Key findings

From the Global Alliance Report on SDG 16+: **Enabling the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through SDG 16+: Anchoring peace, justice and inclusion**, prepared for the High Level Political Forum in July 2019.
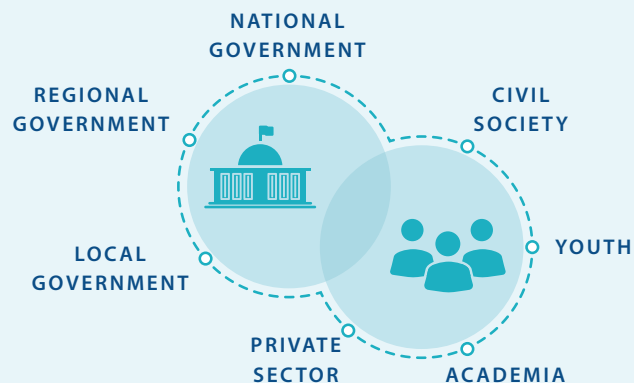
1 Political and financial investment is needed to accelerate progress on SDG 16+

— SDG 16+ will be challenging to meet by 2030. **Visionary and committed national leadership is essential** to accelerate progress on SDG 16+ to transform societies to prevent conflict, address inequalities, reduce injustices and be more inclusive.

— **SDG 16+ can enable other SDGs** if governments embrace full ownership of the process and invest in the enabling and accelerating role of SDG 16+. Failure to invest in SDG 16+ will risk worsening violence, injustice and exclusion, reversing development gains across all SDGs, including education, health and climate action.

— **Measuring progress in achieving SDG 16 is politically, technically and financially possible** and will enhance implementation. However in many countries, **institutional mechanisms at the national and local levels to gather data and monitor policy efforts and impact are weak**. Partnerships between national statistical systems and regional and local governments, civil society organizations, youth organizations and academia as well as the private sector and international organizations can enhance a country's ability to gather, analyse and use data on SDG 16+ targets and indicators.

PEACE · JUSTICE · INCLUSION · CONFLICT · INJUSTICE · EXCLUSION

2 SDG 16+ implementation requires a 'whole of government' and 'whole of society' approach

— National governments stress that they cannot tackle the entire 2030 Agenda alone. **A 'whole of government' approach to localizing and achieving the SDGs is required**. This would involve not just national government agencies and state institutions but also the adoption of the SDGs across local and regional governments and institutions to make them a reality for communities. Indeed **local approaches to achieve the SDGs** should inform national priority-setting.

— **A 'whole of society' approach with broad and meaningful engagement and consultation with stake-holders across all sectors of society** is key to ensuring that no one is left behind. This approach is most effective when institutionalized within formal structures and at different levels of government. **Multi-stakeholder partnerships and platforms involving actors from government, civil society, youth, academia and the private sector are a critical mechanism for the achievement of SDG 16+**. Targetted efforts are needed to build capacities and an enabling environment for such collaboration.

— **For conflict-affected states**, particularly where parts of a territory are outside state administrative authority, **engaging with actors from the whole of society to design and implement development policies is vital**. SDG 16+ not only guides countries on how to shape their institutions to achieve the SDGs, it also **shapes their approach to humanitarian, development and peace actions, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected situations**.

NATIONAL GOVERNMENT · REGIONAL GOVERNMENT · CIVIL SOCIETY · LOCAL GOVERNMENT · YOUTH · PRIVATE SECTOR · ACADEMIA

3   SDG 16+ is instrumental in protecting fundamental freedoms and ensuring that no one is left behind

— **With shrinking civic space across the globe, many civil society actors are faced with barriers to inclusion and participation both on- and off-line. This includes threats to the personal safety of human rights activists and defenders**, who are often prevented from participating meaningfully in development planning and policy making processes. This trend risks excluding from policy making the needs and voices of the most vulnerable in society, including women, children, youth, refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced and stateless people.

— **Governance institutions and decision-making processes rooted in a human rights-based approach to development are critical to the achievement of SDG 16+ and to ensuring that no one is left behind.** Bold reforms in making governance institutions more people-centered, responsive, effective and accountable in line with SDG 16+ principles will increase the resilience of societies to conflict by better integrating minority and marginalized voices. Institutions must not only be accountable and transparent, but also more participative, inclusive, responsive and representative. They must operate in accordance with the rule of law and human rights principles of non-discrimination and equality.

