



MONITORING AND REVIEW OF SDG 16 PLUS AT THE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL (2015-2020) IN ASIA

CSOs Perspective (Based on 13 Countries Case Studies from Asia)





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Foreword





While international processes around the 2030 Agenda to date have experienced unprecedented levels of engagement by civil society, and a growing involvement of civil society and grassroots communities at the regional level, a significant gap still remains in the national level. However, there has been a setback in terms of CSO engagement in this era of COVID-19 where the voices of the civil society have been muted, leading to a wide digital divide and further hindering the meaningful participation of the most marginalised sections of society. This is also a time where the collective efforts to present the experiences of particular groups grounded in the daily realities of their lives can be easily hindered by technological problems, or bypassed and skipped during virtual engagement processes.

The COVID pandemic has led to a backward slide in development processes and while it's difficult to measure the actual losses until a few years have passed but the reversal of SDGs progress across the region has been compounded by a growing trend towards worrying attack on human right defenders, stringent cyber security laws, shrinking democratic and civic space, an escalation in gender based violence and child trafficking, and illegal financial flows in this period of global lockdown. Alongside the implementation of restrictive measures linked to the pandemic, civil society has been campaigning to defend its legitimate space for civic participation. It has done this in various ways despite a tense political climate, and has worked to amplify peoples' voices and directly engage with local communities and constituencies who seeking transformative change.

This is also the time when many national governments have acknowledged the slow pace of data collection which has hampered the SDGs monitoring process. Civil society has been working tirelessly at the grassroots level, even during a time of pandemic, collecting and voicing real stories which make the case for a truly human rights-based, inclusive and Just approach to development as key to achieving the SDGs of the Agenda 2030. Such an approach would involve five transformational shifts: towards Redistributive Justice, Economic Justice, Gender and Social Justice, Ecological Justice and Accountability to People. Such transformational shifts also underscore the relevance of SDG 16 plus, which emphasizes the importance of recognising citizen-led data and indicators. ADA published a powerful report on SDG 16 & civic space with Forus in 2020 which focused on the continuing trend towards shrinking civic space and made a range of recommendations about the need to develop an expanded range of civic space indicators at global, regional and national levels.

As an integrated and mutually-reinforcing whole, SDG 16+ delivers on the promise of inclusive societies free from fear and violence. It embodies a transformative and catalytic shift— that peace and sustainable development are mutually reinforcing and dependent, and help ensure that the implementation of SDG 16+ is not forgotten amidst the health crisis created by the COVID-19. The role of citizens-led data and indicators to measure SDG 16+ could be a major breakthrough in the implementation of this goal, if accepted by governments and national statistical offices. This report, entitled '**Monitoring and Review of SDG 16 Plus at the National and Regional Level**', aims not only at looking at the gaps and challenges of SDG 16 plus implementation in Asia but also includes good practices that could help policy makers understand the perspectives of and priorities of the communities examined. The study is based on 12 country case studies from Asia with a special highlight on the coup in Myanmar and the struggle of people there to retain their belief in democracy. The study also aims to provide solutions and recommendations for national governments and for other institutions at regional and global level.

The report highlights that a human rights-based approach can both improve the identification of problems, but also pinpoint the most effective entry points for SDG implementation, monitoring and reporting. While such an approach aims to protect poor and marginalized people by emphasizing their rights, more work needs to be done to highlight good practices. The use of citizen-led data and other sources of unofficial data and indicators could be useful tools to monitor progress with SDGs implementation, especially at the local level.

National governments need to embrace participatory approaches and to deepen context analysis by including aspects of political economy that are related to local issues. This kind of context or situational analysis would assist by providing a better understanding of the programming environment



in a given country or area, including the power structures and relationships that may favour change or obstruct the achievement of the SDGs.

