

BRIEFING | SEPTEMBER 2019

Time to invest: how to support action on SDG16+

Four years into the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG16) and the picture is not encouraging. Efforts to mobilise national action and generate investments around SDG16+¹ have so far fallen short and – unless something changes – will fail to achieve the goal of more peaceful, just and inclusive societies by 2030. This briefing explores current gaps in support for SDG16+ and proposes ways of stimulating action at all levels in contexts around the world.

The United Nations (UN) Secretary-General's 2019 'Sustainable Development Goals Report' states that around the world, 'no substantial advances have been made towards ending violence, promoting the rule of law, strengthening institutions at all levels, or increasing access to justice'². This sobering assessment clearly shows that efforts to implement SDG16+ so far have not been sufficient. But with a coherent approach and concerted action, there is still time to turn this situation around.

The complexity and politically sensitive nature of many issues within SDG16+ undoubtedly makes it difficult to translate targets into action – plus effective implementation of SDG16+ requires different sorts of support at different levels. However, we can draw lessons from the experience of the past four years about the most effective ways of supporting action on SDG16+.

This briefing provides an overview of:

- the different ways that donors and policymakers can support action on SDG16+
- a review of where and how support has been directed so far
- the need for a more balanced and concerted approach to supporting action on SDG16+
- how to enable action on SDG16+ at the national and sub-national levels

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Types of SDG16+ support

The universal nature of the 2030 Agenda compels every state to work towards achieving SDG16+. But for low- and middle-income countries, especially those affected by fragility and conflict, more investment is needed to meet the ambitious goals and targets of the peaceful, just and inclusive societies agenda. Targeted SDG16+ support for countries eligible for Official Development Assistance will be crucial in the coming years if the trends articulated in the ‘Sustainable Development Goals Report 2019’ are to be reversed, and if there is to be greater global progress on SDG16+.

Current SDG16+ support can be categorised into four main types:



SDG16+ conducive support

These are international initiatives to raise awareness among member states and global bodies and to mobilise collective political support around SDG16+ targets. While generally focused on state or multilateral institutions, this type of support can play an important role in bolstering other forms of SDG16+ action.

Levels: global, regional and sometimes national

Examples: *Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies; 16+ Forum Annual Showcase; the UN Development Programme (UNDP) Global Alliance.*³

SDG16+ related support

These are interventions that contribute to SDG16+ targets, but which are not explicitly designed or implemented in relation to SDG16+. Typically this programming can be matched to a particular SDG16+ target, and may take the form of support to national government or civil society projects, as well as to the UN or international non-governmental organisations (INGOs). This support is often highlighted by reporting mechanisms – such as Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) – as demonstrating progress towards achieving SDG16+.

Levels: national and sub-national

Examples: *Developing participatory governance in Panama; the Free Legal Aid programme in Albania;⁴ Kyrgyzstan participatory referral mechanisms to help victims of gender-based violence;⁵ UN Peacebuilding Fund projects.⁶*

SDG16+ specific support

This consists of interventions explicitly framed using SDG16+ language. These kinds of projects seek to directly deliver a particular SDG16+ target or group of targets. Most of these interventions have started since 2016, when the SDGs began to be incorporated into national development plans and donor frameworks.

Levels: national and sub-national

Examples: *UNDP SDG16 and sustaining peace in Tunisia;⁷ Data Analysis for Advancing Access to Justice;⁸ Accountability Lab SDG16 innovation challenge on justice in Nigeria.⁹*

SDG16+ enabling support

These are interventions that enable national stakeholders to leverage the legitimacy of the SDGs to strengthen action on peaceful, just and inclusive societies. Examples include the adaptation of the SDG16+ framework to a particular context (often referred to as ‘localisation’), support for inclusive reporting on SDG16+ progress to strengthen accountability, or the creation of civil society networks or coalitions to facilitate collective strategising and action on SDG16+ issues.