INSTITUTIONS

ACCOUNTABLE **TRANSPARENT** **PARTICIPATIVE** **INCLUSIVE** **RESPONSIVE** **REPRESENTATIVE**

— **National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) can play multiple roles in ensuring that no one is left behind.** They are catalysts for sustainable development, helping to address inequality and discrimination in all its forms. They contribute to data collection and analysis processes that are more inclusive. They facilitate access to justice, redress and can remedy complaints. They promote human rights standards and the SDGs in business conduct, conflict prevention and peacebuilding. They provide a platform for dialogue in societies that are transitioning towards peace and justice. They help build trust between government institutions and people to promote transparent, participatory and inclusive national processes of SDG implementation and monitoring. They can also play an oversight role over the implementation of the SDGs to ensure that SDG planning, implementation and reporting is aligned with human rights standards and with a focus on "leaving no one behind".

— **Significant investment is required in reliable disaggregated data to ensure that policy and programs reach marginalized and vulnerable groups and others who are "left behind"**. Data collection systems are weak when it comes to systematic coverage and data disaggregation, especially at the local and regional levels. Many SDG 16+ methodologies and national practices are state and citizen-centred, and therefore leave out people without citizen status, including the estimated 3.1 million asylum seekers, 25.4 million refugees, and 3.8 million plus stateless people worldwide. It is essential to expand the use of different data sources, including people-generated data, in addition to exploring new partnerships between data actors to further develop the national capacities for data collection, analysis and dissemination. The data revolution, and the potential of big data and artificial intelligence brings promising opportunities, but must be used responsibly.

Key trends on peace, justice and inclusion

From the Global Alliance Report on SDG 16+: **Enabling the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through SDG 16+: Anchoring peace, justice and inclusion**, prepared for the High Level Political Forum in July 2019.

Peace

70.8 million
people are **forcibly displaced** as a result of persecution, conflict and violence.

80%
of the **extreme poor** are expected to live in countries affected by **violence and conflict** by 2030.

Violence has become the biggest obstacle to reaching the SDGs. More than 80% of the extreme poor are expected to live in countries affected by violence and conflict by 2030. UNHCR's Global Trends Report 2018 details that an unprecedented **70.8 million people (and increasing) are forcibly displaced as a result of persecution, conflict and violence**. Seminal studies like the joint United Nations and World Bank Group 'Pathways for Peace' report are also showing that violent conflicts today are more complex than in the past and increasingly protracted, involving more non-state groups as well as regional and international actors. **All countries, including those in the Global North, face risks of violence and societal unrest as governments and institutions contend with perceptions of exclusion related to inequalities across societal groups.** This calls for increasing efforts from multiple actors to focus on preventing both the occurrence and escalation of violence.

Protracted conflicts and wars have resulted in chronic fragility, psycho-social and economic trauma, and the destruction of cultural heritage. Societies enduring active conflict require **dialogue, trust, consensus-building, inclusive political settlements and reconciliation to build bridges for peace**. Without ensuring sustained positive peace in these countries, progress across the SDGs will be lacking or unsustainable. In order to live up to the commitment of leaving "no one behind," promoting peace in conflict-affected countries must be prioritized.

High levels of **violence against women** can signal that a society might tip into **conflict**. Once conflict breaks out such violence may be exacerbated.

CONFLICT
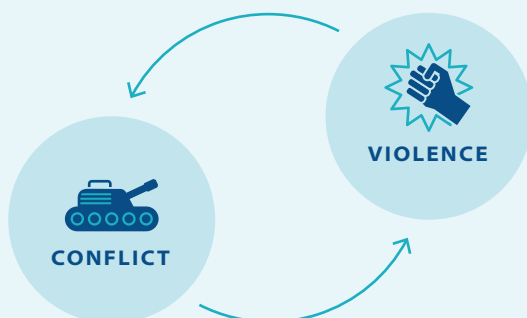
VIOLENCE

87,000
women were intentionally **killed** in 2017 — and more than half by a partner or family member.