Steering Committee of ADA



Authors and Acknowledgements



Authors

Jyotsna Mohan, ADA

Deirdre De Burca, Forus

Claudia Villalona – TAP Network

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National Chapters

- VOICE, Bangladesh – Ahmed Swapan Mahmud, Zayed Ahmed Siddiki, Abtab Khan Shawon, Sadia Rahman
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- Voluntary Action Network India – Arjun Phillips
- Pakistan Development Alliance – Zia Ur Rahman
- Cooperation Committee of Cambodia – Sovanna Ry
- Management and Sustainable Development Institute (MSD) – Linh Pham, Left Noone Behind Vietnam (LNOB Vietnam) - Linh Nguyen
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- Myanmar – Tet Toe
- Care Lao PDR and CSO Network – Rumiko INOUE, Casey Morrison, Thongdom PHONGPICHIT
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- Urantsooj Gombosuren Mongolia – CSOs Network on SDGs
- ARGO- Civil Society Development Association, Kazakhstan - Kaisha Atakhanova and Madina Ibrasheva

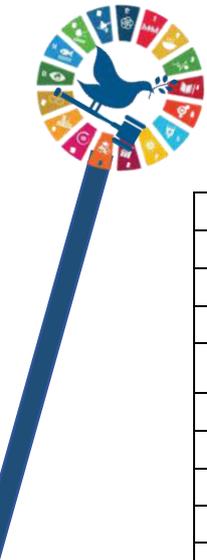


NGO Federation of Nepal
A National Federation of NGOs in Nepal



Acronyms & Abbreviations:

ACA	Anti-Corruption Agency
ADA	Asia Development Alliance
ADN	Asia Democracy Network
AGNA	Affinity Group of National Associations
A J & K	Azad Jammu & Kashmir
AML/CFT	Anti-money laundering and combating financing the terrorism
ANR	Afghan National Registration
APPGM SDG	All Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia on Sustainable Development Goals
APRCM	Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism
APA	Annual Performance Appraisals
APSD	Asia CSOs Partnership for Sustainable Development
A4SD	Action for Sustainable Development
AwazCDS	Awaz Centre for Development Services
BCG	Bacille Calmette-Guerin
BHUs	Basic Health Units
CCC	Cooperation Committee for Cambodia
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CLFSA	Comprehensive Food Security and Livelihood Assessment
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRTI	Coalition of Right to Information
CSDGs	Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CNICs	Computerized National Identity Cards
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease of 2019
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DSA	Digital Security Act
DoSM	Department of Statistics Malaysia
ECC	Economic Coordination Committee
ERD	Economic Relations Division
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
FATF	Financial Action Task Force
FBR	Federal Board of Revenue
FIA	Federal Investigation Authority
FY	For Year
GB	Gilgit Baltistan
GCAP	Global Call to Action against Poverty
GDP	Gross domestic product
GOB	Government of Bangladesh
GED	General Economic Division
GPI	Gender Parity Index
HRCP	Human Rights Commission of Pakistan
EmONC	Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care



GED	General Economics Division
GFI	Global Financial Integrity
GPeVAC	Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IHC	Islamabad High Court
IFF	Illicit Financial Flow
IHR	International Health Regulations
ILO	International Labor Organization
INFID	NGO Forum on Indonesian Development
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organizations
KMDF	Kathmandu Democracy Forum
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
LCCO	Lao CSO Coordination Office
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LGBTQ	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender
MERS-CoV	Middle East Respiratory Syndrome-related Coronavirus
MoHR	Ministry of Human Rights
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoUs	Memorandum of Understanding
MSD	Research Center for Management and Sustainable Development
MSDV	Mongolia Sustainable Development Vision
MSME	Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises
NAB	National Accountability Bureau
NADRA	National Database and Registration Authority
NAP	National Action Plan
NAPVAW	National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women
NCHR	National Commission for Human Rights
NCOC	National Command and Operation Center
NDMA	National Disaster Management Authority
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NGOF	The NGO Forum on Cambodia
NJPMC	National Judicial Policy Making Committee
NMDs	Newly Merged Districts
NoCs	Non Objection Certificates
NDP	No Detention Policy
NPC	National Planning Commission
NSC	National Security Committee
NSEDP	National Socio-Economic Development Plan
NSO	National Statistics Office
OGP	Open Government Partnership
OPD	Out Patient Department
PBA	Pakistan Banks Association
PCHR	Parliamentarians Commission for Human Rights
PDA	Pakistan Development Alliance
PECA	Prevention of Electronic Crime Act
PHEIC	Public Health Emergency of International Concern
PKRs	Pakistani Rupees



