



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

Concept note: Expert meeting on measuring SDG 16 targets on peace, inclusion and freedoms, 28-29 January 2016, Oslo, Norway.

In September in New York, world leaders agreed on the transformational 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with an ambitious set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets. Building on the work of many experts and wide consultation, the United Nations Statistical Commission's Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) is working to define the set of indicators that will form the backbone of the measurement that will be essential to ensure the envisaged transformation.

While agreement has been reached on indicators for many targets, on some there is still no consensus. SDG 16 urges us to "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels." Yet, despite enormous progress in recent years on the measurement of peace, justice and inclusion, there is still work to be done to reach consensus on the measurement of some aspects of SDG16, notably targets 16.1, 16.3, 16.7 and 16.10. The latest documents on the consultation process can be found at: <http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/>

This expert meeting will provide an opportunity for representatives from National Statistical Offices, UN agencies, research, policy and other civil society organizations and networks to get together in a retreat environment on the outskirts of Oslo and consider in detail the feasibility of different indicators under consideration for these four targets, possible empirical basis for the choice, as well as the implications for the development of national and sub-national level indicators within planning frameworks. It will build on the extensive consultations already conducted, particularly through the UNDP-convened Virtual Network on Indicators for Sustainable Development Goal 16. It will also provide an input for the Praia City Group on Governance Statistics, established under the UN Statistical Commission which is addressing the conceptualization, methodology and instruments for producing governance statistics.

16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere

The two indicators previously proposed for target 16.1 are "intentional homicides per 100,000 inhabitants" and "conflict related deaths per 100,000 inhabitants". There appears to be broad consensus on including the homicide indicator, i.e. it is "green" in the post Bangkok summary of IAEG proceedings; but no agreement on the conflict indicator, i.e. it is classified "grey" in the proceedings, for further discussion. In addition, the mid-December web consultation re-introduced "Proportion of people that feel safe walking alone around the area they live", also classified "grey" – which can be seen as a perception-based alternative to the homicide indicator.



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

If the UN were to adopt a set of indicators that do not include conflict deaths, some argue that this will essentially render a large and important portion of SDG 16 as meaningless. While it is important to understand the overall peacefulness of a country – whether measured by administrative or perception data – peace is much more than just the incidence or fear of violence. Thus, if only homicides are included we would measure Iraq in 2012 as experiencing little more violent death than Lithuania in the same year. Not to measure conflict specifically might undermine the entire rationale of SDG 16. More importantly, it may crucially limit the international community’s ability to understand and act on the relationship between conflict and development.

One of the arguments against including a conflict indicator is that it is not presently feasible to measure it. On the first day, this workshop will consider how academic research has sought to measure conflict in a scientifically sound, rigorous, and un-biased manner. Organizations such as the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), the International Institutes of Strategic Studies (IISS), and the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), have established and vetted methodologies for measuring both the incidence of conflict and the number of battle related deaths in a country in a year. As we will discuss at the meeting, even though these and other organizations work with different definitions and methodologies, the resulting data sets exhibit a high degree of correlation. It might be necessary to tailor existing measures to the specific needs of measuring 16.1, but the current body of work strongly suggests the inclusion of “conflict deaths per 100,000 inhabitants” as an indicator.

16.3 Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all

While target 16.1 is chiefly concerned with the level of violence in society, target 16.3 focuses on justice and the rule of law, including how governments treat both the victims and perpetrators of violence. The IAEG-SDGs has already agreed on the inclusion of an indicator measuring “un-sentenced detainees as a percentage of overall prison population”, i.e. it is “green”. There still is no agreement on the inclusion of additional “grey” indicators measuring “proportion of victims of violence that reported their victimization to competent authorities” and “proportion of those who have experienced a dispute who have accessed a formal, informal, alternative, or traditional dispute resolution mechanisms and who felt it was just”. The agreed indicator is administratively based, while both the proposed additional indicators are survey based. In this instance a sole focus on administrative indicators could lead to a bias towards measuring the rule of law for perpetrators only and not for victims. There are arguments for why it is feasible to include survey-based indicators and we will discuss the issue at the meeting.

16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels and 16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.

The issue of administrative or perception-based survey data is also central to assessing the options for 16.7 and 16.10. It appeared going into the Bangkok meeting that SDG 16.7 would apply administrative data on the proportion of positions in public institutions compared to national distributions. However, in the post-Bangkok web consultation two other indicators have been brought into contention on 16.7: a survey-based perception option, “Percentage of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive”; and a different administrative-data option, “Turnout as a share of voting age population in national elections”.

The meeting will also consider whether the proposed indicator for 16.10, which focuses on cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists and other human rights advocates is a good enough proxy for the concepts in the target across a large enough number of countries; or whether other or additional indicators might both broaden the scope (particularly on the issue of access to information) as well as the geographical relevance of this target.

In respect of both these targets, the meeting will consider an empirical comparison of how administrative and survey-based indicators perform, as well as drawing on recent experiences in the use of household surveys for governance-related experience and perception data.