

The Path to HLPF 2019: from ambition to results for SDG16+

Key Points:

- In July 2019, SDG16 will be reviewed at ministerial level, while leaders will conduct the first four-yearly review of all 17 SDGs in September.
- The High-level Political Forums are an opportunity to showcase success and solutions in implementing SDG16+ and to make commitments to demonstrate results by the end of a second four-year cycle in 2023.
- To seize this opportunity, a ‘guiding coalition’ of champions for SDG16+ should unite behind four objectives: demonstrate progress and results; mobilize actions to accelerate implementation; build the movement for peaceful, just and inclusive societies; and consolidate links to all 17 SDGs.
- This challenge paper proposes actions for each of these objectives, with reactions invited from all stakeholders.
- Priorities include maximizing the number of countries with strong reporting on SDG16+, launching a registry of voluntary national commitments, developing an advocacy and communications strategy that draws on the strengths of multiple partners, and working closely with partners from other sectors as they prepare for 2019. The option of a ‘commitments conference’ in 2020 is also suggested.
- This paper will be discussed at a meeting of interested stakeholders, with a full plan developed at a retreat in May or June 2018. The plan will then be the subject of an inclusive consultation.
- The 2018 HLPF will kickstart intensive preparations for 2019.

Introduction

In July 2019, the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development will focus on ‘empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality’ and review, amongst other goals, SDG16 (*peaceful, just and inclusive societies*) and SDG10 (*reduce inequality*).*

In September 2019, the High-level Political Forum will be convened for the first time under the auspices of the General Assembly. At this quadrennial summit on the 2030 Agenda, heads of state and government will “provide high-level political guidance on the Agenda and its implementation, identify progress and emerging challenges and mobilize further actions to accelerate implementation.”

The High-level Political Forums in 2019 provide an opportunity to showcase success and solutions in implementing the SDG targets for peaceful, just and inclusive societies (SDG16+), and to make commitments to demonstrate results by the end of a second four-year cycle in 2023. To build on the momentum created in 2019, a ‘commitments conference’ could be held in 2020. This would provide an opportunity for governments and other partners from all sectors to record implementation and financial commitments in a voluntary register.

* Also: SDGs 4 (*education*), 8 (*inclusive growth*) and 13 (*climate change*).

To deliver this outcome, all stakeholders must:

- **Demonstrate progress and results.** Report progress over the first four years of the 2030 Agenda, recognizing successes at national and local levels, identifying the processes by which progress has been achieved, and shining a spotlight on models that others may want to adapt to their respective contexts.
- **Mobilize actions to accelerate implementation.** Make commitments to implement and finance policies and programs at the scale needed to deliver and demonstrate measurable progress across the SDG16+ targets by 2023.
- **Build the movement for peaceful, just and inclusive societies.** Bring together governments, the private sector, civil society, international organizations and other partners to celebrate their successes and commitments, while highlighting the role of children and young people as critical agents of change, especially at the local level.
- **Consolidate links to all 17 SDGs.** Given that “there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development,” build closer partnerships with those working on other SDGs and strengthening links to other international commitments.*

This challenge paper builds on an initial discussion in February 2018 amongst a group of interested Member States, UN entities, civil society and others, to identify priority actions to prepare for the 2019 HLPFs. It has been prepared by the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, the Global Alliance for Reporting Progress on Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, and the 16+ Forum. These member-state led partnerships provide a platform for SDG16+ as a whole. They are working to bring together actors from all sectors to maximize impact in 2019 and beyond.

Next steps are to:

- Hold a further meeting amongst interested stakeholders to discuss and strengthen this challenge paper, and to explore the best shape for a ‘guiding coalition’ that will maximize the opportunities offered by the 2019 HLPFs.
- Hold a retreat for Member States from the three initiatives in May or June 2018 to further develop this plan for the 2019 HLPFs, with participation from partners from other sectors.
- Consult with partners at all levels through an inclusive process that maximizes the input and contribution of civil society.
- Use the 2018 HLPF to kickstart intensive preparations for 2019.

Outline Plan

This paper suggests actions a guiding coalition could take to maximize impact at the HLPFs in 2019. We invite reactions through an inclusive process involving all stakeholders.

* For example, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights treaties and the Sustaining Peace resolutions.

