

Final Report on illustrative work to pilot governance in the context of the SDGs

Executive Summary

During 2014 and 2015 the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) worked with five Member States – Albania, Indonesia, Rwanda, Tunisia and, at a later stage, the United Kingdom (UK) – to consider relevant approaches to implement and monitor relevant national goals, with associated targets and indicators. The Pilot project aimed to enhance the readiness of participating countries to integrate such a goal and related targets into national planning processes, as well as to operationalise their delivery after the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015. The pilot was also expected to facilitate cooperation and exchange of knowledge and experience between countries and assist in identifying champions in each region, whose early start on this type of work could serve as an example for other countries to follow.

The initiative was launched to support interested Member States and partners to field test relevant national goals and targets so that they could begin assessing both their data capacity needs and measure progress on particular targets. The five pilot countries have also helped to focus global attention on the common elements which will underpin delivery of Goal 16 on peace, justice and institutions, in all countries, in the decades to come – planning, monitoring and reporting, lesson learning, and building partnerships.

The different phases of the Pilot Initiative

During the **first phase** of the Pilot, countries began the process of discussing and identifying the key priorities for action on governance in the context of the SDGs, including identification of preliminary indicators for tracking the priorities in key governance-related areas. A brief outline of key achievements by country is provided below, followed by an assessment of selected themes from the first phase. A global workshop was convened in April 2015 in **Tunis** to review findings and recommendations from countries undertaking the initiative, and to discuss experiences, lessons learned and common threads from the initial phase of the pilot work.

The primary objective of the **second phase** of the Pilot Initiative was to field test the specific relevant national goals, targets and indicators chosen during the initial phase of work at the national level. A side event to the SDG Summit during the 70th UN General Assembly was organised at the UN in New York in September 2015. It provided pilot countries and UNDP with an opportunity to share findings and recommendations emerging from this initiative and to look ahead to implications for the implementation of Goal 16 globally. After the end of the second phase, a global workshop was convened in February 2016 in **Kigali** to review challenges and lessons learned from the five countries undertaking the initiative, and to consider the transition from piloting to implementation, putting activities into the context of the overall

Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) framework for implementation of the SDGs, and emerging work on localisation in particular.

Emerging lessons and trends from the pilot countries' experience

The Pilot Initiative was designed with the overarching goal of improving existing approaches to measuring governance, peace and justice, and to test new approaches. From the outset, and even in the earliest stages of implementation and monitoring, a continuous learning approach characterised the initiative. All five countries engaged in piloting identified challenges during the first phase to be tackled during the second phase, including testing and monitoring. Lessons learned can be drawn from these initial experiences, to be used as a model for subsequent implementation phases of Goal 16, through partnerships at all levels.

The main challenges flagged from the combined country experience were: identifying smart indicators; incentivizing policy-makers to engage; capturing governance processes as well as programme priorities; and the need to build on data findings. Common achievements highlighted from the country experiences included the possibility to utilise citizen feedback for informing and shaping policies and the successful localisation of the SDGs to different contexts.

The challenge of collecting, identifying and prioritising indicators: The large number of indicators chosen for consideration by some countries in the initial phase of the Pilot Initiative required them to condense the numbers of indicators for proportional monitoring, in order to contribute to global processes. Discussions on how to prioritise indicators often centred on the types of indicators to use. Experience from pilot countries suggests that to get a full picture of governance-related issues in a country, several types of indicators – including administrative records and survey-based data, at both the input and outcome levels – should be used to cross-check results towards a single target. **Tunisia** identified 89 potential indicators, to distil and eventually reduce depending on their relevance, their feasibility to be measured and monitored throughout, and their alignment with the global Goal 16 indicators. **Albania** began with an initial long-list of 70 indicators, which it then reduced to 20. The **UK's** Office for National Statistics (ONS) meanwhile, listed 43 possible indicators pertaining to facets of good governance that can potentially be monitored through existing data sets. **Indonesia** prioritised 11 indicators and **Rwanda** 36.

The need for disaggregating data from international sources: Several countries (e.g. **Albania, Tunisia**) mentioned the importance of disaggregating data where possible by income level, gender, age, race, ethnicity, immigration status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics specific to a country.