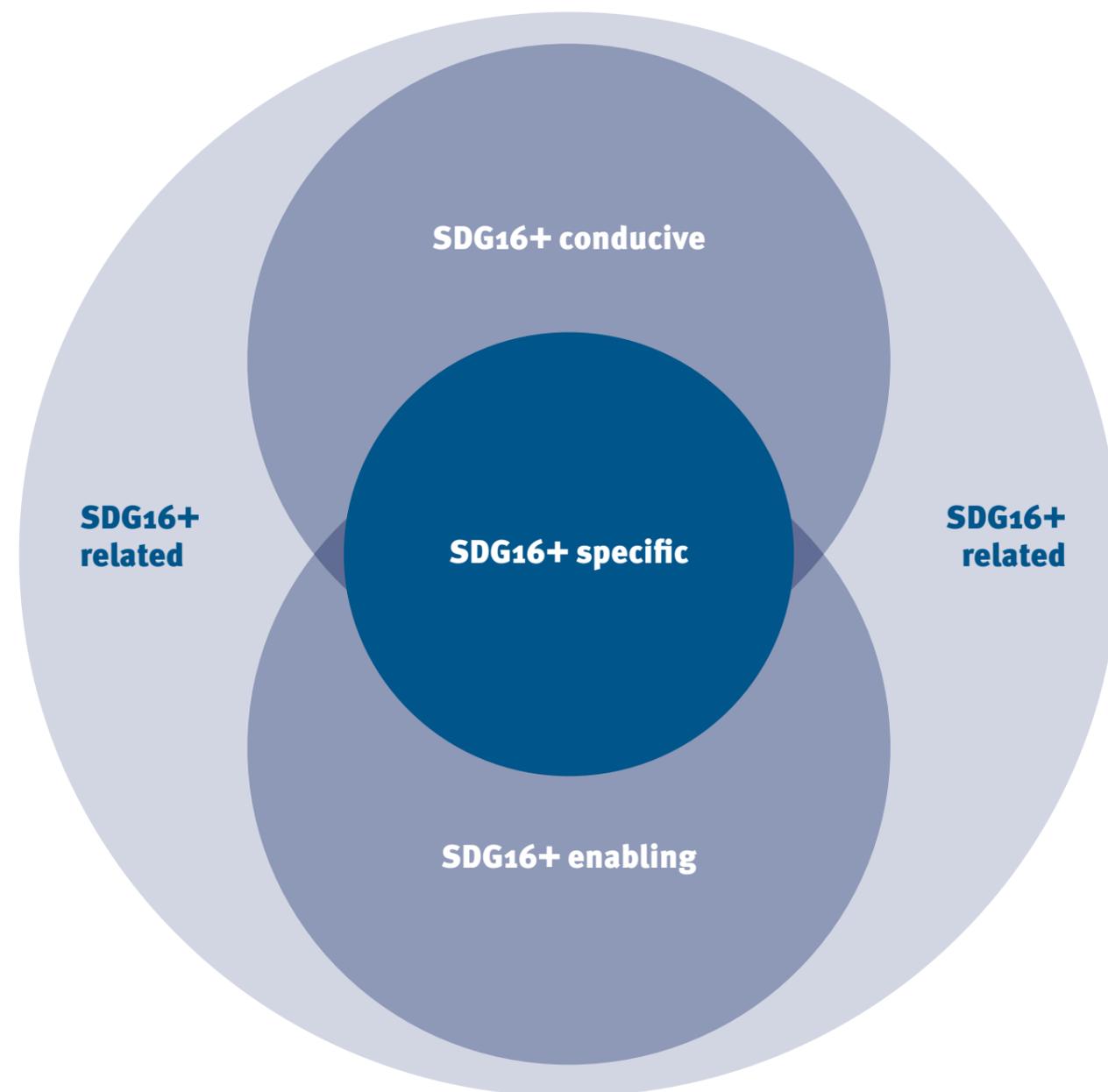
Levels: national and sub-national, sometimes global

Examples: *The localisation of SDG16+ in Somaliland; support for inclusive reporting on SDG16+ progress in Chad, Central African Republic, Cote D’Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Timor Leste, Uganda and Sudan; the Sustainable Development Network in Iraq.¹⁰*



Civil Society representatives from Somaliland, Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia discuss opportunities for national action on SDG16+ in Kampala, Uganda in 2018 .
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The four main types of SDG16+ support



What is SDG16+?

The 17 SDGs within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development include SDG16, a standalone goal which aims ‘to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels’. Also included within the 2030 Agenda are a number of targets under other goals that

are critical for building peaceful, just and inclusive societies – particularly SDG5 on promoting gender equality and SDG10 on reducing inequalities. The term ‘SDG16+’ is used to describe these collective commitments to peace, justice and inclusion across the 2030 Agenda.

Which types of support have predominated?

These four typologies of SDG16+ support ('conductive', 'related', 'specific' and 'enabling') represent the different approaches needed to achieve the commitments to peace, justice and inclusion in the 2030 Agenda. But over the first four years of its implementation, international attention and resources have been unevenly distributed among these different types of support.

Much of the focus so far has been on establishing global partnerships to generate political support for SDG16+, as seen in the creation of several multi-stakeholder global initiatives and platforms. This reflects the need – clearly identified soon after the 2030 Agenda was adopted – to harness diverse global efforts into joined-up partnerships.¹¹ 'SDG16+ conducive' support, such as the support for the Pathfinders or for the Global Alliance, has brought together a variety of member states and other stakeholders, and has played a critical role in focusing attention on the challenges of SDG16+ and mobilising political support.

Equally, governments around the world have demonstrated, notably when presenting their VNRs, how their development plans and programmes contribute to the achievement of SDG16+ targets – in other words, highlighting 'SDG16+ related' support. This reflects the view that there is no need to reinvent the wheel when existing approaches already address issues of peace, justice and inclusion. While the 2030 Agenda represents a transformative approach to international development, many governments are largely continuing with business as usual, exploring how existing plans can be shown to achieve SDG targets rather than taking the SDG framework as a template for a more comprehensive and holistic approach to development.

The sobering assessment of the UN Secretary-General's 'Sustainable Development Goals Report 2019' clearly shows that such efforts alone will not be enough to achieve SDG16+. Over the next phase of implementation, the potential of the 2030 Agenda to unlock new approaches to peace, justice and inclusion must be tapped into. This means more investment from international policymakers and donors in the other two types of support: 'SDG16+ specific' and 'SDG16+ enabling'. More attention needs to be given to stimulating action on SDG16+ at the national and sub-national levels. While political support and mobilisation of global actors is vital, ultimately it is at the national and sub-national levels that peaceful, just and inclusive societies will be achieved.

The Global Alliance's July 2019 review provides a snapshot of the various SDG16+ investments at the national level around the world. It concludes that the 'failure to invest in SDG16+ will risk worsening violence, injustice and exclusion, reversing development gains across all SDGs, including education, health and climate action'.¹² The examples in this study predominantly fall into the category of 'SDG16+ related', as opposed to 'SDG16+ specific' or 'SDG16+ enabling' investments. This resonates with evidence indicating that even the donors who championed the inclusion of peace, justice and inclusion in the 2030 Agenda have made little investment in 'SDG16+ specific' or 'SDG16+ enabling' support.¹³ This is not to say that 'SDG16+ related' support is unhelpful or unwelcome, or that it should all be shoe-horned into a SDG16+ framing. Rather, governments should explore where and how the SDG16+ framework can build on processes already underway at the national and sub-national levels, and where and how it can spark new action to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies.