PM	Prime Minister
PoEs	Privately owned Enterprises
PoR	Proof of Registration
PPEs	Personal Protection Equipment
PPR TWG	Planning and Poverty Reduction Technical Working Group
PWSN	Persons with Specific Needs
PWDs	Person With Disability
RHCs	Rural Health Centers
RTE	Right to Education
RTI	Right to Information
SARS-CoV	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus
SBP	State Bank of Pakistan
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEDA	Social & Economic Development Association
SIPAS	Satisfaction Index of Public Administration Services
SIR	SDG Implementation Review
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
SRH	Sexual & Reproductive Health
SSP	Social service Procurement
TAP	Transparency Accountability and Partnerships
TB	Tuberculosis
TGs	Transgenders
TV	Television
TBML	Trade-based money laundering
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UN	United Nation's
UN ECOSOC	United Nation's Economic & Social Council
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNGA	General Assembly of the United Nations
UNGP	United Nations Guiding Principles
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
USR	University Social Responsibility
UXO	Unexploded Ordinance
VNR	Voluntary National Review
VDPF	Vietnam Development Partnership Forum
WHO	World Health Organization



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Overview:

This report entitled “**Monitoring and Review of SDG 16 Plus at the National and Regional Level (2015-2020) in Asia**” by the Asian regional CSO Platform called [Asia Development Alliance](#) has been co-authored by 13 CSO coalition members of ADA from which are : [Voluntary Action Network India](#) [AwazCDS-Pakistan](#), [NGO Federation of Nepal](#), [Voices for Interactive Choice & Empowerment](#), Bangladesh,

[Cooperation Committee for Cambodia \(CCC\)](#), Malaysian CSO-SDG Alliance, [Care, Laos](#), [Management and Sustainable Development Institute \(MSD\)](#), [Taiwan Alliance in International Development \(Taiwan AID\)](#), [Japan Civil Society Network on SDGs](#)

[\(SDGs Japan\)](#), Mongolian CSOs Network on SDGs, and [Civil Society Development Association “Argo”, Kazakhstan](#). The report has a special mention of Myanmar in the context to military coup and deteriorating state of affairs in the country.

The report provides an overview of country level actions and progress on SDG 16+ across South, South East , North East and Central Asian regions that highlights key trends and findings on SDG 16+ growth and monitoring over the last five years (2015-2021) . The report has been informed by a series of regional CSO’s consultations during the last 3 years and draws from citizen’s led data and the official national statistics across SDG 16+ targets.

Thank you [Forus](#) and [TAP Network](#) for special contributions

Methodology

The information in this report has been gathered and analysed following the call for contributions from the ADA members and partners and once the contributors expressed their commitments , 4 capacity building workshops were organised in late 2021 and early 2021 on SDGs by ADA and later a series of webinars to share and solicit inputs on each country report. The country reports were prepared using available secondary level official data sources apart from using open data sources including the ‘citizen’s led data’ to highlight the growth of SDG 16+ implementation and monitoring over the period of 6 years (2015-2021)

About ADA :

A ground-breaking regional network, the Asia Development Alliance (ADA), empowers civil society and is a catalyst for social change. It brings together 30 national CSO platforms representing over 10 , 000 organisations from South, South East, North East and Central Asia.

The Asia Development Alliance (ADA) was established on 2 February 2013 at the founding assembly in Bangkok, Thailand to represent the national CSO platforms in Asia and serve as key connector to governments, UN organisations and other stakeholders and to create a strong enabling environment for civil society organisations and the rights of citizens for action and participation.

