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Item 6 (e) of the provisional agenda[*]
Plenary round-table panels and parallel meetings on
in-depth review, peer learning and dialogue on
the sub-theme of the Regional Forum: parallel
meeting on the sub-theme of peace

Background paper on peace: transformative actions for peace, justice and strong institutions towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063

I.   Introduction

1.   This paper was developed by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), with contributions from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Development Coordination Offices, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. It is complementary to the ECA publication, *Economic Report on Africa 2019*,[1] the *Global Sustainable Development Report 2019*,[2] and the background paper on ensuring peace, justice and strong institutions from the fifth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development.[3]

2.   Sustainable Development Goal 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels) is a foundational Goal, vital to the inclusive achievement of all the Sustainable Development Goals. It is central to sustaining peace, and preventing and responding to conflict, by strengthening institutions (including multilateral institutions). It contributes to addressing the root causes of poverty, forced displacement, statelessness, human rights challenges and the marginalization of people, as well as educating for a culture of peace and non-violence.[4]

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[*] ECA/RFSD/2020/1.

[1] *Economic Report on Africa 2019: Fiscal Policy for Financing Sustainable Development in Africa* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.19.II.K.2).

[2] Independent Group of Scientists appointed by the Secretary-General, *Global Sustainable Development Report 2019: The Future is Now – Science for Achieving Sustainable Development*, (United Nations, New York, 2019).

[3] ECA/RFSD/2019/6.

[4] Study by the International Science Council and a Guide to SDG interactions: from Science to Implementation. Available at https://council.science/publications/a-guide-to-sdg-interactions-from-science-to-implementation. Accessed on 28 January 2020.

3.   Good governance, espoused in Goal 16, constitutes the foundation upon which the other Goals are built. Similarly, all aspirations articulated in Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union, are hinged on good governance and aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (see table), reflecting the influence of the common African position on the post-2015 development agenda.

Table
Alignment of Sustainable Development Goal 16 with Agenda 2063

Goal 16	*Related goals in Agenda 2063*
Peace, justice and strong institutions	Goal 11: Democratic values, practices, universal principles of human rights, justice and rule of law entrenched
	Goal 12: Capable institutions and transformed leadership at all levels
	Goal 13: Peace, security and stability preserved
	Goal 14: A stable and peaceful Africa
	Goal 15: A fully functional and operational African peace and security architecture
	Goal 17: Full gender equality in all spheres of life
	Goal 18: Engaged and empowered youth and children

Source: ECA *Strategic Framework 2019: Africa's Development Agenda Side by Side*, Addis Ababa, 2019.

II.   Key trends and progress towards achievement of selected targets, including gaps, constraints and emerging issues

4.   Africa's progress towards meeting its development goals and implementing its development agenda demonstrates that the 12 targets under Sustainable Development Goal 16 are measurable, and that national statistical offices can produce good data on access to justice, representation in public institutions and political participation. Where country level data are scarce, regional and global indicators produced by non-State actors were used to monitor progress against the targets of Goal 16.

5.   Frequently used regional indicators are based on the Afrobarometer survey and the Ibrahim Index of African Governance, while global indicators draw from a number of sources, including Transparency International Corruption Perception Index, Global Peace Index, Freedom in the World indicator of Freedom House, Reporters Without Borders on World Press Freedom Index, and the World Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment. Twenty-four member States have also used the UNESCO Media Development indicators, which define a framework within which the media can contribute to, and benefit from, good governance and democratic development.[5]

6.   Overall, governance in Africa remains, on average, on an upward trajectory.[6] Member States' strongest performances were in socioeconomic development, particularly economic governance and management, and corporate governance, while the least gains were recorded in democracy and political governance.

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[5] Media development indicators: A framework for assessing media development. Available at https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000163102-. Accessed on 27 January 2020.

[6] Ibrahim Index of African Governance. Available at https://mo.ibrahim.foundation/iiag. Accessed on 28 January 2020; and African Peer Review Mechanism (2019). Africa Governance Report: Promoting African Union Shared Values. Prepared by the African Peer Review Mechanism in collaboration with the African Governance Architecture. Available at https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/36418-doc-eng-_the_africa_governance_report_2019_final-1.pdf. Accessed on 28 January 2020.

