict prevention and mediation, preventing violent extremism and implementing human rights education programmes.

30. Supporting local governance efforts to strengthen social cohesion, uphold the rule of law, enhance security and access to livelihoods forms a cohesive package of integrated services for refugees and host communities. In order to encourage the participation of young Roma women and men as part of inclusive local governance systems in **Serbia**, UNDP, UNV and UNHCR are working together to support the participation of young Roma women and men as part of inclusive local governance systems. This includes supporting training of Roma youth and placing them within local institutions to contribute to and advocate for the political, social and economic inclusion of Roma and other vulnerable populations in Serbia. This initiative has been transformative at both an individual and systemic level by building up of networks of Roma youth that can collectively advocate for more inclusive policies.

31. There is a strong prevention dividend to the UN's work in participatory citizen engagement as it helps mend and/or strengthen the social contract and enables social cohesion. Countries characterized by such processes tend to be more apt at managing triggers of conflict constructively and better equipped to address grievances before they are mobilized to violence. In **Mauritania**, funded by the PBF, UNDP, UNICEF, FAO and OHCHR have come together to collectively strengthen local governance capacities and community engagement processes to prevent conflict in the southeastern district of Bassikounou, hosting over 50,000 Malian refugees since 2012 and experiencing growing tensions between host and refugee populations due to increasing competition over scarce natural resources. To continue to support such initiatives, UNDP and UNHCR have set up a partnership framework on rule of law and governance.

32. UN partners recognize that local participation in governance efforts can enhance local perceptions of government legitimacy and capacity. In **South Sudan**, UNDP supports State and Payam governments and the police to interact closely with local communities in the search for solutions to insecurity. One answer has been to build more police posts in locations deemed problematic by community members, including close to water wells where women congregate. The programme has helped extend state presence and authority and reduce the incidence of violence and thefts. For the first time, many community members are aware of the presence and role of local governments and are placing greater confidence in them.

IV. Challenges and Lessons Learned

33. Despite much progress on building coherence within the UN system on supporting conflict-sensitive solutions to strengthening responsive, accountable and inclusive core governance systems, there remain a number of challenges and opportunities for growth.

34. **Challenge 1 – Need for Reliable Funding for Governance Support:** To begin with, there continue to insufficient resources allocated for governance support that address the structural drivers of fragility with preventative solutions and in addressing the need for fundamental reforms, particularly in transition contexts to promote accountability and human rights and uphold good governance and the rule of law. It is estimated that effective prevention

would save anywhere from \$5 billion to \$70 billion per year for the affected country and the international community combined. ODA to fragile contexts has been on the rise since the end of the global financial crisis, growing by 26% in real terms from 2009 to 2016. However, this growth is mainly due to the surge in humanitarian assistance, which increased by 144% in the same period.²² Indeed, in the immediate aftermath of violent conflict or during crises such as devastating natural disasters, core functions of government are typically not even classified under humanitarian funding. Indeed, in 2018, only 4.2% of total ODA funding in extremely fragile and 4.2% of ODA funding in the other fragile countries went towards strengthening core governance systems.⁵ Support for effective functioning of security and justice institutions in line with the rule of law, for example, is seen as critical for preventing violence and sustaining peace.²³

35. Recommendation: It is essential to ensure that adequate, predictable and sustained financing for SDG 16 and related programmatic activities to address core governance systems is available to support countries on the ground. Pooled funding at the country level to address serious governance deficits as part of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, linked to national peacebuilding and development plans, and anchored in joined-up conflict and risk analysis with partners, would be catalytic to ensuring adequate resources and capacities to effectively support core governance interventions across the peace and security and development pillars. In contexts in which peacekeeping operations are present, targeted budgetary allocations within peacekeeping budgets for nationally owned, governance-related programmatic activities to support Member States in addressing serious governance deficits would be valuable support to the conflict prevention and development agenda. In addition, a headquarters-level Goal 16 Trust Fund, linked to the joint SDG Fund, would help provide catalytic seed funding to national and local institutions in addition to civil society to collect, track, monitor and report on progress achieved. Support for mechanisms such as the Global Focal Point on Rule of Law can be further strengthened to provide joint analysis and assessment, develop common UN strategies and approaches to rule of law challenges, establish coordinated programmatic and political responses, and enable joint financing of activities in many crisis and transition contexts.

36. Challenge 2 – Inconsistent National Investment on Goal 16+: Five years into the implementation of 2030, Goal 16 indicators are largely trending in the wrong direction²⁴. As noted by the Secretary-General, advances on SDG 16 are “uneven and continue to deprive millions of their security, rights and opportunities and undermine the delivery of public services and broader economic development”.²⁵ Critical gaps continue to persist in terms of the coverage and the quality of data available on all targets under Goal 16.²⁶ Furthermore, analyses of SDG 16 progress captured in 2019 VNRs shows that lack of reliable data remains

²² OECD (2018), States of Fragility

²³ Pathways for Peace

²⁴ UN (2019), The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2019; The SDG Summit Political Declaration

²⁵ UN (2019), The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2019. Available at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2019/>

²⁶ UN (2019), 2019 HLPF review of SDG implementation: SDG 16 – Promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

one of the top challenges for all countries, preventing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the SDGs.²⁷

37. Supporting national ownership and prioritization of national needs in the evidence and reporting on SDG 16 is at the centre of monitoring SDG 16. Timely, reliable, open, disaggregated and accessible data not only enables governments and policymakers to be more responsive to the needs of citizens, but it also empowers people to make informed decisions and take action within their communities. Ultimately, more and better data can contribute to informed advocacy for inclusive development, better policies, better decisions, greater participation and accountability and more empowered people, leading to better outcomes for people. Moreover, the 2030 Agenda has enshrined the fundamental principle of leaving no one behind ensuring targeting the most vulnerable and reaching those furthest behind first. In data terms, it implies ensuring that data collection instruments and analytical tools are at sufficient level of granularity to identify those left behind, target policy interventions, and assess their impact on vulnerable populations.

