

Joint Statement on behalf of the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies at the SDG Summit, September 2023

Full Statement

Presented by H.E. Mr. Petr Pavel, President of the Czech Republic on September 18, 2023, during the plenary of the second SDG Summit ([Watch Video](#)). This statement was prepared by the Permanent Missions of Czechia and Timor Leste to the United Nations.

This statement was co-facilitated by the Permanent Missions of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Uruguay (to be confirmed) to the United Nations on behalf of the [46 member states of Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies](#). The Pathfinders is a high-ambition, member state-led, multi-stakeholder coalition committed to building more peaceful, just, and inclusive societies by accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda targets for peace, justice, equality and inclusion (SDG16+). The Czech Republic (Czechia) is a proud member of Pathfinders. We are honored to present this statement on its behalf.

In 2015, this body made a promise- that we would adopt and act on a transformative agenda for people, planet and prosperity; that we, and the institutions we represent, had listened to those we are meant to serve and that we were prepared to deliver through the implementation of 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Eight years later, we have much to live up to. Yet, there is still no better blueprint for a more peaceful and prosperous world than that of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and no greater catalyst for the change needed than SDG16+, as both a transformative goal and as an enabler of the larger 2030 Agenda. The universality of SDG16+ and the need for its advancement across all countries is clear: Societies with lower levels of violence, political instability, and gender inequality are more productive, have better access to information, and suffer less from corruption and ineffective governments.

We know that we are living in the midst of multiple, cascading and intersecting crises. Yet, solutions exist and champions for them persist. Halfway through the 2030 Agenda, advancing peace, justice, equality and inclusion, through our policies and our purse strings, is critical to mitigating the impact of global crises and to delivering the policy solutions needed to fulfill the promises made eight years ago. As global polarization and distrust remain at an all-time high, we need to rebuild the social contract between people and the national and international institutions mandated to serve them.

In supporting the Secretary-General’s call for commitments and solutions to fast-track implementation of the SDGs, including SDG16, allow me to highlight some of the innovative work our coalition is undertaking across peace, justice, equality and inclusion. This work puts people at the centre, demonstrates that progress can, and has been made, and underscores the importance of action on SDG16+ action for achieving the larger 2030 Agenda.

While conflict-related violence has increased, we have learned that only 20% of all violent deaths occur in conflict zones, and that governments and civil society have made real progress in reducing violence in such contexts. In this connection, the Pathfinders' Halving Global Violence Task Force will launch its Flagship Report in 2024, highlighting both the significant social and economic costs of violence, while also amplifying proven solutions to advancing peace in varied contexts. Some mayors, for example, have reduced violence by upwards of 80% through better data and with methods that balance social services, targeted outreach, and law enforcement based on respect for human rights. Such efforts need to be supported. We must act on SDG16's pledge to reduce violence in all its forms, addressing violence not only on the battlefield but also in our homes and on our streets.

Over the past seven years, we have measured the justice gap and have demonstrated that there is a need to pivot to people-centered justice in order to achieve justice for all. Against this backdrop, a number of member states and partners have come together to form the Justice Action Coalition, a high-ambition, multistakeholder and cross-regional coalition championing equal access to justice for all. The Coalition promotes people-centered justice at the international level and displays ambitious action in delivering people-centered justice at national levels, calling on justice actors across stakeholder groups, including Young Justice Leaders, to join in the quest to close the global justice gap. We cannot address poverty, the fallout from climate change, or conflict without ensuring equal access to justice for all.

Finally, the promise to leave no one behind lies at the very heart of the SDG agenda. Yet, since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, inequality both within and among countries has risen dramatically. The COVID-19 pandemic and multiple crises that have followed have made addressing inequality and exclusion particularly challenging, with uneven responses further fuelling grievances and divisions. The Pathfinders provides practical evidenced-based solutions in areas such as social protection, housing, taxation, inclusive green transitions, and the avoidance of divisive political narratives, demonstrating that change is possible. To ensure adequate tracking of progress, we also advocate for more accurate measurement of inequalities, central to SDGs 10 and 16.

The 2023 SDG Summit represents a critical moment to change the trajectory of the SDGs, and SDG16+. We cannot fail in this effort. Trust in our domestic institutions, and in multilateralism, is dependent on it.