A. Progress on peace

7. While peaceful societies are the foundation of economic development, insecurity, terrorism, social strife, political tension and riots remain visible on the continent, alongside progress in conflict prevention and violence reduction, in some countries.

8. Ongoing armed conflicts, which represent protracted crises that massively impede or even destroy development, are not adequately addressed in the Sustainable Development Goals. In 2018, Somalia and South Sudan were among the least peaceful countries, while the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic, Lesotho and Togo faced increased internal conflict as Cameroon, the Niger and Nigeria faced deterioration in peacefulness.[7] Chad progressed most, with the number of attacks and resulting deaths declining from 22 terrorist attacks and 206 deaths in 2015 to only 4 attacks and 13 deaths in 2017. Chad's Global Terrorism Index improved from 5.83 in 2015 to 4.7 in 2018.[8] South Africa faced the highest economic impact of violence on the continent, estimated at $2,582 per capita.[9]

9. Africa's average scores for personal safety and national security were at their lowest in 10 years in 2017.[10] The deterioration of security on a continental level was driven by the higher number of conflicts, both domestic and external, and increased levels of violence by non-State actors, highlighting the modern transversal security challenges facing the continent. Country performance varied. Between 2014 and 2017, 29 countries experienced weakening national security performance; 16 improved, as South Africa and Uganda consistently improved year-on-year; while Angola, Cameroon and Djibouti declined every single year since 2014. Only 4 countries managed to reduce their conflict involvement, while 22 countries were involved in more conflicts in 2017 than in 2014. At the same time, violence by non-State actors peaked in 2017, leading to forced migration, internally displaced persons and refugees, reaching its highest levels in 2017 (in the case of refugees in 2016 and 2017) over 2008–2017.

10. Lack of progress in security could lead to setbacks in building institutions or development-related goals and targets. The incidence of armed conflicts and violence in 2017 differed in terms of the triggers, actors and overall dynamics. However, those conflicts had similar underlying root causes, linked to structural weaknesses, including poor governance, horizontal and vertical inequality, and diversity mismanagement.

11. A range of human rights and governance challenges are leading to violence and conflict in societies. The challenges include inequality, exclusion, discrimination, corruption, gender and child abuse, and lack of access to information, which is not only a basic human right, but also an important tool for promoting the rule of law and ensuring other rights under the Sustainable Development Goals. There is significant disparity across the continent on access to information: only 24 African countries have promulgated access to

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[7] Global Peace Index 2019. Available at http://visionofhumanity.org/indexes/global-peace-index/. Accessed on 28 January 2020.

[8] Chad, Republic of (2019). National Voluntary Review.

[9] Institute for Economics and Peace (2017). *SDG 16 Progress Report*. Sydney. Available at https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SDG16-Progress-Report-2017.pdf. Accessed on 28 January 2020.

[10] Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2018). Ibrahim Index of African Governance 2018. London: Mo Ibrahim Foundation.

information legislation. [11] Despite legislation, a culture of secrecy still characterizes some African regions, inhibiting investigative reporting, while laws pertaining to anti-terrorism and cybercrime resulted in restrictions in media freedom, crucial in promoting peaceful coexistence and good governance.

12.   Violent conflicts today are more complex than in the past, and increasingly protracted, involving more non-State groups as well as regional and international actors,[12] calling for increasing efforts from multiple actors to focus on preventing both the occurrence and the escalation of violence.

13.   Proliferation and availability of weapons are fuelling violence and armed conflicts, and hampering the achievement of sustainable development. In Nigeria, for example, an assessment[13] of Sustainable Development Goal 16 shows that – despite the ratification of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition – Nigeria still receives around 70 per cent of the 500 million illicit weapons coming into Africa. Armed violence and insecurity negatively affect economic growth and often result in long-standing grievances among communities. Yet, for every 1 per cent improvement in positive peace, the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita income improves by 1.8 per cent. [14] Societies enduring active conflict require dialogue, trust, consensus-building, inclusive political settlements and reconciliation to build bridges for peace, as evidenced in Somalia.