As a legitimate catalyst and representative of the voice of the CSOs from across Asia, ADA works to strengthen the capacities of civil society to ensure the effective and efficient participation of civil society actors in official negotiations. ADA also advocates for an enabling environment for civil society organisations in the context of continued shrinking civic space to influence public policy at the national, regional and international level.

ADA has been doing strong advocacy through its reports and position papers on CSOs’ engagement in the VNR process since last four years and Goal 16+ by being part of regional networks like APRCEM, ADN, APSD and Global networks like Forus, A4SD, TAP Network, CIVICUS, AGNA , UN2020 and other like minded organizations besides engaging with the UN at the regional and the global level. In the past ADA produced SDG 16 themed reports , [Empowering Civil Society for National Reporting and Action on SDG16 Report](#) (2019) and [Realising the potential of Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda](#) (2020) apart from SDGs Training toolkit called [GALA Toolkit](#) (2019), [Toolkit for National CSO Coalition Building](#) (2019) and [Privacy Online Guide](#) (2021)



Chapter I



1.1. Global Overview

1.2. The importance of SDG 16 + to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and promoting and protecting civic space globally , Forus

1.2.1. Introduction

SDG 16 is the “Peaceful Just and Inclusive Societies” pillar of the 2030 Agenda. The concept of SDG 16 + grew out of the recognition by many stakeholders of the important and wide-ranging interlinkages of SDG 16 with many other SDGs. For this reason, the implementation of SDG 16 + has the potential to catalyse the implementation of the 2030 Agenda as a integrated and mutually reinforcing whole. The focus of SDG 16 + is on enhancing government accountability, building trust and sustaining peace – these conditions are essential if the 2030 Agenda is to be successfully implemented. SDG 16 + also uplifts the human rights agenda and makes it clear that sustainable development cannot be achieved without ensuring civil and political rights.