1 billion
children experience some form of **violence** every year.

There have been positive trends in some indicators on violence. Global homicide rates have slowly declined between 2000 and 2017. However, **high levels of interpersonal violence, especially violence against women, can be a warning sign that violence in societies may degenerate into conflict**. Once violent conflict breaks out, violence against women and girls may be exacerbated. SDG 16 is stimulating more and better data and statistics on violence against women which is enabling countries to better understand the extent of the problem and respond more effectively.

The aspirations of sustaining peace (as adopted in the 2016 UN Security Council and UN General Assembly Resolutions) and sustainable development are intrinsically linked. Countries are looking beyond post-conflict peacebuilding to embrace the concept of "sustaining peace". This concept is focused on addressing the root causes and drivers of conflict, highlighting issues of inclusivity, national ownership and the need for a "whole of society" approach. SDG 16+ provides a framework that spans the development, governance, and peacebuilding nexus. The framework can be used to underpin the sustaining-peace approach and align it with the more comprehensive SDG agenda.

Goal 16+ is central to sustaining peace and preventing and responding to conflict by strengthening institutions (including multilateral institutions). It also addresses the root causes of poverty, forced displacement, statelessness and the marginalization of people, as well as educating for a culture of peace and non-violence. UN Security Council Resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018) on youth, peace and security recognize the positive role young people play in sustaining peace. The developing world is now witnessing its largest youth generation in history. Indeed, youth are often the majority of the population in countries, and this younger generation needs a seat at the table in decision-making. UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women and peace and security also reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. The resolution stresses the importance of women's equal participation and full involvement in the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. The 2030 Agenda, particularly SDGs 4 on education, 5 on gender equality, 10 on equality, and 16 on peace, justice and inclusion, encompass the spirit of these important Resolutions. It recognizes sustaining peace as an inherent component of sustainable development.

Justice

Hundreds of millions of people, including 650 million children, lack proof of legal identity. People **excluded from society through the lack of a legal identity** cannot seek protection from the law or claim their rights and entitlements. They are often invisible to the state and at high risk of being left behind. Lack of legal identity poses significant barriers to accessing public services (health or education, for example), exercizing the right to participate in civic processes (vote, participate in politics), or seek out justice for grievances. Similarly, access to rights is denied when laws do not live up to key international standards and exclude population groups — such as the right of refugees to access education.

Seeking justice is often **prohibitively expensive and legal proceedings are lengthy.** Moreover, for many marginalized groups, confidence in the justice system's ability to protect their rights is often very low. The Taskforce on Justice, an initiative of the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, has estimated that there is a 'justice gap' affecting more than 5 billion people worldwide who cannot access legal services to resolve their problems. The High-Level Group on Justice for Women posits that **women's justice needs are shaped by overlapping disadvantages, legal discrimination and discriminatory practices**.

650 million

children lack proof of **legal identity.**

Lack of legal identity limits people's **access to**:

justice	education	work
health services	civic processes	property rights

Countries around the world are grappling with ineffective justice systems that often reflect and perpetuate the structural inequalities, low levels of integrity and power disparities in broader society. However, there is an increasing recognition that a **human rights-based and people-centered approach to access to justice** is necessary to ensure that legal frameworks do not exclude certain population groups, that justice institutions are more responsive to people seeking redress for grievances or to resolve disputes and that people themselves are more empowered to seek out and claim their rights.

With shrinking democratic space in many countries, **the robustness and independence of institutions can be critical to safeguarding the rights of marginalized populations and upholding the rule of law**. The judiciary can play a critical role in such situations — whether in fragile or conflict-affected contexts or high/middle income countries. However, **the independence of the judiciary is under threat** in a number of countries where politicians attempt to exert control

over the judiciary. Governments have made use of parliamentary majorities to **change the statutory rules on judicial appointments and the composition of appointment panels**. Furthermore, population surveys show that experiences with and perceptions of corruption in the courts are widespread.

People are increasingly turning to **informal, traditional and customary justice systems** to seek quick, accessible, inexpensive resolution of disputes. This tends to happen more frequently in areas outside the reach of state authority, although these systems may not be aligned with the human rights protections afforded under international law. Countries are searching for **efficient and effective ways to deliver justice,** including alternative dispute resolution fora, mobile courts and legal aid provision. They are also looking into community-based legal services and paralegals who can advise and assist people through the justice system, focusing on those most at risk of being left behind.