Young people laugh together at a workshop in Kyrgyzstan.
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The benefits of a balanced approach

Without support for 'SDG16+ specific' and 'enabling' action, progress will be limited. Achieving SDG16+ targets will not be possible if they are perceived as objectives of Western capitals, or if they are retro-fitted into existing programmes, interventions or development efforts. Reducing global violence, improving access to justice or increasing women's participation in decision-making will only be possible if support for 'SDG16+ conducive' and 'SDG16+ related' action is matched with support for 'SDG16+ specific' and 'enabling' action.

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Supporting national and sub-national action through 'SDG16+ specific' and 'enabling' interventions can:

Help governments and civil society to 'leave no one behind': 'SDG16+ specific' or 'enabling' interventions can be tailored to address this aim and can open up space to ensure that the concerns, needs and priorities of all people – regardless of economic status, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation or other identities – are included in national and sub-national strategies, implementation efforts and monitoring mechanisms.

Open up space on contested issues: Past international development frameworks like the Millennium Development Goals created opportunities for domestic change-makers who work outside – and inside – the state to push for progress on challenging issues. SDG16+ can be used to legitimise engagement on issues related to peace, justice, gender, equality and inclusion, and to create commitments that can be used to push for concrete action by advocates.¹⁴ Programming that is 'repackaged' as SDG16+ work misses this important opportunity for impact.

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Complement existing initiatives: Implementing the 17 goals and 169 targets of the 2030 Agenda is challenging in any context. Countries need to prioritise and sequence their approaches to achieving the SDGs according to the national context. It is important that the focus is not just on the SDG priorities of the government or of one donor, but of the society as a whole. This means identifying local and national priorities, understanding how SDG16+ targets align with existing national plans, and supporting government and non-government stakeholders to implement national priorities inclusively. If this process is supported with human and financial resources, new entry points for advocacy can open up for civil society, the media and politicians. But it is equally important to identify initiatives and processes that are already helping deliver SDG16+, and to make the most of existing national capacities.

Allow learning from best practices: There is a wide array of locally driven initiatives on peace, justice and inclusion that contribute to achieving the targets of SDG16+.¹⁵ But there is still a perception that the SDG16+ agenda is being shaped largely in New York and other Western capitals. It is important that the experiences and achievements of these locally led initiatives are showcased in major global policy forums to ensure policymakers learn from what has actually worked in implementing, monitoring and reporting on SDG16+.

Deliver and monitor SDG16+ targets: 'SDG16+ specific' resources that address a single SDG16+ target or group of targets allow for better follow-up and review mechanisms nationally and internationally, helping identify what is being supported and the impact of this support. This reduces the burden of reporting on civil society and governments, limits duplication by different stakeholders and allows for increased sharing across different contexts. Additionally, 'SDG16+ enabling' support for national action that promotes the inclusion of non-governmental, marginalised and under-represented groups becomes an 'SDG16+ specific' intervention through its direct contributions to SDG target 16.7.¹⁶

'SDG16+ enabling' investment

Putting SDG16+ into practice – 11 steps to promote peace, justice and inclusion

Over the past few years, Saferworld has generated clear evidence of how a programming focus on SDG16+ can spark action on building peaceful, just and inclusive societies and on the wider 2030 Agenda. Efforts to localise SDG16+ in the Horn of Africa have provided a guiding approach that could be replicated elsewhere. This 11-step infographic details each aspect of this approach.

2 Acknowledge that most people will still not be familiar with the SDGs, so it is important to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda and SDG16+ commitments. This should include raising awareness among political parties, civil servants, academics, private sector companies, civil society organisations (CSOs) and community activists. In most cases, **SDG communication materials will need to be translated into national and local languages.**

3 Most countries have now begun to develop comprehensive national development plans. However, these plans and policies tend to be broad and relatively top-down documents and rarely have buy-in from the country's citizens. **The 2030 Agenda can be a springboard for a more inclusive and more targeted national conversation on development, and is an opportunity to open up development planning to ask people about their primary concerns and aspirations relating to peace, justice and inclusion.**



4 Use inclusive national consultations to build ownership and buy-in of interested parties and the wider population. This will help to bring together different constituencies related to SDG16+ (those working on peace, justice, inclusion, youth issues, gender issues and more), which can lay the foundations for follow-up action and advocacy.

5 There may be opportunity to connect SDG16+ efforts with existing action to promote access to justice, women's political participation and public access to information, or to fight corruption. All support needs to be delivered with a degree of humility and awareness that priorities should be set by national and sub-national stakeholders, not by external bodies.



1 The starting point for supporting efforts to localise SDG16+ is mapping who is already doing what, what policies and plans exist, and to what extent authorities, multilateral actors or donors have already integrated the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs into their work.

6 An inclusive process can also give rise to new partnerships that bring previously overlooked diverse voices and perspectives into national and sub-national conversations. Use the legitimacy of the 2030 Agenda to explore potential new areas of cooperation between authorities and non-governmental groups on SDG16+ implementation. Recognise the limitations of external support, and acknowledge the need for genuine partnership with national and sub-national organisations.

7 Mobilise activists, change-makers and those championing SDG16+ to influence and motivate others – nationally and globally – to see the value of the agenda.

8 Assist national authorities and non-governmental groups to navigate global processes on SDG16+, and support national stakeholders to participate in official monitoring of the 2030 Agenda – for example, through VNRs.

Through global forums such as the annual UN High-level Political Forum (HLPF), demonstrate national progress towards SDG16+ and achievements – but also be frank about gaps and obstacles. It's important to be open about challenges, as this highlights where and how international partners can support national action. Authorities do not have an exclusive role in this process; non-governmental organisations and other civil society groups should also be involved, and can play a crucial role strengthening accountability for national SDG16+ priorities.

9 As the SDG16+ localisation process evolves, connect national experiences to international conversations by enabling champions to share their experiences at global forums. This supports learning, sharing of best practices and coordination with global SDG16+ partnerships, and raises awareness of the SDGs nationally. It also helps motivate people to invest in the agenda.

