

REGIONAL FORUM

ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR THE UNECE REGION

16

PEACE, JUSTICE
AND STRONG
INSTITUTIONS



Accelerating policies, partnerships and innovation for just, peaceful and inclusive societies in the UNECE Region

As of 8 March

Wednesday 13 March 2024, 15:00 – 18:00

Palais des Nations, Room XXI

Background / Scenario

SDG 16 aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies and to ensure justice and accountability for all. Latest analyses showed significant challenges in achieving targets, particularly in countries experiencing democratic erosion, protracted conflict and armed violence, and unequal development (SDG16 Data Initiative Report 2022). In the UNECE region, the COVID-19 pandemic, conflicts, and crises including natural disasters continue to fuel polycrises that are increasingly felt both locally and regionally. Fragile political transitions have likewise increased the risks of political polarization, social tensions, violence and unprecedented displacement, with shrinking civic space further challenging the rule of law and contributing to democratic backsliding in a number of economies. Shifting demographics also have significant impact on economic development, health and social protection, governance, and national financing systems, among others. Amidst these challenges, governments, civil society, the private sector, development organizations, and other stakeholders, have continued to explore and advance new business models, policies and initiatives, and learn from best practices across the region and through the global community, to respond to these dynamic needs.

In the remaining six years to 2030, it is imperative to continue the exploration of new policies and solutions, and build on successes, to accelerate the achievement of SDG 16. Exploring joint, integrated approaches and innovations will be critical to building a peaceful world where no one is left behind, and where every person can exercise their own choices. The SDG 16 Roundtable will therefore identify and reinforce foundations of democratic and societal resilience, reflect on addressing tipping points that can further create fragile imbalances and conflict risks, and generate innovative ideas that can further propel the UNECE region towards peaceful, democratic, digitally equipped, and people-centered societies. It is expected to stimulate learning and catalyze policy, programmatic and partnership engagements on SDG 16, that can inform the development agenda in the UNECE region.

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Guiding Questions:

The SDG 16 round table will focus on concrete solutions and partnerships in the following areas:

- Partnerships and innovation to accelerate the implementation of SDG 16
- Evidence-based solutions to reduce inequalities within our societies
- Continuing participation of civil society and society at large in decision-making, including on environmental matters

1. What partnerships, policies, and development interventions are effectively preserving and safeguarding SDG-16 gains for all and are bringing them back on track- in the face of ongoing polycrises and challenges such as COVID-19, conflicts, disasters, economic crises and increased human mobility? How do digital and technological solutions accelerate these interventions and results?
2. What institutional innovations and policies, including digital and technological solutions, have contributed to strategic, radical reforms that reduced inequalities, enhanced transparency, public service delivery, and new governance models in the region that have accelerated SDG16 achievement, particularly at the local level?
3. How can governments work with civil society (including women, youth, and people on the move), the private sector, and other actors to ensure a robust mechanism for accountability, transparency, and participation, and rights-based digital transformation, within shifting political environments, and specifically address the needs of the vulnerable and those most left behind?

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Programme

Moderator: **Robert Bernardo**, Team Leader, Governance and Peacebuilding Team, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub

Rapporteur: **Maike Salize** (Environmental Affairs, UNECE)
Rune Brandrup (Regional Programme Coordinator, UNFPA)

	Welcome and Opening Remarks
15:00 – 15:15	Ms. Ivana Zivkovic , Assistant Secretary General, Assistant Administrator and Director, UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS (tbc)
Moderated Presentations and Knowledge Sharing	
15:15 – 16:00	Question 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ms. Corina Ajder, State Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, Republic of Moldova• Mr. Mark Cassayre, Permanent Observer of the International Development Law Organization to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva, Switzerland• Q&A (15 Minutes)
16:00 – 16:45	Question 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr. Radim Sršeň, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Regional Development, Czech Republic• Mr. Mathieu Mori, Secretary General of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe• Q&A (15 minutes)
16:45 – 17:30	Question 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr. Michel Forst, UN Special Rapporteur on Environmental Defenders under the Aarhus Convention• Ms. Mariia Pihura, Youth Activist, Ukraine• Q&A (15 minutes)
17:30 – 17:50	Open Forum and Interventions from the Floor
17:50 – 18:00	Concluding remarks and closing

Organized by UNDP in collaboration with UNECE and other UN agencies.