People seek resolution for a range of civil, administrative and criminal needs. In criminal matters, access to legal aid is the foundation for the enjoyment of the right to a fair trial and a safeguard that prevents corruption and ensures fairness and public trust in the criminal justice process. The UNDP/UNODC Global Study on Legal Aid identified improving the coverage and quality of legal aid services (including for vulnerable groups) and quality of legal aid services as priority needs in most countries. **To deliver justice for all countries must also recognize the civil justice needs of people**. Legal aid to access justice in a range of civil and administrative matters from property and housing issues to employment and education needs is lacking for many people around the world. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) notes that a conservative estimate of the cost of leaving civil legal needs unmet ranges from 0.5 to 3% of GDP in most OECD countries.

Building just societies contributes to preventing violence and conflict: group-based grievances around exclusion and feelings of injustice as well as abusive actions by state actors accelerate violence and the risks of conflict. Sustainable peace and development are more attainable **when justice is pursued for those grievances, including through transitional justice measures**. These will include establishing victim-centric processes to deal with legacies of mass violations of human rights, incorporating victims' voices in peace processes, returning property to people in the aftermath of conflict and investing in more broad-based, institutional reforms.

+5 billion

people worldwide cannot access **legal services.**

People are often **unable to seek justice** due to:

elevated costs	lenghty proceedings	lack of legal identity

80%

of people turn to **informal justice systems** to solve their problems.

0.5 - 3% GDP

is the estimated **cost** of leaving civil needs unmet.

Inclusion

Civic space is shrinking in many countries across the world. Civil society organizations report an increasing number of cases in which legal and political barriers are suppressing and weakening civil society. **Shrinking civic space is highly likely to halt or reverse progress towards reducing inequality, ensuring inclusion and improving sustainability**. It is often precisely those at greatest risk whom civil society seeks to empower and protect, including women, youth, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender & Intersex community and other marginalised groups. From a human rights perspective, this trend also impinges upon the fundamental freedoms of the right to peaceful assembly and freedom of association.

There has been **good progress in recognizing the right of individuals to access information held by public authorities**. However, **certain groups — such as women — are disproportionately disadvantaged in the exercise of this right**. Moreover, the protection of freedom of expression is being threatened by **violations of the safety** of those who gather and report information to the public, principally **journalists, media workers and human rights defenders**. Media freedom, journalist safety, freedom of assembly — not to mention an independent and effective National Human Rights Institution in accordance with the Paris Principles — are all prerequisites for establishing effective, accountable and transparent institutions.

181 restrictions

have been imposed on **CSOs** in **82 countries** since 2013, targetting:

58%

20%

22%

the 'lifecycle' of CSOs
(formation, registration or
operation)

peaceful assembly

access to international
funding

125

countries have adopted **laws and
policies** to guarantee people's
right to information.

1,456

journalists and **human rights
defenders** have been killed
in 61 countries since 2015.

Countries are recognizing that responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making can strengthen the legitimacy of public institutions and also facilitate the adoption of policies that address the needs and rights of all people. This is as true for education (SDG 4) as it is for decent work (SDG 8). The picture of **women's representation in public institutions (the judiciary, parliament and the public service), however, is mixed**. Some regions are steadily improving the proportion of women occupying decision-making positions in public institutions, whereas other regions remain stagnant. Representation of other demographic groups in public institutions — e.g., youth, ethnic groups, the disabled — is more challenging to assess, as only a handful of countries are systematically producing and monitoring this data. **Young people's participation and representation in deliberative bodies and in policy making processes is impossible** in some contexts. This is due to formal rules restricting the age of participation, a lack of space for expanding membership and financial constraints on facilitating meaningful participation to ensure a real influence on decision-making.

Women's representation in national **parliaments** varies widely per region but the average stands at

24%

Young people make up the majority of the world's population, yet **MPs under 30** make up less than

2%

Among children of primary age, **girls** are still more likely to be **out of school**.

Asylum seekers and **refugees** might be **legally excluded** from accessing certain rights and associated services.