10 To support SDG16+ implementation, coordination and overall accountability, explore options for sustained collaboration. This could be in the form of a network, forum or coalition. **Don't get stuck in structure, and don't let the mechanism become an end in itself – it should be a platform that enables sustained action on SDG16+.**



11 There is no single blueprint for translating SDG16+ into action. It should be a locally owned and locally led process. All countries are different, and localisation is an evolving process. Depending on changes in the context, it might be necessary to rework priorities, engage additional stakeholders and mobilise new champions.



SDG16+ enabling action: the case of Somaliland



Saferworld played a critical role in advocating for the inclusion of peace in the 2030 Agenda.¹⁷ In 2016, we began to take steps to see what this looks like in practice and began a project to promote national and sub-national action on SDG16+ in the Horn of Africa. The aim was to support stakeholders to own and lead action to address SDG16+ targets.¹⁸ Below is an overview of Saferworld's journey to put this into practice in Somaliland, outlining what we learnt along the way.

Laying the foundation

In 2016, few people in Somaliland knew about the commitments made within the 2030 Agenda to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies – SDG16+. The unfulfilled promises of previous international frameworks that had been promoted in Hargeisa¹⁹ meant there was no guarantee that the SDGs and SDG16+ in particular would be welcomed. But given Saferworld's presence in Somaliland since 2004 and the relationships we had developed with national partners, there was room for an exploratory process around the SDGs that promoted learning and support, rather than extraction and imposition. Together with our long-term partner, the Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum (SONSAF), we began with a mapping exercise of organisations, individuals and authorities working on issues related to SDG16+. This enabled us to explore whether SDG16+ would be a useful framework for addressing the unique set of problems people face in Somaliland.

“We've had international frameworks before. They aren't a new thing for Somaliland. But the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the goals and targets that make up the SDG16+ Agenda to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies, are something we are particularly excited about.”²⁰

Abdijalil Afqarshe, Head of Hargeisa Office, Saferworld Somalia and Somaliland

Following this mapping exercise, we organised a series of workshops and awareness-raising activities with a diverse group of CSOs to explore the potential benefits of SDG16+ in relation to the Somaliland context and the work these groups were already doing. There were no prior assumptions that organisations would see the framework as relevant, so care was taken to explore new partnerships with those who wanted to genuinely invest in the agenda. This included a range of new individuals and groups, including Somaliland authorities, CSOs, lawyers, media groups, academics, members of the private sector and students. There is a tendency for donors, UN agencies and INGOs to work with the same partners each time a new project comes up – but for an agenda as wide-reaching as SDG16+, this approach can shut out those who are able and willing to contribute.

From an early stage, it was clear that Somalilanders were keen to explore how the 2030 Agenda could support sub-national action on peace, justice and inclusion. This was seen broadly across civil society but also with the Somaliland authorities. Importantly, the Somaliland Ministry of National Planning and Development was an early adopter of the framework, having integrated SDG targets within its 2017–2021 Somaliland national development plan (NDPII)²¹. This plan included many targets relevant to SDG16+, such as: reducing violence; improving the rule of law; eliminating organised crime; reducing corruption and bribery; developing effective, accountable and transparent institutions; enhancing public participation in decision-making; reducing the harmful practice of female genital mutilation (FGM); and improving human rights protections.

“The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly SDG16+, provides the foundation for sustainability in Somaliland.”²²

Guleid Jama, Founder and Board Member, Human Rights Center Somaliland

By incorporating SDG targets into the NDPII, the Somaliland authorities demonstrated their commitment to the agenda. But with a budget shortfall of over USD\$2 billion to implement the national plan, it was clear that the NDPII alone would not lead to the action that was needed on the SDGs.²³

But the inclusion of the SDGs in the NDPII provided an opportunity for CSOs to use the agenda as leverage on the SDG16+ issues they had prioritised. Organisations were able to use the NDPII together with the 2030 Agenda as reference points to advocate on issues that they were previously unable to, such as FGM, access to justice, freedom of the press or women's political participation. Soon after, there were signs that CSOs were using SDG16+ language to support their day-to-day activities and advocacy.

Lessons learnt

1. Do not impose the SDG16+ agenda, but collaborate with national partners to explore appetite to engage with the agenda.
2. Work with those who demonstrate a commitment to addressing SDG16+ targets, and not just with those who want to take advantage of opportunities for increasing their profile or resources.
3. Recognise the value – and limitations – of getting the SDGs included within national development plans.
4. If possible, work with both state and non-state actors.



Getting meaningful buy-in and ownership

While early awareness raising and the inclusion of SDG16+ targets in the NDPII laid the foundations for SDG16+, civil society partners in Somaliland did not see this as enough to generate meaningful action. While it looked good on paper, many civil society partners saw the NDPII as a state-centric document and – given the small budget available – more of a 'donor wish list' than a strategy for action.²⁴ As a result, they took steps to create a plan for SDG16+ implementation that was not just for donor consumption, but that was intended to reflect the concerns and priorities of wider society.



To develop this plan for the SDG16+ agenda and national development efforts, SONSAF – together with additional convening partners including the Somaliland Human Rights Centre and the Somaliland National Youth Umbrella – held a series of consultations to gather a range of views on priorities for SDG16+ action in Somaliland. Consultations were held with representatives from over 50 CSOs and networks, together with community groups and individual activists from across the six regions of Somaliland. The aim of the consultations was to discuss and identify steps to achieving peace, justice, security, gender equality, inclusion and good governance – the main elements of SDG16+. Consultations took the Somaliland NDPII commitments as the starting point, but also asked what priority actions on SDG16+ participants wanted to see in the coming years. They asked participants to assess which SDG16+ target they felt needed strategic investment over the short term to build on existing progress or create greater impact. Consultations also reflected on the SDG16+ targets that deal with fundamental issues in the Somaliland context and that must be addressed through longer-term, strategic support. This framing of the consultations was designed to encourage participants to focus on their most pressing concerns rather than on a more 'projectised' view of development.