Objective 1: Demonstrate progress and results

Report progress, over the first four years of the 2030 Agenda, recognizing successes at national and local levels, identifying the processes by which progress has been achieved, and shining a spotlight on models that others may want to adapt to their respective contexts.

- Maximize the number of countries with strong reporting on SDG16+ (in 2019, but also those reporting in 2018 and preparing to report in 2020) through the work of the Global Alliance,¹ while encouraging inclusive approaches to reporting.
- Use the Roadmap on Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies to help national partners understand, explore and capture the full range of national innovation and emerging practice at all levels.²
- Bring together innovators at the 16+ Forum’s annual showcase, strengthening cooperation and learning between all countries and stakeholders.³
- Document innovative models and national practices, strengthening partnerships between countries and increasing south-south, south-north and north-south learning.
- Engage with the quadrennial Global Sustainable Development Report in 2019, and publish an ‘SDG16+ report’ ahead of or at the 2019 HLPF to showcase emerging practice from the local level upwards.
- Support the HLPF’s thematic review on *empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality* to highlight solutions being implemented by those working on SDG16+.
- Work with the UN system to mobilize all entities supporting progress on SDG16+, and liaise with DESA on formal preparations for the 2019 HLPFs.
- Ensure an inclusive process for preparation of the Thematic Review paper by the UN system leads on SDG16 for the 2019 HLPFs, reflecting the diversity of approaches and activities on SDG16+ targets.

Objective 2: Mobilize actions to accelerate implementation

Make commitments to implement and finance policies and programs at the scale needed to deliver and demonstrate measurable progress across the SDG16+ targets by 2023.

- Maximize the number of new commitments, recognizing that early preparation will be needed if partners are to be ready to make ambitious commitments in 2019, by:
 - Working directly with Pathfinder countries on commitments.
 - Using the Global Alliance’s support for reporting as a platform for new commitments, building on the global workshops in Buenos Aires and Oslo in 2017.
 - Using the 16+ Forum Annual Showcase as an opportunity to present commitments, while exploring the potential for a strategic dialogue on SDG16+ implementation, to run at or alongside the showcase.
 - Linking to the work of the United Nations system and other international organizations in support of SDG16+ implementation.
 - Leveraging the major SDG16+ ‘delivery’ partnerships to identify and support countries prepared to make new commitments.*

* For example: Open Government Partnership, Global Partnership to End Violence against Children, Spotlight Initiative, Alliance 8.7, Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, Effective Institutions Platform, etc

- Harnessing ongoing initiatives such as the Task Force on Justice, which are working with countries to prepare commitments for the HLPF.
 - Exploring commitments with major businesses and private sector networks, working with existing platforms such as the Global Compact and through the Global Alliance's private sector partners.
 - Convening major civil society networks to explore commitments by NGOs, CSOs, faith groups and other civil society partners.
 - Mobilizing funders and philanthropists, providing a platform for them to align strategies for meeting the SDG16+ funding gap and to explore financing commitments for HLPF 2019.
 - Launching an informal lobbying campaign (*what will you commit to in 2019?*) to socialize the idea of a critical mass of partners making commitments in 2019.
- Explore the potential for a register of voluntary national commitments, learning from existing models in other sectors (e.g. oceans,⁴ energy,⁵ women's, children's and adolescents' health,⁶ or for the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition⁷). As with the voluntary commitments for the Oceans Conference, this register could be linked to the UN *Partnerships for SDGs* online platform.⁸
 - Construct a shared narrative that captures and communicates the depth and breadth of commitments being made and develop options for launching the voluntary register of commitments:
 - At the ministerial HLPF in July 2019, through a ministerial meeting where countries and other partners can announce their pledges.*
 - At the head of state/government HLPF in September 2019, for example through a 'commit to play' leadership event, as a contribution to the summit's objective to *mobilize further actions to accelerate implementation*.
 - At a 'commitments conference' in 2020 which provides a standalone platform for celebrating both implementation and financial commitments.
 - (These options are not necessarily mutually exclusive – work to populate a register could begin in 2019 leading up to a major event in 2020.)

Objective 3: Build the movement for peaceful, just and inclusive societies

Bring together governments, the private sector, civil society, international organizations and other partners to celebrate their successes and commitments, while highlighting the role of children and young people as critical agents of change, especially at the local level.

