Oslo Governance and Peacebuilding Dialogues

United Nations Development Programme

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FIRST OSLO GOVERNANCE AND PEACEBUILDING DIALOGUE: 'MEASURING GOAL 16 PROMOTING PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES', 12 JUNE 2015, OSLO

''Governance, peace and security are not experienced the same way by the rich and the poor, the young and the old, the employed and the unemployed. To match the post-2015 agenda's ambition of 'leaving no one behind', there is an important role to be played by nationally representative surveys'.

Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator

The first Oslo Governance and Peacebuilding Dialogue on "*Measuring Goal 16: promoting peaceful and inclusive societies*" hosted two presentations illustrating different approaches to measuring Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16: through **official statistics** gathered by National Statistics Offices (NSOs) and through **expert assessment** by international bodies. The presentations focused on sharing experiences from existing governance measurement initiatives, and their contribution to creating stable, safe, inclusive and peaceful societies. It explored the advantages and disadvantages of these different approaches to measurement, while assessing the contributions to countries in transition. Discussants[1] and contributions from the floor contributed to the vibrant debate.

Key Themes:

1. Measuring Goal 16 to support transitional societies

Peace and conflict are difficult concepts to measure as there are no clear cut definitions. However, SDG 16 is measurable, although there are many challenges, since a peaceful, stable, transparent and accountable society may be required for producing high-quality statistics. Nationally produced governance data can support policy makers to make appropriate national plans, as well as support democratic transitions. Indeed, 'transitional contexts' create

opportunities for measurement that may not have existed previously under more stable governance arrangements.

In Tunisia, measuring governance became possible due to the transition process, and the process of measuring helped to open up and consolidate democratic space. A better understanding of the drivers that promote or obstruct the pathways towards more resilient, inclusive and peaceful societies, needs to be coupled with the right tools to monitor progress effectively during transitions.

Tunisian National Institute of Statistics
'If you want to improve it, you have to measure it.'
Nadia Touihri, National Institute of Statistics,
Tunisia quoting Sir William Thomson

In 2014, the Tunisian National Institute of Statistics conducted a national survey to measure governance, peace and democracy in the country. Special efforts were made to ensure that the voices of civil society organizations and other local stakeholders were included in defining national goals and targets for measuring Goal 16.

- The National Survey reaffirmed citizens' enthusiasm for and interest in being consulted on issues related to governance, peace and security.
- Civil Society in Tunisia have played a key role in defining indicators, and will play an important role in monitoring and disseminating data
- In-depth analysis of the data is currently underway to inform national and regional planning processes.
- The Government of Tunisia has recognised the benefit of using survey results in the overall development plans of the country.

Conclusion:
- Political transitions can create opportunities for piloting and implementing new initiatives.
- Although governance data collection is a new phenomenon in Tunisia, it has proved useful to CSOs, political parties and researchers in their work promoting governance, peacebuilding and democracy in Tunisia.
- Some challenges remain in refining the methodology and indicators to ensure the credibility and quality of data produced.
- There also remain challenges in encouraging politicians and policy-makers to use the data.

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[1] *Key presentations by Ms. Nadia Touihri, Senior Director of Statistics and Social Studies, National Institute of Statistics, Tunisia; Mr. Daniel Hyslop, Research Manager, Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP); Mr. Olav Ljones, Deputy Director General, Statistics Norway and Mr. Håvard Nygård, Senior Researcher, Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO).*

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UNDP is heavily involved and fully committed to supporting Member States in implementing SDG Goal 16, and establishing appropriate national monitoring systems for measuring progress. Experiences from Albania, Indonesia, Rwanda, Tunisia and the UK are demonstrating that it is possible to develop appropriate indicators in the national context and employ innovative approaches to governance in the context of the SDGs.

The measurement of governance, peace and security under the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA) has also demonstrated that perceptions of ordinary people about the governance, peace and security issues that affect them can be collected rigorously and reliably by national statistical offices. With UNDP's support, the incorporation of governance indicators into official statistics will be further explored by the recently established Praia City Group under the UN Statistical Commission – a grouping of national statistical offices with the mandate to develop international recommendations on the production of official governance statistics.

Global Peace Index

The Global Peace Index (GPI), produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) provides credible ongoing statistics and analysis on peace, human rights, governance, security and violence, crime and rule of law. The GPI is the first study to rank the nations of the world by their peacefulness.
- Peace building data is beneficial not only to governments and public sector but also to the private sector. It assists in better targeting and allocating resources and builds the evidence to shows policy impact over time.
- Peace monitoring indicators complement SDG 16 indicators.
- SDG 16 can be measured- but currently data is only available for 5 out of 12 indicators. 7 out of 12 indicators will be difficult to measure as data doesn't exist.
- Locally derived data is very important but not exhaustive. Expert data and analysis can fill the gap.
- National governments need to ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.

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2. Ownership of data and the need to provide trust between providers and users

Who should provide and own governance data? NSOs? Experts? Civil Society?
Some worry that under certain regimes, collection and analysis of governance data by national statistical offices or other state entities will not be sufficiently independent.

Even when NSOs are recognised as being fully independent, they often do not have the capacities or resources to design, conduct and monitor nationally representative surveys. Others argue that data produced by civil society is rarely nationally representative and may also not meet international standards. Additionally, it may not be accepted as legitimate by state institutions. Similarly, expert assessment is sometimes rejected by national bodies and is less commonly used for national planning purposes.

Data from different sources has different types of legitimacy, and the challenge is how to bring together different datasets to serve peace and development purposes. There is also a need to differentiate which data is best measured by international bodies and which is best measured by national entities. Investment in the right tools, methodologies and strategies can also help ensure the legitimacy and credibility of data, whoever is providing it.

The proposed targets and indicators for SDG16 are currently very complex and multi-dimensional. The UN and other bodies need to recognise that making the measurement process and methodologies too complex would result in failing to meet the bigger objectives.

3. Factors that will determine whether Goal 16 is successfully measured

Key factors determining the successful measurement of SDG16 are:

- **Capacity of NSO**s to collect high-quality data. Capacity strengthening initiatives need to be owned by NSOs themselves, if they are to bear results.
- **Political will of governments to support** and national ownership of data collection processes. The UN and other international bodies can play an important role in building the capacity of NSOs, as well as pressuring them to make their data accessible to the public.
- Investment in sound, **scientific research methodologies**, which will produce high-quality and credible data that will be accepted by policy makers.
- Active involvement of **civil society organisations**, providing checks and balances, contributing to the reliability of data.
- **Synergy** between NSO, civil society and expert assessments.