Through these consultations, the following priority targets were identified as points of action on SDG16+ in Somaliland:

- SDG 5.5: Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.
- SDG 5.3: Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.
- SDG 16.3: Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure access to justice for all.
- SDG 16.5: Substantially reduce all forms of corruption and bribery.
- SDG 16.6: Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.
- SDG 16.10: Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.²⁵

This priority-setting approach provided Somaliland's civil society with specific issues to mobilise around. It also prompted authorities in Somaliland to undertake their own prioritisation process, having acknowledged the value of these civil society consultations for their SDG16+ related strategies. The process of inclusive consultations also helped bring together previously disconnected Somaliland CSOs – for example, those working on issues such as access to justice for all, ending FGM, increasing women's political participation, inclusion and violence prevention – to collaborate and join forces on SDG16+ issues. This approach has not only helped raise awareness of SDG16+ and the 2030 Agenda among Somaliland CSOs, but also promoted shared ownership of the NDPII by civil society and government. It has set the stage for action on priority SDG16+ issues such as access to justice.

Lessons learnt

1. Inclusive consultations to identify people's priorities not only produce more people-centred interventions but also raise awareness and familiarise different communities with the SDGs.
2. Inclusive consultations indirectly contribute to progress on SDG16.7 (on accountable and transparent institutions) and SDG16.6 (on inclusive and transparent participatory decision-making).
3. As an organising framework, SDG16+ brings together different interest groups and communities that previously were disconnected from one another.

Mobilising ambition, catalysing action and supporting accountability

While civil society mobilisation around SDG16+ is crucial, it cannot be seen as isolated from efforts to stimulate action from authorities and service providers. Because meaningful national and sub-national action on SDG16+ in Somaliland was only seen as realistic with government buy-in, efforts to identify and mobilise champions were central. Such efforts to generate political will focused on individuals in the office of the Chief Justice of Somaliland, the Ministry of Justice and the Somaliland Ministry of National Planning and Development – ministries critical for SDG16+ implementation. The process of promoting SDG16+ commitments with authorities was a collaborative effort by national partners and did not happen overnight. Through bilateral engagements, ministers and senior civil servants were encouraged to adopt SDG16+ language and champion specific SDG16+ causes. By the end of 2018, the Chief Justice, the Minister of Justice, officials from the Ministry of Planning and the Attorney General's office all had made public statements about SDG16+ or included SDG16+ in their work plans. With this level of public support from authorities – together with an inclusive set of SDG16+ priorities for action – the next step was to translate commitments into action.

“**SDG16+ can be a catalyst for Somaliland development for improving social inclusion, justice and stability, and by engaging the society from the grassroots to the national level – this framing could be one of the effective approaches for Somaliland to recover on severe underdevelopment issues.**”

Abdirahman Gaas, Executive Director, NAFIS Network²⁶

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The first attempt began with action on SDG16.3 – improving access to justice – which was one of the previously identified SDG16+ priority targets. Together with the Somaliland Human Rights Centre and SONSAF, Saferworld began gathering data on the main gaps and challenges around accessing justice in Somaliland. Working closely with SDG16+ champions in government – including the Chief Justice and the Minister of Justice – our partners hosted a three-day workshop that brought judges from all regions of Somaliland together with members of civil society, academia, justice ministries and other judicial bodies.²⁷ This was the first time these groups had come together to discuss justice in Somaliland. These convening discussions informed a new strategy for Somaliland based on the growing global commitment to implementing SDG16.3.²⁸ This strategy will shape international engagement in Somaliland and help steer authorities, multilateral actors and civil society groups on how to work collaboratively to improve access to justice. This would not have been possible if the discussions had not been framed around SDG16+, which created an entry point for greater collaboration.

“**The beauty of the SDGs is that its framework is created by the government and people, for the government and people.**”²⁹

Zainab Hassan, Project Officer, SONSAF

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Partner CSOs have since launched new campaigns to raise awareness of the need to increase women's political participation (SDG5.5), and have collectively pushed for legislation to ban all forms of FGM (SDG5.3). Within each campaign, people and organisations that had not been previously involved in promoting women's political participation or in efforts to end FGM were brought into advocacy efforts. The collaboration seen in the consultation phase also spilled over to the implementation phase, showing the value of SDG16+ increasing coordination between different groups that may not otherwise work together.



Given Somaliland's unrecognised status,³⁰ authorities there have no way to report on SDG progress to the official UN HLPF. Civil society groups recognised that while there would be no formal way of holding Somaliland authorities to account, they had an opportunity to lead the reporting process themselves. Somaliland CSOs carried out a detailed review of progress made in achieving SDG16+ priority targets and also reviewed the process for delivering on SDG16+. The 'Somaliland SDG16+ civil society progress report' assesses what is already being done in Somaliland on SDG16+, outlines the data available, provides a baseline, identifies implementation gaps, and stimulates action. Civil society groups used the process of developing the report to further promote civil society inclusion in overall SDG16+ efforts, with civil society evidence used together with official data.³¹ The report will be an important benchmark to help ensure that the commitments to implementing SDG16+ are kept, that any shortcomings are highlighted and that there is some way to measure future progress.

In the months following the publication of the civil society SDG16+ progress report, there have been a number of positive developments. The Ministry of National Development and Planning has announced it will create an official multi-stakeholder SDG platform to cover each of the 17 goals, to allow for better collaboration between authorities and civil society groups and to create a platform for collective monitoring of progress. The Ministry of Justice has also requested that all its staff receive training on SDG16+ from those who worked on the 2019 civil society progress report and have requested that copies of the report are sent to each civil servant within the ministry.

