

SDG16+ Messages for the 2024 High-level Political Forum

Dynamics and data

- Progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is off track, with [SDG16](#) as one of the seven goals for which **no** targets are on track.
- Violence, conflict, and war [cost the world](#) more than a trillion dollars annually, with the majority of this violence taking place outside of conflict zones. [Two-thirds](#) of the world lack meaningful access to justice and [seventy-one percent](#) of the global population lives in areas of rising inequality.
- [Many countries are backsliding on their human rights obligations](#), with climate, cost of living, food, and energy crises highlighting not only their uneven impacts but also our shared global fragility.
- At its core, **SDG16 is about transformative systems**. Tackling data gaps on peace, justice, inclusion, and institutions is fundamental to unpacking interlinkages and driving meaningful progress on the SDGs holistically and through improved policy sequencing and prioritization in national plans, strategies, and budgets.

Why SDG16+

- In a world fraught with compounding crises and governance challenges, SDG16—with its commitment to peaceful, just, and inclusive societies—offers a set of tools and policies to realize people’s daily needs and aspirations, rebuild trust in institutions, and catalyze progress across the SDGs, universally and at all levels.
- Amid growing global polarization and distrust, we need to rebuild the social contract between people and the national and international institutions mandated to serve them.
- SDG16—with its links across the SDGs, and the larger UN system—is critical to mitigating the impact of current and intersecting crises, while acting to prevent future ones, including through anticipatory action and a systems approach grounded in human rights.

SDG16+ interlinkages across the SDGs, including those under review

- Peace, justice, equality and inclusion are tools for all the SDGs, not competing priorities. Understanding the relationship between the SDGs and fully harnessing interlinkages, with SDG16 as a driver is crucial to sustainably advancing the 2030 Agenda.
- When people feel unsafe, it hinders their ability to work, go to school, and access healthcare or basic services. Injustice increases the risk of violence and conflict; it also limits people’s ability to access rights and resources.





- It is [estimated](#) that every dollar invested in justice saves 16 dollars in reduced conflict risks, with the rule of law and access to justice [correlating to improved economic growth, greater peace, more education, and better health outcomes](#).
- People-centered justice seeks to transform institutions, simplify processes, and make services accessible by breaking down barriers to justice—which has both social and economic benefits.
- Empowering people in the most vulnerable situations, coupled with [responsive legal frameworks](#) and justice remedies for environment-related concerns, are vital to combating climate change. Climate action will struggle to gain adequate traction without policies that address its distributional impact.
- Reduced inequality and exclusion not only benefit the most vulnerable. More equal societies have better-sustained [growth rates](#) and stronger performance on [health](#) and [education goals](#).
- Democratic governance and political inclusion [enhance](#) the poverty-reduction impact of GDP growth. Increased inclusion, participation, and accountability also have [positive effects](#) on social protection, equal opportunities, and poverty. As captured in the 2023 Global Sustainable Development Report, governance is “an essential lever of the systematic transformations needed to achieve all 17 SDGs”.
- Digital transformations must focus on inclusivity and human rights to close digital divides, ensure the advancement of equitable development, including as related to gender, and improve our collective security through improved global governance.

Going forward: evidence-based policies and solutions

- **Violence is universal and costly but is preventable.** As captured in the just launched Halving Global Violence **Task Force report**, there are evidence-based solutions that have been shown to be effective in violence reduction and prevention.
- The [Peace in Our Cities Network](#) works with city officials, experts, and other cross-sector decision-makers implementing innovative, holistic, and data-driven approaches to violence prevention—with some cities seeing a **60% or more reduction in violence rates**.
- The [Inequality Solutions Portal](#) is an interactive resource of applied policy solutions to combat inequalities and exclusion globally. Featuring 100+ policies from 36 countries and counting, it provides practical evidence of how countries are advancing inclusive policymaking and, by extension, more inclusive institutions.
- We need to reject the politics of hate and fear, and instead equip policymakers with tools to navigate the new political reality marked by **disinformation and backlash**. New Pathfinders research provides insight into how to disrupt **polarization** and build **social cohesion** by addressing the vectors of division and its root causes, including material grievances.
- The [Justice Action Coalition](#) has committed political and financial support to promote justice systems that prioritize people’s needs and ensure fair outcomes. Its **catalytic fund** supports low- and middle-income countries to co-create strategies for people-centered justice reforms at national levels and brokers access to international expertise and partnerships.



- Amidst deep geopolitical contestation and an evolving global order, the 2030 Agenda, with SDG16 at its core, remains our collective vision for a better world that improves the lives of all. As we reaffirm our commitment to it here in New York, we must also ensure that we are effectively communicating its concrete value in improving people's lives at home.
- As we eye the Summit of the Future and subsequent milestones, the SDG Summit's Political Declaration continues to provide guidance on SDGs acceleration, including SDG16. This includes international financial architecture reform that addresses inequality within and between countries, measuring progress beyond GDP, and urgently tackling global debt.