14.   Violence is an obstacle to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and crime, particularly organized crime, remains a challenge, especially for large economies in Africa. "Incitement to radicalization towards violent extremism" (or "violent radicalization") has grown in recent years.[15] While intentional homicides declined overall during the previous decade, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Nigeria and South Africa have the highest number of homicide victims in Africa. Moreover, a homicide rate of 12.5 per 100,000 inhabitants places Africa second to Latin America with 23 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants.[16] The murder rate in South Africa increased by 6.9 per cent in 2018 over 2017, with more women and children being murdered. Without ensuring sustained positive peace, progress across the Sustainable Development Goals will be lacking or unsustainable.

15.   For the period 2005–2016, the proportion of children in Africa aged 1 to 14 years who experienced any violent form of discipline (psychological aggression and physical punishment) in the previous month, was on average 85 per cent versus 80 per cent globally. Children also remain the most trafficked population in Africa.

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[11] UNESCO (2018). World trends in freedom of expression and media development: regional overview of Africa 2017/2018. Available at https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000266191_eng-. Accessed on 28 January 2020.

[12] World Bank Group (2018). Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict. Available at https://olc.worldbank.org/system/files/Pathways%20for%20Peace%20Executive%20 Summary.pdf. Accessed on 28 January 2020.

[13] Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Center (2017). Sustainable Development Goals 'Shadow' Report 2017: Nigeria's progress review of targets 16.4., 16.5. and 16.10. Available at http://cislacnigeria.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/CISLAC-SDG-16-Executive-Summary-and-Recommendations.pdf. Accessed on 28 January 2020.

[14] Institute for Economics and Peace (2018). Economic Value of Peace: Measuring the global economic impact of violence and conflict. Sydney. Available at https://reliefweb.int/report/world/economic-value-peace-2018. Accessed on 28 January 2020.

[15] Youth and violent extremism on social media: mapping the research. Available at https://unesdoc. unesco.org/ark: /48223/pf0000260532-. Accessed on 28 January 2020.

[16] Cusson, Maurice, and others. *Mille homicides en Afrique de l'Ouest*. June 2017.

B.   Progress on justice

16.   Exclusion from society occurs for a range of reasons, from a lack of legal identity that denies people existence to, for example, demand for access to public services and human rights – they are invisible to the State and at high risk of being left behind. Some people live under oppressive legislation that deviates from international standards, exacerbated by factors including poverty, conflict and corruption. Justice can be a means to deal with discriminatory laws or practices or crimes that threaten the foundation of peaceful societies.

17.   Access to rights is denied when laws deviate from key international standards and exclude population groups – such as the right of refugees to access education. For those with a legal identity, seeking justice is often prohibitively expensive and legal proceedings can be excessively lengthy. Nor does the provision of legal aid necessarily meet legal needs. More than 5 billion people worldwide fall into a "justice gap" – the failure to provide justice to people and communities outside the protection of the law – because they cannot access legal services to resolve their problems. [17] According to the ECA background paper on ensuring peace, justice and strong institutions (ECA/RFSD/2019/6), about 500 million of Africa's 1.2 billion people lack official identification, underpinned by a poor civil registration and vital statistics system, further contributing to marginalization and exclusion of the uncounted. Africa has the lowest levels of registration for children under 5 years of age (46 per cent), significantly pronounced in, Chad, Guinea-Bissau, Malawi, Somalia and Zambia. By contrast, Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia have almost reached universal coverage for birth registration.

