



Informal comments to Members of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals on the Zero Draft for its 12th Session

June 2014

This document offers informal comments from Saferworld on the [Zero Draft](#) circulated by the co-Chairs of the Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in advance of its 12th session. The OWG should be congratulated for its continued pursuit of consensus on inclusion of commitments related to peace and governance. This document offers a number of suggestions for refining the content proposed, drawing on the available evidence as to what will most effectively promote the peace necessary for sustainable development.

Key Messages

- **Covering these issues under a single proposed goal does not fully reflect the high priority attached to these issues** by societies around the world – nor the outcomes of previous expert consultations and official reports.
- However, the targets listed in the zero draft address the key issues and lay a strong foundation for dialogue on how they could be consolidated and more effectively worded.
- In particular, **targets in goal 16 need to be worded to focus on outcomes for people, rather than capacities or processes**: how countries choose to meet these targets cannot be prescribed.
- While there is some room for improvement, **the wording of gender targets in goal five is strong**.
- We urge that all targets are framed in a way that supports **equality of development outcomes for all social groups** – as for example in education targets 4.1 to 4.4. This is vital for conflict-sensitive development.
- It is critical that member states in favour of including targets on peace and governance strengthen and organize their alliance around **priority targets and shared language**.
- There are still a number of member states who might be supportive of including targets on peace and governance - **continued engagement, particularly at a technical-level, will be vital to widening consensus**.

1. Are the targets under Proposed Goal 16 in the new zero draft an improvement on the previous draft?

Yes – the targets on peace and governance are markedly improved.

Firstly, by increasing the number of targets from ten to seventeen, the goal is *addressing a more comprehensive range of issues* that are critical for ensuring sustainable peace and good governance. The majority of the key issues are captured. Secondly, there has been some *movement towards more outcome-orientated targets rather than output-orientated targets* – although more needs to be done in this regard (see next section). Thirdly, the proposed targets on peace and governance *are more focused on how to build to sustainable peace, rather than on the symptoms of insecurity, violence and poor governance*.

2. How can the targets under Proposed Goal 16 be improved?

Targets need to focus on people-centred outcomes: At present, twelve of the seventeen targets under proposed goal 16 focus on the capacities, mechanisms, policies and actions that can help promote sustainable

peace and good governance. However, more work is necessary to ensure that targets are articulated as specific outcomes that matter to people and that will motivate and guide action. As currently formulated, many of the targets risk skewing future development efforts on peace and governance towards the implementation of process and development of capacities, *without a clear enough sense of purpose as to what these processes and capacities are intended to achieve*. A focus on outcomes would also work in favour of countries being able to choose for themselves *how* they meet targets – an overly prescriptive framework should be avoided.

An illustration of a more outcome focused target	
Current OWG target	Outcome focused wording
Enhance the capacity, professionalism and accountability of the security forces, police and judiciary.	People from all social groups feel safe and have confidence in security provision.

Consolidation of targets: While the inclusion of seventeen targets on peace and governance is to be welcomed – it is highly probable that the number of targets will have to be reduced. Indeed, there are currently a total of **212** targets for the 17 proposed goals – far too many for a framework that is meant to be actionable, easily communicated and harmonized with national frameworks.

Based on detailed analysis of their impact on peace (see below), we suggest that there could be a total of eight targets under proposed goal 16, with the target on illicit financial flows moved under the goal on means of implementation:

Suggested consolidation of proposed Goal 16	
Fostering peaceful and inclusive societies	By 2030, reduce by x% the number of violent deaths per 100,000 and reduce the number of people from all social groups, including children, affected by violence.
	By 2030, significantly reduce international stresses that drive conflict and, including irresponsible trade in arms and conflict commodities, and the violent impact of drugs trafficking.
	By 2030, tensions, grievances and disputes within society are being resolved peacefully, inclusively and constructively.
	By 2030, people from all social groups feel safe and have confidence in security provision.
Rule of law, effective and capable institutions	By 2030, ensure people from all social groups can participate in and affect political processes at all levels.
	By 2030, people from all social groups have effective remedies to injustice, and access to and confidence in effective, accountable and impartial justice provision.
	Reduce bribery and corruption by x% by 2030 and ensure that all those are involved are held accountable.
	Ensure, by 2030, that people from all social groups enjoy legal identity, freedoms of speech, association, peaceful protest, civic engagement and access to information.
Proposed Goal 17	By 2030, reduce illicit financial flows, including money laundering, tax evasion, trade mispricing, transnational corruption and bribery by x%, and recover at least y% of illicit financial flows, by 2030.