Lessons learnt

1. Consultations should set the tone for collaboration during implementation, focusing on inclusion and transparency.
2. Use SDG16+ framing as a way of bringing together different groups to collectively advocate and act on identified issues.
3. Collective civil society reporting on SDG16+ can enable more action and collaboration with authorities and other civil society groups.
4. Increasing authorities' accountability on SDG16+ does not mean being confrontational – it can be a constructive process that enables better targeted and coordinated action.



Leading the way nationally and globally

Prompted by collective national and sub-national efforts to act on SDG16+, a number of CSOs came together to drive forward the SDG16+ agenda in Somaliland. The resulting 'Somaliland SDG16+ Coalition' is a way of formalising collaboration on SDG16+, galvanising action on priority issues and acting as an engagement platform between civil society and the Somaliland government on SDG16+ issues. Coalition members decided that the coalition should not begin with onerous governance structures, that membership should be kept open, and that partners should collaborate on the basis of ensuring efforts to localise SDG16+ lead to sustained and coordinated national action from authorities and CSOs.

But a global agenda should not just be confined to the national and sub-national levels. Members of the Somaliland SDG16+ Coalition have been working to make the Somaliland story global. We supported Somaliland civil society activists to share their stories on SDG16+ with global audiences at policy events in Freetown, Stockholm, The Hague and New York – which included being featured at the UN HLPF every year since 2017. These global policy spaces have provided opportunities for coalition partners to explain how and why SDG16+ can make a difference in Somaliland, while at the same time outlining the challenges of implementing the agenda with limited resources. If global ambitions around SDG16+ are to be translated into positive change, they must be better informed by the perspectives of the people most directly affected by conflict, injustice and exclusion. The Somaliland SDG16+ Coalition has been addressing this global shortcoming, but much more needs to be done.

Civil society partners, through the Somaliland SDG16+ Coalition, will continue to share their stories nationally, regionally and globally in the years ahead.



Lessons learnt

1. Work with global SDG16+ networks and initiatives to find opportunities to share national stories of SDG16+ implementation.
2. When designing localisation programmes, include space to present learning to the UN HLPF and to regional forums.
3. Create national coalitions where possible, but without overburdening participants with endless red tape.

Summary

The Somaliland SDG16+ experience has shown that SDG16+ can – and does – effect change at the national and sub-national levels. Specific 'SDG16+ focused' resources have proven to be invaluable in unlocking the potential of the global framework – for example, by transferring legitimacy to local action, bringing authorities and civil society together and providing a way of sharing learning globally.

After three years of SDG implementation, the work is by no means done, and it will be an uphill battle to achieve the ambitious SDG16+ targets in Somaliland by 2030. But by supporting a process that encourages the localisation of these commitments, the foundations have been built to initiate meaningful action on priority targets. There is now more collaboration between authorities and non-state groups, and there are new ways of coordinating between different groups to support collective implementation.



“**For Somaliland, SDG16+ has huge potential to spur great progress in a range of different areas. Our hope is that we can not only take huge steps to achieving the 2030 Agenda, but be able to share the Somaliland SDG16+ story with the rest of the world to galvanise progress in contexts far and wide.**”³²

George Were, Head of Africa Programmes, Saferworld

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First-hand experiences of impact in Somaliland



The work on SDG16+ in Somaliland enabled a human rights defender to be involved in national-level discussions for the first time. It enabled us to work with civil society groups and authorities on a shared common goal, rather than as adversaries. When space to operate globally and locally is shrinking, the SDGs broadened the space. With the convening in September 2018 on access to justice, it was the first time to bring the group of stakeholders together. This was ordinarily not possible. Others can learn from the localisation of SDG16+ in Somaliland. Our process was about the locals; it was about ownership; it brought many people together and their involvement was the key. It was about helping new plants grow in the soil that was already there, rather than bringing in new soil.

Guleid Jama, Founder and Board Member, Human Rights Center Somaliland.³³



We established the SDG16+ Coalition. It's the first time civil society [in Somaliland] has come together to establish a forum that directly works for the implementation of the SDGs. We translated the SDGs into Somali. Somaliland is one of the few places in Africa that is directly using the SDGs in its national development plan. We produced the first SDG16+ progress report from Somaliland. One of the key challenges is there is limited access to justice in the urban areas but not the rural areas. Now at least with the progress report we have a baseline.

Ismail Farjar, Founding Member, Centre for Policy and Analysis Horn of Africa.³⁴



We have been working on increasing awareness of the SDGs in Somaliland. We pushed for the SDGs to be included in the national development plan. But as we all know, the national development plan does not always translate into action. But there are a few success stories through our advocacy on the SDGs: for the first time Somaliland has approved a 20 per cent quota for women [for parliamentary elections]. We have also had success in ending violence against women – both houses and the president approved the sexual offence bill.

Zainab Hassan, Project Officer, Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum.³⁵



Before the SDG16+ localisation process in Somaliland began, many civil society organizations were working in silos, even though they were focusing on the same agenda. But now working together under the SDG16+ umbrella there is a collective voice – and more importantly collaborative action – on FGM, women's political participation and access to justice. This action is not just national – it is global too. We have seen the Somaliland SDG16+ story shared with the world. The coalition got together to produce an overview of SDG16+ progress within Somaliland and presented it to the UN HLPF in 2019 in New York. There is real appetite from the government and civil society to continue collaborating on this agenda.