18.   Justice and the rule of law need further improvement on the continent, to help deal with discrimination and repression. The institutions responsible for the police, the judiciary and elected officials are seen as some of the most corrupt in Africa, with 55 per cent of Africans believing corruption had increased from the previous year. [18]

19.   There is concern about the high number of imprisoned journalists and shutdowns of social media, United Nations and African Union normative frameworks notwithstanding. Impunity for crimes against journalists remains high, in spite of the United Nations Plan of Action on Safety of Journalists. In 2006–2018, UNESCO recorded 1,109 killings of journalists, with only 131 cases of journalists' killings reported by member States as being resolved since 2006 – an 88 per cent impunity rate. While a greater number of journalists were killed in Africa in the period 2012–2017 than in the period 2006–2011, the number of killings decreased between 2012 and 2017.[19]

20.   However, there are positive improvements in the range of rule of law indicators, including access to justice and judicial independence, as 72 per cent of Africans said courts had the right to make decisions that people always had to abide by, reflecting increased legitimacy of the judiciary.[20]

21.   Building just societies contributes to preventing violence and conflict, and people are increasingly turning to informal, traditional and customary justice systems to seek quick, accessible, inexpensive resolution of disputes.

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[17] World Justice Project. Measuring the Justice Gap. Task Force on Justice report. 2019. Available at https://worldjusticeproject.org/sites/default/files/documents/Measuring%20the%20Justice%20Gap_Feb2 019.pdf. Accessed on 28 January 2020.

[18] Afrobarometer 2018. Highlights of Round 6 survey findings from 36 African countries. Available at http://afrobarometer.org/sites/default/files/summary_results/ab_r6_afrobarometer_global_release_highlig hts8.pdf. Accessed on 28 January 2020.

[19] Intensified attacks, new defences: developments in the fight to protect journalists and end impunity https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000371487-

[20] Afrobarometer 2018. See footnote 19.

This tends to happen more frequently in areas outside the reach of State authority, although these systems may not be aligned with the human rights protections afforded under international law. Countries are searching for efficient and effective ways to deliver justice, including alternative dispute resolution forums, mobile courts and legal aid provision.[21] They are also looking into community-based legal services and paralegals who can advise and assist people through the justice system, focusing on those most at risk of being left behind.

C.   Just societies, illicit financial flows, corruption and bribery

22.   A just society, free of corruption and bribery and with high levels of trust in public institutions, can make significant contributions to accelerating Sustainable Development Goal targets in the economic domain (Goal 8).

23.   Corruption continues to weaken good governance, and the leakages and bottlenecks it causes increases the cost of development through enhancing inequalities, discrimination and injustice. The majority of citizens surveyed in 35 African countries think that corruption is getting worse and that their Governments are doing a poor job of fighting it,[22] as poor people pay bribes twice as often as the richest to access public services such as health care and police assistance, while younger people pay more bribes than their elders.[23] Corruption weakens State functions, undermines public trust and may delegitimize the State, leading to severe political and economic instability, with long-term ramifications, including violent conflicts.

24.   Implementing realistic budgets remains challenging in sub-Saharan Africa: more than 75 per cent of countries had budget variances of more than 5 per cent, and about 40 per cent of countries experienced deterioration in the reliability of budget execution estimates. Corruption affects around 70 per cent of public procurement contracts in Africa and inflates the cost of contracts by roughly 20 to 30 per cent.

25.   Countries with higher incomes generally have lower rates of bribery, while countries with the lowest incomes have the highest rates. At similar levels of economic development, countries with the lowest levels of corruption collected 4 per cent more GDP in tax revenue than countries with higher levels of corruption.[24] Countries with high levels of corruption collected fewer taxes, as tax evasion was more likely when corruption was perceived as high, as taxes were avoided by paying bribes or by the exploitation of tax loopholes that were designed to facilitate kickbacks to the Government.

26.   Progress is slow on combating illicit financial flows. In the period 2000–2015, net illicit financial flows between Africa and the rest of the world

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[21] The Global Alliance for Reporting Progress on Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, "Enabling the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through SDG 16+: Anchoring peace, justice and inclusion", United Nations, New York, 2019. Available at: https://www.sdg16hub.org accessed on 30 January 2020 at https://www.sdg16hub.org/system/files/2019-07/Global%20Alliance%2C%20SDG%2016%2B%20 Global%20Report.pdf.

