

SDG 16 PLUS & PROMOTING CIVIC SPACE



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CIVIL 20 INDIA 2023
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CIVIL SOCIETY RECOMMENDATIONS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Today the world is witnessing geopolitical issues that are challenging international security and multilateralism. Additionally, the global scene has pushed donor funds to focus on military expenditures rather than allocating resources towards conflict prevention, peacekeeping and improving people's lives. Finally, the limited opportunities to collaborate on SDG implementation in the sphere of existing fragmented coordination at the national level also poses its own challenges. Non-governmental actors need to be involved in projects to achieve real outcomes and sustainability. Structural obstacles, lack of political will, and lack of commitment to foster inclusive partnerships are hindering effective collaboration. Governments have promised to reduce violence and conflict, but accountability and transparency remains a major problem. Recognition and urgency for a committed and strong partnership is needed apart from ensuring National Commitments to SDG Transformation with transparent and inclusive platform for showcasing these commitments, helping to ensure follow-up and accountability.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CALL FOR ACTION

1. Promoting Civic Space

- a. Key international bodies should encourage national governments to enact laws which regulate in a fair way ensuring the existence of healthy civic and democratic spaces. In this regard, the adoption of civic space indicators as part of the monitoring framework of SDG 16+ would provide important leverage for civil society organisations to communicate with the governments to demonstrate progress on the promotion and protection of civic space nationally as part of annual review processes.
- b. We call on governments and the international community to expand citizen-generated data and all other "non-official" data sources .

2. Preventing illicit financial flows, stolen assets and organized crime

- a. Ensure faster, wider, and more effective use of mutual legal assistance through the application of a Mutual Recognition Agreement among G20 Members. These should include mutual enforcement of "freeze and confiscate" orders, authentication of public records, and transparency of documents. When assets are returned they need to be aligned to GFAR principles, including through the engagement of civil society and community groups to support the transparency of this process.
- b. Define and commit to global standards on beneficial ownership transparency, i.e. the disclosure of the ultimate owners of an entity- in a central, public registry with free and open data, and supported by international cooperation on these issues among law enforcement agencies.
- c. Ensure all member countries are party to the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention and private sector bribery is criminalized in line with UNCAC provisions. Policies and procedures for several acts of high-risk corruption- including bribery toward domestic and foreign civil servants, bribery towards a third party, facilitation payments, gratification, political donations, and social donations- should be in line with the G20 High-Level Principles on Private Sector Transparency & Integrity.

3. Financial Commitments towards the Delivery of SDG 16 Plus

- a. The flow of global aid, and in particular an increased percentage of ODA flows should be targeted at funding the promotion and protection of human rights and civic space, increasing the sense of security for communities everywhere, and promoting fair access to the law and to information.
- b. Civil society actors, especially grassroots communities,, face structural financial barriers that must be addressed by the financial architecture of public development banks.
- c. The G20 must also come to the SDGs Summit with financial commitments – including around domestic resource mobilisation and budgetary commitments to deliver on the SDGs. For donors, this also includes financial commitments towards SDG16+ and the 2030 Agenda, which can also play a key role in helping donors meet their commitments to 0.7% of GDP for development cooperation.
- d. We strongly support the Secretary-General’s call for an ambitious “SDGs Stimulus Plan”, which calls for an additional \$500 billion per year towards sustainable development financing.
- e. We reiterate our call from the 2023 Rome Declaration for donors to develop and invest in a comprehensive donor-collaborative “ Global SDG16+ Fund”.
- f. We support the call for expanding measurement of economic progress to a “Beyond GDP” model.
- g. G20 and the international community must make efforts to solve the increasingly urgent sovereign debt crisis. To do so, debt cancellation or restructuring must be considered, as well as other innovative mechanisms such as “debt swaps” that will further incentivize action towards SDG16+ and the 2030 Agenda overall.
- h. The G20 countries should take measures to effectively involve companies, international financial institutions and communities in the implementation of global agendas and demand transparency and credibility around their contributions .

4. Recognizing and utilising SDG16+ as an enabler for achieving the 2030 Agenda and responding to current global crises

- a. We call on the United Nations and its partners to ensure that “National Commitments to SDG Transformation” called for by the Secretary-General are adequately compiled and tracked around the SDGs Summit, including by providing a transparent and inclusive platform for showcasing these commitments, helping to ensure follow-up and accountability.
- b. We reiterate our call for SDG16+ to be reviewed annually at the HLPF going forward, including through the negotiations around the review of the HLPF modalities taking place in 2024. This affirms that SDG16 strongly links with all other goals, in line with the integrated and indivisible nature of the 2030 Agenda