38. This is magnified by a lack of capacity in communities, civil society and other stakeholders to understand, analyze and use data independently to hold government to account.²⁸ In many instances, these data sources are not disaggregated and therefore is challenging to learn about the positive or negative impact on marginalized groupings i.e. the accessibility/inclusivity of the government's work and the government's ability to ensure no-one is left behind. One estimation shows that it will take at least 5 years before data becomes available for many of the missing indicators for many countries and especially the many population survey-based measures.⁷

39. Unlike many other thematic areas of the 2030 Agenda, the SDG 16 target areas of peace, justice and inclusion are new domains in official statistics with few international standards defining their measurement. Few countries and statistical offices have experience in producing governance data or in establishing the type of inclusive systems needed to monitor and report on governance, peace and security indicators. However, this ask to member states to provide data and be accountable for governance, justice and inclusion provides a massive opportunity for transformational change.

40. The UN and indeed partner countries need to invest more in identifying, measuring and monitoring SDG indicators, including but not limited to Goal 16, to ensure a more nuanced understanding of real and perceived exclusion and inequality. Moreover, engaging early in preventive action requires a shift from early warning and quick responses for bursts in violence to a more holistic awareness of risk. In particular, by better measuring progress on indicators across SDG 16, governments can encourage more evidence-based policy making related to

²⁷ Karina Cázarez-Grageda (2019), The whole of government approach: Initial lessons concerning national coordinating structures for the 2030 Agenda and how review can improve their operation; White & Case (2019), Review of the 2019 Voluntary National Reports with a focus on Sustainable Development Goal 16

²⁸ The SDG Summit in 2019 confirmed that all countries are challenged by the lack of robust data to monitor progress against SDG 16 targets and too few countries have truly inclusive monitoring systems that engage a broad range of stakeholders and are built on a consensus of what is important to measure and how.



addressing violence and insecurity, improving trust and confidence in state institutions, and supporting people centered approaches to justice and security, with a particular focus on populations at risk of being left behind. By understanding and addressing issues around exclusion and marginalization faced by different populations also can help to ensure national policies adopt a strong prevention lens.

41. **Recommendation:** To ensure increased investment in governance to sustain peace and unleash the transformative potential of promoting more peaceful, just and inclusive societies, the UN and Member States need to invest both politically and financially to strengthen national and local capacities to undertake more accurate data collection and inclusive reporting to collate and reflect impact and results.²⁹ All relevant stakeholders should sign up to the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data's (GPSDD) Inclusive Data Charter, and National Statistics Offices and international actors should be encouraged to experiment with new technologies to fill data gaps for marginalised groups, including people caught in crisis, who are often excluded from traditional means of data collection.³⁰

42. In countries where resources for data collection are limited, the UN must focus its efforts on strengthening nationally owned and managed data systems. The capacities of official statistical systems and their national statistics offices, as cornerstones, must be prioritized supporting the routine, regular and sustained statistical functions and improving national capacities to produce time series data as opposed to one-off data collection exercises that are ad hoc and driven by donor needs as opposed to long term country needs.

43. Countries need to promote and fortify the independence of National Statistical Offices (NSOs) to fulfil their dual roles as primary generators of data and as coordinators of national monitoring. In addition, the UN should also encourage Member States to support the existence of independent National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) in compliance with the Paris Principles. Institutional cooperation between NHRIs and NSOs to include groups that are at risk of being excluded in data collection efforts should be supported. Lastly, Countries should moreover consider if targeted data collection tools are needed to cover those furthest behind, including those forcibly displaced, refugees and stateless persons. Countries could also strengthen – or establish – collaboration between NSOs and National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) to leverage the institutional independence and mutually reinforcing monitoring of these state institutions. This could help ensure that key population groups are not further marginalised by SDG-related data collection and data management efforts.

44. **Challenge 3 – Gaps in Integrated Responses on the Ground:** While significant progress has been made in promoting UN policy coherence and inter-agency cooperation at headquarter level, in addition to increasing calls for more integrated approaches including joint analysis and funding, concerns remain that these headquarter-driven policy and programmatic

²⁹ UN (2019), 2019 HLPF review of SDG implementation: SDG 16 – Promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

³⁰ODI (2018), SDG progress Fragility, crisis and leaving no one behind. Available at <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/12424.pdf>



activities do not always trickle down to a truly joint vision and action at the country level. Indeed, there continue to be scattershot, incoherent and occasionally contradictory or even competitive international efforts to strengthening governance systems in the immediate aftermath of conflict. Particularly in non-mission contexts, there is a need to be able to leverage capacities across the UN system to provide coherent support to country programming on SDG 16, whether through existing inter-agency mechanisms (e.g. the GFP, legal identity, TPP, etc.) or as part of integrated support on the SDGs.

45. Recommendation: In order to ensure improved UNCT cooperation and genuine integration on the ground, UN agencies across the humanitarian, development and peace (HDP) nexus need to come together with the new Development Coordination Office (DCO) under a common framework of governance and peacebuilding that prioritizes the risk of conflict and violence. UN agencies and Secretariat partners need to support the ³¹capacity of Resident Coordinators to identify emerging political, economic, social, and environmental risks for violent conflict and fragility and find opportunities for strengthening governance capacities to address interlinked risks swiftly. This will require strong conflict analysis, cross-pillar coordination between the HDP partners and better integrated support from Headquarters, especially in relation to joint analysis and technical assistance.

³¹ UN (2019), United Nations, General Assembly, Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund, 9 April 2019, available from <https://undocs.org/A/73/829>

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