Inclusion, or its lack, starts early and is often determined by legal status and identity. It begins at the time of birth — underscoring the importance of birth registration for proof of official identity and nationality — and continues as children enter the education system. **The gap between male and female out-of-school rates has narrowed over the years, but among children of primary age, girls are still more likely to be out of school than boys**. Depending on the country, **asylum seekers and refugees might be legally excluded from accessing certain rights and associated services.** Legal identity secures important legal protection mechanisms, safeguards equal access to key social services such as health and education and foster income-generating opportunities. It also helps to ensure that these individuals are counted in official statistics.

Moving forward:
## policy and programming recommendations

The Global Alliance report **Enabling the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through SDG 16+: Anchoring peace, justice and inclusion** — prepared for the High Level Political Forum in July 2019 — draws together a set of key recommendations directed at a range of key stakeholders to meet SDG 16+ within the next 11 years of the 2030 agenda.

EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION

1. Political leadership and investment to implement SDG 16+

— Governments need to increase people's awareness of plans and policies to implement SDG 16+ to ensure public ownership and support.
— Governments need to enhance domestic resources including through broad partnerships with traditional and non-traditional actors.
— International organizations and other providers of technical assistance need to provide technical support that is grounded in local realities, carefully sequenced in terms of priorities, coordinated with other donor and domestic programmes, financed sustainably and does no harm. International and regional actors should support cross country learning and exchange, accompanying countries in piloting approaches and taking these to scale.
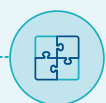
2. Making effective links between justice, peace and inclusion

— Governments and non-governmental stakeholders need to continuously assess how peace, justice and inclusion are inter-connected and identify the root causes and drivers of conflict, injustice and exclusion.
— Governments and non-governmental stakeholders need to strengthen institutions, including multilateral institutions, to tackle the root causes and drivers of poverty, forced displacement, statelessness and the marginalization of people.
— Multilateral and bilateral institutions need to acknowledge and provide countries with the time and space to assess how peace, justice and inclusion are inter-connected and which root causes and drivers of conflict, injustice and exclusion are relevant to a given context.
— Governments and non-governmental stakeholders need to fully recognize and strengthen informal justice institutions such as alternative dispute resolution and paralegal services and strengthen linkages through legislation and policy between informal legal mechanisms and the formal justice sector.
— Governments and non-governmental stakeholders need to strengthen transitional justice mechanisms to deal with grievances post-conflict.
— Governments and non-governmental stakeholders need to address official gender bias in justice delivery, expand the provision of legal aid, and increase the participation of women in justice delivery.

3. Implementation and monitoring mechanisms for SDG 16+

— Governments need to reform existing coordination mechanisms to be more fit for purpose in connecting a broader range of institutions (government and non-governmental) to work through SDG 16+ priorities, establish baselines and identify policies and programs to accelerate and monitor progress. This coordination should happen at multiple levels.
— Governments and UN agencies need to support the participation of ordinary people in the implementation and monitoring of SDG 16+, especially women, youth and those population groups without citizenship status who are currently largely absent from SDG 16 action.

4. Utilizing human rights mechanisms

— Countries need to more actively link SDG implementation and follow up to human rights mechanisms, including the Universal Periodic Review (UPR).
— UN human rights mechanisms need to more systematically include the monitoring of the SDGs in their work to help reinforce equality and non-discrimination, as well as to direct attention to the most vulnerable. This would provide an added means of accountability through independent mechanisms.
— UN member states should more actively use the UPR to help monitor the SDGs. UN special procedures could incorporate monitoring of the SDGs into thematic and country visit reports. UN treaty bodies could incorporate the monitoring of the SDGs into their examination of state parties' reports, making recommendations that link Human Rights and the SDGs.
— UN agencies and governments need to strengthen collaboration between UPR/Human Rights reporting and SDGs/Voluntary National Review (VNR) reporting.
— Governments need to strengthen National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) to play a central role in SDG implementation.

WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT APPROACH

1. Ensuring policy coherence in SDG implementation

— Governments need to reform institutional arrangements to work across sectors both vertically and horizontally.
— Political leadership is needed to promote and incentivize coordination and collaboration across institutions at all levels.
— Governments, UN agencies and donors need to prioritize investing in capacities of the government and other stakeholders to work collectively.