- Agree on a shared workplan between the Global Alliance, Pathfinders, and 16+ Forum, focused on maximizing impact on 2019 and 2020.
- Publish and update a shared calendar of events, major reports and other opportunities for advocacy, communications and movement-building, and build on shared online spaces for partners as they prepare for the HLPFs and for a potential 'commitments conference' in 2020.[†]

* As models: the launch of the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health where the SG hailed commitments from 40 countries and 100 organizations; the launch of 1,400 commitments at the Oceans Conference; the \$110 billion in commitments from 50 developing countries and \$2.3 billion in donor commitments announced at the Global Partnership for Education Financing Conference hosted by the Presidents of Senegal and France.

† The SDG Resource Centre, the UNDP SDG16 Portal, and others.

- Bring together:
 - The major delivery partnerships ahead of the HLPFs, both informally (through a regular conference call) and formally (at events such as the 2019 Partnership Forum or a side event at the 2018 HLPF).
 - Private sector networks and major businesses at events such as the SDG Business Forum in 2019.
 - Major civil society networks and forums.
- Hold a workshop to develop a communication strategy for the HLPFs in 2019, drawing on the strengths of all partners with significant communication capacity to develop campaigning messages and ‘asks’.
- Coordinate partners that are planning activities at the HLPFs, maximizing collective impact as part of a *de facto* ‘movement for peaceful, just and inclusive societies.’
- Map networks that have capacity to mobilize civil society and grassroots actors* especially those that are active in countries and communities most at risk of being left behind, or those that amplify the voices of young people or other disadvantaged groups.
- Explore with these networks options for increasing the diversity of those who contribute to the success of the HLPFs in 2019, including funding for those who would not otherwise be able to make a meaningful contribution.
- Work with the Czech presidency of ECOSOC to build on their focus on participation and inclusion, delivering a legacy that will feed into the ‘empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality’ theme of the ministerial HLPF.
- Canvass support for a ‘commitments conference’ in 2020 and explore options for its hosting. As necessary, convene a group to plan how to take this conference forward.

Objective 4: Consolidate links to all 17 SDGs

Given that “there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development,” build closer partnerships with those working on other SDGs and strengthening links to other international commitments.

- Highlight areas where successful delivery of SDG16+ creates condition for the success of other SDGs, or where multi-sectoral mobilization is needed to build peace, justice and inclusion.
- Explore the potential for an event at the HLPF in 2018 that will strengthen partnerships and build on existing positive interlinkages.[†]
- Strengthen links with partners working to realize human rights, and to sustain peace and prevent conflict and other humanitarian emergencies.
- Develop partnerships with other sectors and actors as they prepare for 2019 (for example, by contributing to the regular United Nations Foundation coordination call on the SDGs).
- Combat myths where they inhibit engagement by all countries and sectors in delivering SDG16+.

* For example: The World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA), the Transparency, Accountability and Participation Network (TAP), the Legal Empowerment Network (Namati), Southern Voices, Civicus, Restless Development, etc.

† For example, on tackling urban violence to link SDG11 and SDG16, or inclusive institutions for resource management to link SDG6/SDG7/SDG12/SDG15 and SDG16

Endnotes

¹ UNDP (undated), 'The Global Alliance on Reporting Progress on Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies,' available at <http://www.undp.org/content/dam/norway/undp-ogc/documents/Global%20Alliance.pdf>

² Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies (2017), *The Roadmap for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies – A Call to Action to Change our World*. New York: Center on International Cooperation, available at <http://www.cic.nyu.edu/pathfinders>

³ WFUNA (undated), '16+ Forum,' available at <http://www.wfuna.org/sixteenplusforum>.

⁴ United Nations (undated), 'The Ocean Conference – Registry of Voluntary Commitments,' available at <https://oceanconference.un.org/commitments/>

⁵ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnerships/se4all>

⁶ Every Women Every Child (undated), 'Commitments To advance the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health,' available at <https://www.everywomaneverychild.org/commitments/>

⁷ United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition (undated), 'The UN Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025,' available at <https://www.unscn.org/en/topics/un-decade-of-action-on-nutrition/action-and-commitments>

⁸ United Nations (undated), 'Partnerships for the SDGs – Global Registry of Voluntary Commitments & Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships,' available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnerships/>