[22] Afrobarometer 2019. Global Corruption Barometer – Africa 2019: Citizens' views and experiences of corruption. Available at www.afrobarometer.org/publications/global-corruption-barometer-africa-2019-citizens-views-and-experiences-corruption. Accessed on 28 January 2020.

[23] Afrobarometer and Transparency International (2019). Global Corruption Barometer – Africa 2019: Citizens' views and experiences of corruption, Afrobarometer and Transparency International. Available at   https://afrobarometer.org/sites/default/files/publications/Publications%20conjointes/partenaires/ab _r7_global_corruption_barometer_report.pdf. Accessed on 30 January 2020.

[24] International Monetary Fund. Curbing Corruption, Fiscal Monitor, Washington: April 2019. Available at https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/FM/Issues/2019/03/18/fiscal-monitor-april-2019. Accessed on 30 January 2020.

averaged $73 billion per year, from trade misinvoicing alone,[25] while Global Financial Integrity estimates that illicit financial flows from Africa by other means total up to $26.7 billion per year. Taken together, this amounts to $100 billion per year of illicit financial flows, equivalent to 4 per cent of Africa's GDP.

27. Money laundering and financing of terrorism are major concerns in many African countries. Porous borders, coupled with the presence of terrorist groups and organized criminal gangs, together with a financial, economic and sociocultural context favourable to the diversion of means of payment for criminal purposes, favour the use of cross-border remittances and manual foreign exchange transactions for money laundering and financing of terrorism. To tackle these challenges, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and ECA are developing frameworks for detecting, tracking, measuring and curbing illicit financial flows related to illegal markets and other criminal activities, and tax and commercial practices.

D.   Progress on strong and inclusive institutions

28. Strong institutions that are effective, accountable and transparent are the mechanism through which good governance happens. In 2019, there were mixed results on the extent to which the continent's institutions were inclusive. While participation has improved, driven by democratic elections, it is happening alongside a shrinking civil society space, as well as worsening trends in freedom of association and assembly, civil rights and liberties, and freedom of expression.

29. In 36 African countries, 54 per cent of people expressed more trust in informal institutions, such as religious and traditional leaders (72 and 61 per cent, respectively), than in the formal executive agencies of the State,[26] although 64 and 57 per cent, respectively, find certain executive agencies, such as the national army and the State presidency, to be quite trustworthy. Eight out of 10 African citizens feel "somewhat free" to join any political organization they want, 58 per cent feel "completely free", while 17 per cent felt "not very" or "not at all" free to associate as they wished. The countries that ranked highest included Botswana, Ghana, Malawi and Senegal; those that fared worst included Egypt, Eswatini, the Sudan and Zimbabwe. Political and civil rights also continued to wane in the Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Libya, Somalia, South Sudan and the Sudan; while Angola, Ethiopia and the Gambia became exemplary.

30. While indicators on transparency and accountability have been improving during 2008–2017, they remain the lowest of all 14 subcategories.[27] The Ibrahim Index shows that issues of transparency, anti-corruption and accountability are some of the areas where the continent is performing worst. On average, Governments appear to perform better in ensuring accountability of government and public employees than in preventing corruption, and they perform poorly on transparency through providing access to information.[28] Although institutions seem to have been strengthened for holding officials accountable, actual prosecution or penalization of misconduct or abuse of office is becoming weaker. While corruption in the form of bribes is less prevalent in executive branches than in the public and private sectors,

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[25] Economic Commission for Africa. *Economic Report on Africa 2019: Fiscal Policy for Financing Sustainable Development in Africa* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.19.II.K.2).

[26] Afrobarometer 2018. See footnote 19.

[27] Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2019). African Governance Report: Agenda 2063 and 2030: Is Africa on Track? London: Mo Ibrahim Foundation.

[28] Ibrahim Index of African Governance indicators.

favouritism, the worst performing corruption-related measure, is on the rise in both the government and the private sector. Lack of transparency can act as an obstacle to enforcing accountability.