3. What needs to happen next?

Supporters of the peace agenda need to engage with one another to ensure that there is a high degree of consensus on priority targets and specific target language. They also need to reach out to other states that will likely support many of these targets, building an organised coalition of member states delivering a strong and shared message into the OWG's final deliberations. Finally, to address the concerns of sceptical states, misperceptions need to be addressed, and sustained reassurance needs to be offered regarding issues of [legitimate concern](#).

Saferworld's specific comments on goal 16 of the zero draft are provided in more detail in the table below, together with suggestions on how to move forward on the themes identified for inclusion in each case:

Proposed goal 16. Achieve peaceful and inclusive societies, rule of law, effective and capable institutions			
'Zero Draft' Target	Comment	Consolidation and / or improved target language	Why is this change an improvement?
Fostering peaceful and inclusive societies			
16.1. by 2030 reduce levels of violence and related death rate by x%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This target is critical to measuring progress towards more peaceful societies across a variety of contexts and tackling the cycles of violence that can drive further conflict. 	<p>By 2030, reduce by x% the number of violent deaths per 100,000 and reduce the number of people from all social groups, including children, affected by violence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This target is more precise and directly linked to existing datasets. A focus on 'all social groups' would help measure different levels of violence among different groups. This could help highlight priorities for conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts. Measurement with a basket of violence-related indicators (rather than a single indicator on violent deaths) will ensure applicability across a variety of victim groups in a variety of contexts within and beyond conflict-affected states.
16.2. by 2030 end abuse, exploitation and violence against children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This target is important in its own right given that children face specific forms of violence and abuse. In the interests of consolidation, one option is to merge it with 16.1. 		
16.3. by 2030 reduce illicit financial flows by x% and reduce money laundering and all forms of organized crime including human trafficking and illicit trade in arms, drugs and wildlife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This target is critical: transnational factors can drive conflict as well as those at the national level – and <i>all</i> states will need to take collective responsibility for peace. At present this single target is currently trying to do too much and we would recommend separating it into two separate targets. The target on illicit financial flows could be moved under Proposed Goal 17 on means of implementation (where a variant of it is already included). 	<p>By 2030, reduce illicit financial flows, including money laundering, tax evasion, trade mispricing, transnational corruption and bribery by x%, and recover at least y% of illicit financial flows, by 2030. <i>[Move to goal area 17]</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given its specific focus and applicability to many other goal areas, this should be a single target. The revised target captures a broader range of issues that need to be addressed.

'Zero Draft' Target	Comment	Consolidation and / or improved target language	Why is this change an improvement?
		<p>By 2030, significantly reduce international stresses that drive conflict and, including irresponsible trade in arms and conflict commodities, and the violent impact of drugs trafficking.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human trafficking is an important issue associated with conflict, but we are not certain that there is an evidence base that it drives conflict – the issue could be addressed elsewhere in the framework (e.g. under Proposed Goal 8 or 10). • The original focus on 'illicit trade in arms' is helpful – however we need to promote a more responsible legal arms trade overall (e.g. as agreed in the UN's Arms Trade Treaty). • The framework needs to focus not only on reducing the illicit trade in drugs, but all violence associated with the issue and the other negative impacts (arguably a more achievable objective). • In some cases, the illicit trade in wildlife fuels conflict, but it is only one conflict resource – the framework should include a focus on the global trade of <i>all</i> conflict commodities (e.g. diamonds, oil).
<p>16.4. by 2030 increase inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels, taking into consideration the interests of present and future generations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This target area is critical for sustainable peace: giving people a say in the decisions that affect them will help ensure that grievances can be peacefully resolved and that state decisions are accountable and responsive to people's needs. • We recommend moving the target into the next section of 'Proposed Goal 16' and merging it with target 16.11. 	<p><i>Merge with target 16.11.</i></p>	

'Zero Draft' Target	Comment	Consolidation and / or improved target language	Why is this change an improvement?
16.5. by 2020 build necessary capacities of sub-national and local governments for fostering peaceful and inclusive societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These targets are useful given that responsive, accountable and effective governance lies at the centre of sustainable peace. • However, in the interest of consolidation we recommend moving these targets into the next section of 'Proposed Goal 16' and combining them with 16.11. 	<i>Merge with target 16.11.</i>	
16.6. forge unity in diversity through democratic practices and mechanisms at the local, national and international levels			
16.7. by 2020 provide information and education on a culture of non-violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets on these themes are critical: peace is dependent on society's ability to peacefully manage conflict and levels of social cohesion. • Given that the draft targets are framed as actions whose outcomes are insufficiently clear, we recommend merging these targets into a single outcome-focused target. 	By 2030, tensions, grievances and disputes within society are being resolved peacefully, inclusively and constructively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This target is more outcome-focused than those suggested. • Given that the evidence base on the effectiveness of education on non-violence as a peacebuilding approach is uncertain, it should not be prioritised at a target level but seen as part of the effort to strengthen social cohesion and create capacities for peace-making. • Mechanisms for the peaceful resolution of conflicts within society play an important role, but are a means to an end.
16.8. strengthen mechanisms for formal and non-formal dispute resolution at all levels			
16.9. reduce the number of internally displaced persons and refugees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is an important issue. However, there is a risk that such a target could create perverse incentives, especially with regards to refugees. • The number of internally displaced persons could be used as an indicator for target 16.1 within a basket of indicators. 	<i>Use as indicators for target 16.1.</i>	