Abdijalil Afqarshe, Head of Hargeisa Office, Saferworld Somalia and Somaliland

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Somaliland SDG16+ Coalition

The Somaliland SDG16+ Coalition aims to enhance collaboration between civil society groups, recognising the fundamental role that partnerships must play if the 2030 Agenda is to be successfully implemented. This coalition is open to any CSO or individual who shares a commitment to implementing SDG16+ in Somaliland. Activities are intended to be complementary of government, donor, international and national civil society initiatives, and aligned with the NDPII where possible.³⁶

In July 2019, the Somaliland SDG16+ Coalition produced the first SDG16+ progress report. The report was the result of an inclusive and comprehensive consultation process involving civil society and authorities. The report outlined progress towards implementing SDG16+ in Somaliland, identified a range of gaps, and provided recommendations for future action by authorities and donors.³⁷

Members of the Somaliland SDG16+ Coalition

Center for Policy Analysis Horn of Africa
Somaliland Human Rights Centre
Network against FGM in Somaliland
Saferworld
Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum
Somaliland National Youth Umbrella





Opening plenary session of the May 2019 Expert Group Meeting on SDG16 in Rome.

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What should be done?

Recommendations for supporting action on SDG16+

Donors

- Map levels of investment in each type of SDG16+ support. Balance 'SDG16+ conducive' support with support for 'SDG16+ specific' and 'SDG16+ enabling' national and sub-national action. Ensure this support facilitates:
 - a sustained process of awareness-raising and capacity-building on SDG16+
 - inclusive multi-stakeholder processes to identify priority SDG16+ targets for specific countries
 - action by a range of national and sub-national organisations and institutions, including civil society and authorities, to address identified SDG16+ priorities
 - opportunities and space for national SDG16+ champions to participate in global SDG processes
- Explore opportunities to shift 'SDG16+ related' programming to 'SDG16+ specific' programming where appropriate.
- Support 'SDG16+ enabling' interventions that allow space for national and sub-national actors to own and develop plans of action on SDG16+, rather than pre-determining priorities and expected results.

UN agencies & INGOs

- Build localisation into programme design and make sure there are resources for national and sub-national CSOs.
- Adapt SDG16+ support programmes to reflect identified national and sub-national priorities.
- Help protect space for civil society to participate in SDG processes by promoting an inclusive approach to national reporting on SDG16+ progress.
- Support 'SDG16+ enabling' interventions that allow space for national and sub-national actors to own and develop plans of action on SDG16+, rather than pre-determining priorities and expected results.

National authorities

- Broaden participation in national development planning and SDG implementation through inclusive consultations, coordination and collective monitoring approaches.
- Base future national development plans on the 2030 Agenda, but ensure these are developed jointly with relevant stakeholders.
- Together with all relevant stakeholders, collectively determine the short-term SDG16+ priorities that will mobilise action on the most pressing issues.

National and sub-national organisations

- Explore options for sustained and concerted action on SDG16+ by bringing together diverse civil society groups (for example, coalitions and networks).
- Take advantage of the opportunity afforded by the HLPF and VNR processes to provide civil society perspectives on progress towards SDG16+ targets.
- Identify and advocate to donors, in-country UN representatives and other INGOs on the specific opportunities to leverage the SDG16+ agenda.

Global SDG16+ coalitions

- Reflect on how existing strategies relate to the four types of support for SDG16+ action.
- Align strategies with other relevant actors in support of a balanced and coherent approach.
- Highlight the impact of 'SDG16+ specific' and 'SDG16+ enabling' action in global SDG forums and processes.

A brief history: Saferworld and SDG16+

From 2011–2015, Saferworld worked to ensure that the global framework for sustainable development that would replace the Millennium Development Goals included a standalone focus on peace. An independent evaluation in 2016 found that Saferworld made a significant contribution to the final agreement that produced SDG16+. Specifically, this evaluation found that Saferworld's efforts contributed to:

- increased support within the global policy community for the inclusion of peace in the 2030 Agenda

- reduced resistance of influential rising powers to the inclusion of peace in the 2030 Agenda
- the inclusion of the 'right' kind of peace in the 2030 Agenda, which largely reflected Saferworld's calls for the root causes of conflict and violence to be addressed
- the adoption of a comprehensive, robust and actionable monitoring framework by the UN Statistical Commission in March 2016, which reflected Saferworld's key asks.³⁸