III. Stepping up the pace and scale of implementation: opportunities for transformative leadership, partnerships, commitments and actions to drastically accelerate implementation

31. A decade until 2030, it remains imperative to strengthen the implementation of actions that feed into the 12 targets and 23 indicators of Sustainable Development Goal 16 and address limitations. This requires strong multi-stakeholder engagement, commitment and collaboration at the national, regional and global levels, with standardized and reliable data.

A. Implementation requires a "whole of government" and "whole of society" approach

32. African Governments stress a "whole of government" approach in localizing and achieving the entire 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, by involving national government agencies and State institutions, and incorporating the Sustainable Development Goals in local Governments, institutions, legislation and frameworks. A "whole of society" approach with broad and meaningful engagement and consultation with stakeholders across all of society is key to ensuring that no one is left behind. This approach is most effective when institutionalized within formal structures and at different levels of government. Multi-stakeholder partnerships and platforms involving actors from government, civil society, young people, academia and the private sector are critical to achievement of Goal 16.

33. Innovations in social media are enabling interaction, exchange and dissemination, helping to widen and expand space for participation of populations previously excluded and marginalized. Increasing Internet connectivity and mobile phone access have positively impacted the democratization of data and information, enabling access to independent news and media pluralism, and also enhancing inclusion. Promoting digital inclusion is leveraging information and communications technology (ICT) as an enabler in Egypt, the Sudan and Tunisia, enlarging space for citizens' participation and enhancing individual and societal well-being. This is achieved through capacity-building on ICT-based and ICT-supported entrepreneurship skills, and development of mobile apps that address the needs of persons with disabilities and non-communicable diseases, leaving no one behind.

34. One of the aims of the Centre of Excellence for Digital ID [29] is to develop principles for the issuing of adequate identification, contributing directly to Sustainable Development Goal 16, target 16.9 by providing legal identity to all, including birth registration. Ordinary citizens are armed with information and are demanding high standards of ethics, integrity and accountability, expecting public service with fairness and responsibility. This expansion is set to continue as both companies and Governments make investments to expand connectivity to enable universal Internet access. However, there is a rising trend of Internet censorship and complete Internet shutdowns on the part of Governments.

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[29] Jointly established by the African Union, United Nations system and World Bank.

B. Political will and financial investment are needed to accelerate progress on Sustainable Development Goal 16

35.   The achievement of Goal 16 can facilitate the achievement of other Goals if Governments embrace full ownership of the process and invest in enabling and accelerating the role of Goal 16. Visionary and committed national leadership is essential to accelerate progress on Goal 16 and to transform societies to prevent conflict, address inequalities, reduce injustices and be more inclusive. Failure to invest in Goal 16 could worsen violence, injustice and exclusion, reversing development gains across all Sustainable Development Goals, including education, health and climate action. Increased public sector financing for the Goals can be attained through progressive taxation, institutional capacity development and meaningful civic participation.

36.   African Governments are increasingly trying to "localize" Goal 16, with some 60 per cent of survey respondents indicating that their country had tailored the Goal's targets and indicators to the national context in consultation with civil society leaders, researchers, and government actors.[30] In Kenya, all public sector officials in ministries, departments and agencies whose work involves Goal 16 are obliged to sign performance contracts with the central Government, in which they identify Goal 16 targets and indicators relevant to their mandates, and explain how these are being integrated in policy and development plans. Benin and Ghana, meanwhile, emphasize budget spending that has a high Goal 16 impact, and the Government of Ghana publicly discloses how closely its financial priorities are aligned with its stated commitments under this goal.

C. Fundamental freedoms and rights need to be protected, for inclusion, peace and justice

37.   With civic space shrinking globally, many civil society actors faced barriers to inclusion and participation both online and offline, including threats to personal safety of human rights activists and defenders often prevented from participating meaningfully in development planning and policymaking processes. This trend risks excluding from policymaking the needs and voices of the most vulnerable in society, including women, children, youth, refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced and stateless people.

38.   A human rights-based approach to development – based on international human rights standards and environmental, social and political rights – can support the effective implementation of Goal 16. Despite global commitments – including the Secretary-General's "Sustaining Peace Resolutions", peacebuilding processes continue to exclude the participation and perspectives of those most impacted by conflict and war. The inclusion of all groups in fragile and conflict-affected societies at the national and local levels in policy development and peacebuilding processes should involve women's leadership and youth contributions to consolidating peace, and mobilizing local mediation and conflict resolution forums.