The importance of localisation at the sub-national level *vis-à-vis* universalisation and harmonisation of indicators: Experience from the pilot countries confirms the importance of balancing specific and contextualised indicators that capture the richness of information at the national and sub-national levels, whilst still being internationally comparable and capable of being harmonised across countries. It is also important to not exclusively focus on a handful of indicators that are universally accepted to the exclusion of collecting more localised information that may be most relevant for a specific country.

Reconciling an emphasis on indicators with appropriate policies and processes that lead to change: the need to link policies with practice and service delivery has been identified by some pilot countries. Countries have also organised themselves in very different ways at the institutional level to address this interface, and begin the process of implementing Goal 16.

Some targets and indicators related to Goal 16 have been assimilated into existing national development plans and policies: During the planning stage, many of the Pilot countries were able to leverage existing capacities within the country to measure and monitor the proposed targets. In **Albania** targets and indicators were established in the National Strategy for Development and Integration. **Indonesia** has been tracking progress on some governance-related indicators, through its Ministry of National Development Planning (Bappenas) since the late 1990s. In the **UK** there has been a conscious effort to try and ensure that new policies, strategies, and indicators (e.g. the new UK Anti-Corruption Action Plan) are consistent with the Goal 16 targets.

Ensuring that national-level targets and indicators map onto specific targets of Goal 16: **Albania** has conducted a three-pronged process to align indicators in its NSDI 2015-2020 with priorities outlined for accession into the European Union (EU), and some of the targets of Goal 16. The **Rwanda** Governance Board adapted the application of ICT in governance matters from global processes and integrated it in the RGS assessment, starting with 2014 edition where the extent of the use of ICT in Court processes has been measured as a function of promoting the rule of law. Going forward, legal identity for all, including birth registration, is set to be included in publication of the Rwanda Governance Scorecard 2015.

The pilot countries have worked in partnership with multiple stakeholders: multi-stakeholder partnerships between civil society and government in particular, have been useful in advancing work on identifying and refining relevant targets for monitoring in several countries. The involvement of, and coordination between, statistics offices, other government agencies and academics have facilitated efforts to develop an integrated list of indicators in **Indonesia, Tunisia** and to some extent, **Rwanda**. This experience suggests that partnerships at all levels – through consultation in local communities, at the regional and provincial level, across government, and between government actors and stakeholders in oversight bodies, in civil society and the private sector – will be essential for progress on Goal 16.

The way forward

Experience in the pilot countries needs to be put in to the context of priorities for implementation, including the overall MAPS approach to implementation, and ongoing efforts to localise the SDGs at community level.

The MAPS approach already pays special attention to crosscutting elements of partnerships, data and accountability – all familiar themes from the pilot work. In addition to highlighting the importance of planning for Goal 16, which will be a key theme of the MAPS approach, the Pilot work has also helped to emphasise that successful implementation of Goal 16 will be essential to ensuring subsequent progress

on all other goals. The interrelation with other goals and targets is evident for mainstreaming, acceleration, and even more for policy support that will require analysing the links between the targets of Goal 16 and other SDGs.

To capture more robust information on progress towards the realisation of Goal 16, a range of data types and sources, including administrative data, experiential, factual and perception based surveys, and expert assessments is likely to be needed. Experience from the Pilot work suggests that an indicator framework should draw on both official and reliable third party data sources, including data produced by the UN and other multilateral institutions, civil society organisations, research institutions, academia and the private sector. There should be an attempt to use several different types of indicators to assess progress within each target. Disaggregation of data is fundamental to ensuring that implementation meets the vision and ambition of the SDGs – to ‘leave no one behind’.

The Pilot work has also demonstrated the importance of initiatives to help ‘localise’ Goal 16 targets, with regional and local Institutions, and further attention will be needed on this as part of SDG implementation. ‘Localising’ development should be seen as a process based on the empowerment of local stakeholders, rather than a translation of global policies within local contexts.

Finally, challenges related to the political process have also occasionally emerged at the country level, and the pilot work has emphasised the need for resilience and flexibility in this regard. Experience in the pilot countries shows the importance of flexibility to adapt to changes, and the importance of a strong evidence base to underpin activity on Goal 16, to generate lasting and resilient political commitment on Goal 16.