2. Involving sub-national stakeholders

— Governments should privilege local-level consultation mechanisms on SDG prioritization, planning and monitoring.
— Regional and local governments should use the opportunity of localizing the SDGs to pursue open government initiatives.

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Reporting Progress on Peaceful, Just, and Inclusive Societies

— Sub-national governments need to establish local SDG implementation plans linked to national SDG/development plans.

— Local government and statistics offices need to establish baselines and monitor locally, drawing on sources of data relevant to local priorities.

WHOLE OF SOCIETY APPROACH

1. Enabling consultation and civic space

— Governments and UN agencies need to improve multi-stakeholder consultations to be not only inclusive, but also meaningful, participatory and safe.

— Governments and UN agencies should intensify efforts to include and support the participation of the most marginalized groups, including those without citizenship status, and those who live outside their country, such as refugees.

— Governments and UN agencies need to include civil society in all its diversity in all phases of SDG implementation, including policy prioritization and implementation, monitoring progress and reporting.

— Governments should institutionalize stakeholder engagement within formal government structures and at different levels of government.

— Shrinking civic space is having a pervasive impact on the realization of the SDGs, particularly SDG 16+. Restrictive legal and regulatory frameworks for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), as well as barriers to association and access to financial and other resources, must be lifted by governments.

2. Public-Private Partnerships

— Governments should ensure that Public-Private Partnerships are underpinned by fundamental governance principles, such as inclusive engagement, accountability and transparency.

MEASUREMENT AND MONITORING

1. Political and financial investments in SDG 16+ data and statistics

— Countries need to promote and fortify the independence of National Statistics Offices (NSOs) to fulfil their dual roles as primary generators of data and as coordinators of national monitoring systems. This needs to be carried out in an impartial way and in line with international standards, including respect for the human rights of people who have shared their information with these bodies.

— Countries need to ensure that NSOs are adequately resourced and capacitated to develop and implement monitoring and accountability frameworks, including national quality assurance frameworks for statistics across all entities of a national statistical system.

— Countries need to become more engaged in producing data that covers issues related to SDG 16 and to overcome resistance in the production and use of official statistics on sensitive topics and those that are perceived to be difficult to measure.

— The UN should develop international methodologies and standards to ensure the measurability and comparability of data that is reported.

— The UN needs to adopt an open innovation philosophy and support innovative methodologies and multi-stakeholder partnerships to strengthen national statistical systems and bring about a data revolution.

2. Involving a broad range of data producers to address data gaps

— NSOs and governments can benefit from a range of non-statistical sources, including non-official data to track SDG 16. CSOs, academia and the private sector are all producing important data, providing valuable context and complementary information.

— Engaging public-private partnerships is the way forward. At the same time, it is also important to ensure that the private sector uses and shares data ethically.

— Governments and UN agencies should promote partnerships between the government, civil society, youth and the private sector to increase the quality and availability of data.

— UN agencies should encourage member states and other stakeholders to support institutional cooperation between NHRIs and NSOs to improve the inclusion of groups that are at risk of being left behind in data collection efforts.

— Member states and other stakeholders should adopt complementary human rights indicators, such as those that are part of internationally recognized human rights mechanisms to reinforce linkages between human rights and SDGs.

3. Data disaggregation to ensure no one is left behind

— Countries need to invest in data sources (surveys, census, administrative data) to more effectively understand disparities across population groups, including vulnerable population groups.

— Countries need to audit the availability and quality of data that is disaggregated to ensure the visibility of vulnerable groups within SDG monitoring and implementation, including those who are forcibly displaced or stateless. Countries should also support international efforts to improve standards, guidance and capacity building in this regard such as the Expert Group on Refugee and IDP Statistics (EGRIS).

— Countries should consider if targeted data collection tools are needed to cover those furthest behind, including those forcibly displaced, refugees and stateless persons.

— Countries should strengthen or establish collaboration between NSOs and NHRIs. Countries should leverage the institutional independence and mutually reinforcing monitoring roles of these state institutions. This will help to ensure that key population groups are not further marginalized by SDG-related data collection/utilisation efforts.