39.   Although some African countries have established legal frameworks and institutions to promote and protect human rights, far too many individuals still have no access. National human rights institutions can help to ensure that no one is left behind as catalysts for sustainable development, helping to address inequality and discrimination in all its forms, and contributing to more

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[30] South African Institute of International Affairs/UNDP (2019). Is Africa Measuring Up to Its Goal 16 Commitments? The HLPF 2019 and Beyond. Available at www.undp.org/content/oslo-governance-centre/en/home/library/saiia-undp-report-on-africa-and-sdg16.html. Accessed on 28 January 2020.

inclusive data collection and analyses. National human rights institutions can play an oversight role in relation to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals to ensure that planning, implementation and reporting are aligned with human rights standards and with a focus on "leaving no one behind". However, national human rights institutions lack the requisite resources and autonomy to function effectively.[31]

D. Multi-stakeholder partnerships and collaboration are accelerators and enablers for the means of implementation towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 16, fully leveraging the comparative advantage of each partner

40.   Such partnerships include joint planning and resources-pooling in targeted geographical areas, building databases for monitoring and evaluating Goal 16, and acquiring needed expertise and financing. Structured engagement between Governments, the media and other partners can help address press freedom violations and barriers to access information. Inclusive multi-stakeholder platforms and mechanisms can help to ensure accountability, accessibility and transparency through information sharing, data-gathering, bottom-up progress reporting, together with the review of funding allocation and spending based on international standards.

E. Sustained investment is required in reliable data to address persistent data gaps, including disaggregated data, to ensure that policy and programmes reach marginalized and vulnerable groups, and others who are left behind

41.   Goal 16 remains a challenge to implement and measure, despite the recent upgrade to Tier 2 indicators. By 31 December 2018, only 6 of 23 indicators for monitoring Goal 16 could readily be measured – classified as Tier 1 indicators. By mid-2019, the remaining indicators either did not have established methodologies (Tier 3 indicators) or data were not regularly produced by countries (Tier 2 indicators). The inadequacy of official statistics inhibits any reliable comparison of the status of implementation across regional and subregional trends.

42.   African countries have innovated and committed to measuring and reporting on the governance goal, with government officials and non-government actors from 38 African countries surveyed highlighting how the continent is measuring progress on governance.[32]

43.   Since 2012, African national statistical offices have tested a pilot approach to institutionalize the production of official national survey data on governance, peace and security. Half of African national statistical offices use a survey module that enables countries to report – in one go and at minimal cost – on 11 of 23 indicators under Goal 16, under the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa. This initiative reflects a strong preference on the part of African policymakers for national statistics based on citizens' experiences rather than international governance indicators that reflect "expert" views. Strengthening statistics on official governance and peace will require Governments to spend more on generating such data and national statistical offices to establish dedicated teams with relevant expertise.

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[31] *Africa Governance Report: Promoting African Union Shared Values.* Prepared by the African Peer Review Mechanism in collaboration with the African Governance Architecture. Available at https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/36418-doc-eng-_the_africa_governance_report_2019_final-1.pdf. Accessed on 28 January 2020.

[32] South African Institute of International Affairs and UNDP, 2019. See footnote 29.

44.   Few countries allocated funding specifically for the generation of Goal 16 statistics, although several found innovative ways to ensure Governments use national Goal 16 data in their day-to-day decision-making. The Peacebuilding Office in Liberia trains potential users of governance statistics to analyse data and apply a methodical approach to their work, while Uganda employs statisticians in justice and law enforcement agencies to create a "data culture" among planners and policymakers.

45.   Data collection systems are weak and systematic data disaggregation at local government levels is still a challenge. Many monitoring methodologies and national practices are State- and citizen-centred, and therefore leave out people without citizen status, including refugees and stateless people. It is essential to expand the use of different data sources, including people-generated data, and explore new partnerships between data actors, to further develop the national capacities for data collection, analysis and dissemination. The data revolution, and the potential of big data and artificial intelligence, bring promising opportunities, but must be used responsibly.