'Zero Draft' Target	Comment	Consolidation and / or improved target language	Why is this change an improvement?
16.10. enhance the capacity, professionalism and accountability of the security forces, police and judiciary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A target on this theme is critical: Security is a key public good that not only makes individuals feel more immediately safe but also reduces the risks of conflict and provides a vital platform for development to succeed. The judiciary should be dealt with under a target on justice (e.g. 16.12.) 	By 2030, people from all social groups feel safe and have confidence in security provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased capacity, professionalism and accountability of security providers will be a vital means to an end – however we recommend re-wording the target to be focused on the ultimate objective – people feeling safe. A focus on all social groups ensures that none are left without access to security and forced to create their own, which can often be a conflict driver.

Rule of law, effective and capable institutions:			
16.11. develop effective, accountable and transparent public institutions at all levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This target is critical (see above: 16.4, 16.5 16.6) 	By 2030, ensure people from all social groups can participate in and affect political processes at all levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This language is focused on the outcome (people's participation and ability to affect political processes) Inequality between different groups' participation in political process and decision-making can be a driver of conflict – a focus on all social groups ensures that none are excluded.
16.12. by 2030 provide equal access for all to independent, effective, and responsive justice systems that respect due-process rights, and equal access to legal aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A target on this issue area is critical: justice systems provide the means for people to resolve their disputes peacefully and ensure that grievances are addressed. 	By 2030, people from all social groups have effective remedies to injustice, and access to and confidence in effective, accountable and impartial justice provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As with security provision, the target could be improved by making it more outcome focused rather than prescribing processes and the means to the end. Excluding social groups from justice can drive conflict.
16.13. by 2020 provide legal identity for all, including birth registrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This target is useful. However, in the interests of consolidation, it could be used as an indicator for target 16.11. or merged into target 16.17. 	<i>Use as indicator for target 16.11 or merge into target 16.17.</i>	

'Zero Draft' Target	Comment	Consolidation and / or improved target language	Why is this change an improvement?
16.14. by 2020 improve public access to information and government data, including on public finance management, public procurement and on the implementation of national development plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This target is useful, but in the interests of consolidation, we recommend merging it into target 16.17. 	<i>Merge into target 16.17.</i>	
16.15. by 2030 ensure that all laws are publicized and accessible by all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This target is below the minimum standard required for an aspirational framework. As an action rather than an outcome it is important, we recommend merging it into target 16.17. 	<i>Merge into target 16.17.</i>	
16.16. by 2030 establish and implement effective regimes to decrease and provide accountability for corruption and bribery in all its forms and at all levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action in this target area is critical: correlated to levels of peacefulness, corruption undermines state-society relations and undermines effective and responsive governance, contributing as a driver of conflict 	Reduce bribery and corruption by x% by 2030 and ensure that all those are involved are held accountable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This new target language is more immediately measurable. The existing target language is focused on processes rather than the final outcome, which should be lowered levels of corruption and increased accountability of all those involved.
16.17. promote freedom of media, association and speech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This target area is critical: rights that are enshrined across the United Nations and in other globally agreed frameworks form the basis of societies where all people are able to express their grievances peacefully, organise themselves to manage disputes and be informed about issues that affect their lives. 	Ensure, by 2030, that people from all social groups enjoy legal identity, freedoms of speech, association, peaceful protest, civic engagement and access to information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This new target language focuses on the outcome rather than simply its promotion. A wider set of issues is covered.

Sources and further reading:

- Saferworld (2013) [Issue Paper 1: The impact of conflict and violence on achieving development](#)
- Saferworld (2013) [Issue Paper 2: What are the key challenges? What works in addressing them?](#)
- Saferworld (2013) [A vision of goals, targets and indicators](#)
- Saferworld and Conciliation Resources (2014) [Gender, violence and peace](#)
- Saferworld and CDA (2014) [Defining and measuring the external stress factors that lead to conflict in the context of the post-2015 agenda](#)