Notes

- 1 The 17 SDGs within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development include SDG16, a standalone goal which aims 'to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels'. Also included within the 2030 Agenda are a number of targets under other goals that are critical for building peaceful, just and inclusive societies – particularly SDG5 on promoting gender equality and SDG10 on reducing inequalities. The term 'SDG16+' is used to describe these collective commitments to peace, justice and inclusion across the 2030 Agenda.
- 2 United Nations (2019), 'The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2019', July (<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2019/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2019.pdf>)
- 3 These global initiatives include but are not limited to the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies (<https://www.sd16.plus/>), the Global Alliance for Reporting Progress on Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies (<https://www.un-globalalliance.org/>) and the 16+ Forum (<https://wfuna.org/sixteenplusforum>)
- 4 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', July (<https://www.sd16hub.org/system/files/2019-07/Global%20Alliance%2C%20SDG%2016%2B%20Global%20Report.pdf>), p 42.
- 5 Ibid, p 90.
- 6 United Nations (2019), 'Peacebuilding Fund investment in the Sustainable Development Goals', May (<https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org/peacebuilding/files/documents/1907427-e-pbf-investments-in-sdgs-web.pdf>); United Nations General Assembly (2019), 'Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund', April (https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/a_73_829.pdf)
- 7 For more information, see the Dutch government's open aid portal: <https://openaid.nl/projects>
- 8 Charles Stewart Mott Foundation (2018), 'Data Analysis for Advancing Access to Justice', September (<https://www.mott.org/grants/world-justice-project-data-analysis-for-advancing-access-to-justice-2018-03534/>)
- 9 The Global Alliance for Reporting Progress on Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, op. cit., p 92.
- 10 Ibid, pp 72–73.
- 11 Wheeler T (2016), 'Greater than the sum of our parts: global partnerships for Goal 16', Saferworld, April (<https://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/publications/1057-greater-than-the-sum-of-our-parts-global-partnerships-for-goal-16>)
- 12 The Global Alliance for Reporting Progress on Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies (2019), op. cit, p 31.
- 13 Saferworld (2019), 'International Development Committee inquiry: UK progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals', February (<https://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/publications/1200-international-development-committee-inquiry-uk-progress-towards-the-sustainable-development-goals>)
- 14 For example, see: Miller-Dawkins M (2014), 'Global goals and international agreements: Lessons for the design of the Sustainable Development Goals', Overseas Development Institute, November (<https://www.odi.org/publications/8813-global-goals-and-international-agreements-lessons-design-sustainable-development-goals>); Binat Sarwar M (2015), 'National MDG Implementation: Lessons for the SDG era', Overseas Development Institute, November (<https://www.odi.org/publications/10106-national-mdg-implementation-lessons-sdg-era>); Vernon P, Baksh D (2010), 'Working with the grain to change the gain', International Alert, September (<https://www.international-alert.org/publications/working-grain-change-grain>)
- 15 For example, see the Voices of SDG16+ Campaign: <https://voicesofsdg16plus.org>
- 16 SDG16 target 16.7 aims to 'ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels'. For a full list of targets, see: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg16>
- 17 Collinson H (2016), 'Ensuring that the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development promotes peaceful, just and inclusive societies. An evaluation of Saferworld's contribution, 2011–2016', Saferworld, June (<https://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/publications/1221-ensuring-that-the-un-2030-agenda-for-sustainable-development-promotes-peaceful-just-and-inclusive-societies>)
- 18 This project was supported by the Department for Stabilisation and Humanitarian Aid at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- 19 For example, see the New Deal from the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding: <https://www.pbsdialogue.org/en/>
- 20 Saferworld (2018), 'SDG16+ in Somaliland', December (<https://www.saferworld.org.uk/multimedia/sdg16-in-somaliland>)
- 21 The Government of Somaliland (2017), 'The National Development Plan II 2017-2021', July (https://slministryofplanning.org/images/front-page/Somaliland_NDPII_Final.pdf)
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 The Somaliland Ministry of National Planning and Development estimates the NDPII would cost USD\$2.112 billion, while Somaliland Central Government funding provides just USD\$81.4 million in direct funding.
- 24 Somaliland's NDPII includes 223 targets across nine sectors (economy, energy and extractives, production, infrastructure, governance, education, health, water, sanitation and hygiene, and environment).
- 25 Saferworld (2018), 'Building a peaceful, just and inclusive Somaliland: SDG16+ priorities for action', May (<https://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/publications/1173-building-a-peaceful-just-and-inclusive-somaliland-sdg16-priorities-for-action>)
- 26 Saferworld (2018), 'SDG16+ in Somaliland', December (<https://www.saferworld.org.uk/multimedia/sdg16-in-somaliland>)
- 27 Somaliland SDG16+ Coalition (2019), 'Improving Access to Justice in Somaliland', February 27 (<https://www.somalilandsdg16plus.org/february-access-to-justice-conference>)
- 28 Somaliland SDG16+ Coalition (2019), 'Improving Access to Justice in Somaliland', February (<https://somalilandsdgs.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Report-Improving-access-to-justice-in-Somaliland-25012019-2.pdf>)
- 29 Saferworld (2018), 'SDG16+ in Somaliland', December (<https://www.saferworld.org.uk/multimedia/sdg16-in-somaliland>)
- 30 Somaliland declared independence from Somalia in 1991, but is not formally recognised internationally. Saferworld takes no position on the matter of international recognition. We have been working to promote peace, democratisation and good governance in Somalia and Somaliland since 2004.
- 31 Somaliland SDG16+ Coalition (2019), 'Somaliland SDG16+ Progress Report', July (https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/24270Somaliland_SDG16_Progress_Report.pdf)
- 32 Saferworld (2018), 'SDG16+ in Somaliland', December (<https://www.saferworld.org.uk/multimedia/sdg16-in-somaliland>)
- 33 Saferworld interview, Guleid Ahmed Jama, Hargeisa, 29 July 2019.
- 34 International Peace Institute (2019), 'Civil Society Voices Speak in New York on Implementing SDG16+', July 11 (<https://www.ipinst.org/2019/07/voices-of-sdg16-stories-for-global-action>)
- 35 International Peace Institute (2018), 'Bringing Words to Life: How Are the SDGs Supporting Peace, Justice, and Inclusion?', July 12 (<https://www.ipinst.org/2018/07/how-sdgs-support-peace-justice-inclusion>)
- 36 For more information, see: <https://www.somalilandsdg16plus.org>
- 37 Somaliland SDG16+ Coalition (2019), 'Somaliland SDG16+ Progress Report', op. cit.
- 38 Collinson H, op. cit.



About Saferworld

Saferworld is an independent international organisation working to prevent violent conflict and build safer lives. We work with people affected by conflict to improve their safety and sense of security, and conduct wider research and analysis. We use this evidence and learning to improve local, national and international policies and practices that can help build lasting peace. Our priority is people – we believe in a world where everyone can lead peaceful, fulfilling lives, free from fear and insecurity. We are a not-for-profit organisation working in 12 countries and territories across Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

Cover photo – Community discussions in Indonesia on how women contribute to peace in their communities.

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Acknowledgements

This briefing was written by Jordan Street, Ivan Campbell, and Abdijalil Afqarshe of Saferworld. Comments and advice were provided by Robert Parker and Elizabeth Bourne. Ilya Jones and Martha Crowley provided valuable publication and copyediting support. The infographic and icons used on pages 6–11 were designed by Garry Robson, and the briefing itself was designed by Jane Stevenson.

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