IV.   Key messages

46.   The following messages focus on opportunities and transformative actions, commitments, levers, partnerships and other measures to accelerate implementation.

       (a)   **Progress on Goal 16 is mixed. It can be observed that, of all the Sustainable Development Goals, the paucity of data on Goal 16 is the most marked**. Challenges in measuring progress towards achieving Goal 16 stem from governance being fairly new in official statistics, few international standards existing for production of governance statistics, and inexperience in producing such statistics. Methodological issues, political challenges, together with practical and implementation issues around data collection and statistical capacity in governance, if not addressed, may undermine the monitoring of the achievement of Goal 16. Globally comparable data are either not available or gathered in only a few countries for many of the indicators.

       (b)   **Significant investment is required in reliable disaggregated data to ensure that policy and programmes reach marginalized and vulnerable groups and others who are left behind.** Data collection systems are weak in systematic coverage and data disaggregation, especially at the subnational and regional levels. Many Goal 16 methodologies and national practices are State- and citizen-centred, leaving out stateless people. It is essential to use different data sources, including people-generated data, and explore new partnerships between data actors, to further develop national capacities for data collection, analysis and dissemination. The data revolution, and the potential of big data and artificial intelligence, bring promising opportunities, but must be used responsibly.

       (c)   **Country level action on Sustainable Development Goal 16 remains critical.** This includes human rights-based, conflict-sensitive and gender-sensitive approaches in development planning, implementation and monitoring, in partnerships with civil society. Goal 16 should be incorporated into subnational and national development plans for tangible development results to local communities, households and individuals, especially those who are vulnerable, marginalized and risk being left behind, hinged on awareness, partnerships and participation, including grass-roots participation. Subnational governments and municipal and local councils, have a key role to play in enabling the full ownership by communities, cities and regions, and in fostering effective implementation and accountability, by integrating and adapting Goal 16 to realities on the ground, while remaining coherent with national priorities and policies.

(d)   **Policy, practice and process are required for advancing peaceful and inclusive societies in the region**. This entails addressing locally-, nationally-, regionally- and globally-based drivers of violence; ending and preventing abuse, exploitation, trafficking, torture and all forms of violence, in particular among vulnerable populations, by advancing peace and sustainable development as mutually reinforcing processes; accelerating progress on peaceful, just and inclusive societies in conflict and crisis situations; and promoting dialogue and reducing insecurity by enhancing legal identity for all, including birth registration. Strengthening relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation for capacity-building, and leveraging regional initiatives such as the African Peace and Security Architecture, are needed, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime.

(e)   **Access to meaningful justice is key to sustaining peace and accelerating inclusive sustainable development.** A people-centred approach to justice enhances solutions that prioritize inclusivity, innovation and accessibility to address inequality, or by ensuring access to justice and effective rule of law at subnational, national, regional and global levels. This involves promoting the rule of law, the promotion of equality and protection of fundamental freedoms, and leveraging non-discriminatory laws and policies to combat corruption, illicit flows and organized crime, in accordance with their domestic legislation and relevant international conventions.

(f)   **Transparent, accountable and inclusive institutions are central to the effective achievement, monitoring and evaluation of the Sustainable Development Goals at local, national, regional and global levels**. It is important to ensure enabling environments for participation and public access to information, and the protection of fundamental freedoms, leveraging National Human Rights Institutions to monitor human rights and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Enhanced democratic participation includes a representative role of parliaments, opening up civic space further in accordance with the United Nations and African Union human rights mechanisms, leveraging innovative technologies alongside principles that govern ICT. Enhanced economic governance through prudent government expenditure within budgets, which is responsive to development needs, is inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels, and promotes better overall governance.

(g)   **ICT needs to be comprehensively leveraged as an enabler for the attainment of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, including its power to ensure no one is left behind, by providing ICT-based solutions that enable the engagement and inclusion of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in society.**

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