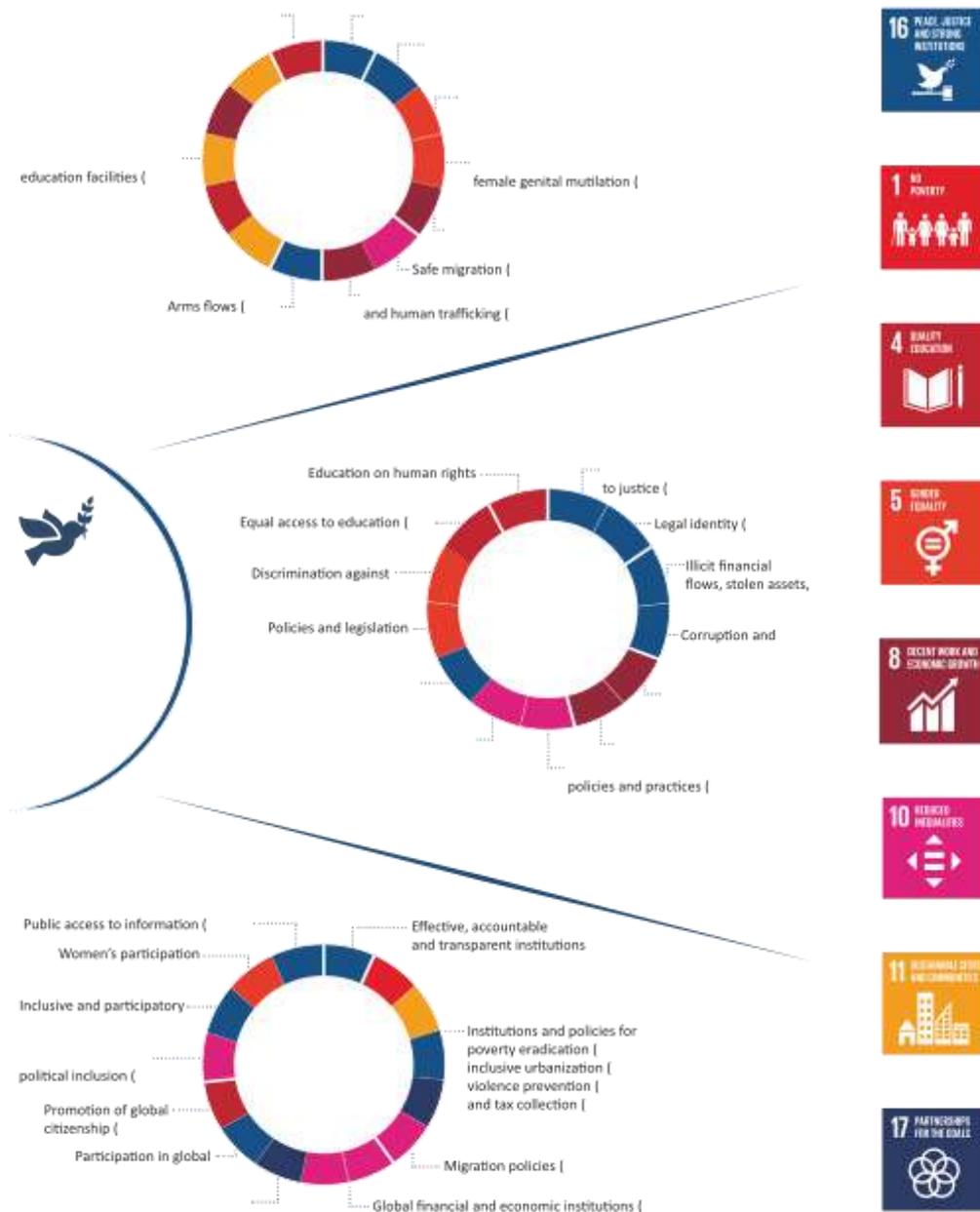
The SDG 16+ framework provides countries with a rights-based approach to tackling the drivers of suffering that affords dignity and agency to those left behind. It addresses patterns of exclusion, structural and institutional constraints and unequal power relations that produce and reproduce patterns of exclusion, marginalization, inequality and suffering over generations. SDG 16+ requires countries to support legal, policy, institutional and other measures to dismantle harmful gender and other stereotypes and to promote equality and non-discrimination. **It also requires free, active and meaningful participation, particularly of women and girls,** as stake- holders in subsequent review processes to ensure accountability and gender responsive remedies for rights violations¹.

Furthermore, SDG 16 + has led to the area of governance receiving much greater attention where official UN statistics are concerned. The reality is that there are a limited number of existing international standards defining the measurement of governance. This became clear during the first four-year cycle of SDG implementation globally. Few countries and national statistical offices have experience in producing governance data, or in establishing the type of inclusive systems needed to monitor and report on governance, peace and security. There has also been a significant missed opportunity to date to use data and information produced for other relevant reporting processes, including for human rights mechanisms, to report on issues related to SDG16+), Citizen- led and generated data also needs to be explored and recognized by the government.

¹ Global alliance, SDG 16+Report , 2019



Figure 1 SDG 16+ Targets and Synergies



Source: Pathfinders, www.sdg16.plus

1.2.2. Civic Space

It is essential that sufficient civic space is available for civil society around the world to enable it to fulfil the role envisaged for it as part of a multi-stakeholder approach to the implementation, follow up and review of the universal 2030 Agenda. As the former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has stated, ‘according space to civil society is not optional’ since for most countries human rights are part of internationally agreed upon obligations.¹⁹

The term civic space describes the space required for people to exercise their basic civil and political rights and fundamental freedoms. The CIVICUS Monitor <https://monitor.civicus.org> (defines civic



space as “ a set of universally-accepted rules, which allow people to organise, participate and communicate with each other freely and without hindrance, and in doing so, influence the political and social structures around them”..

The CIVICUS Monitor reports that today, only 3.4% of the world’s population lives in countries with **Open** civic space., while 9.3 % live in countries with Narrowed civic space, 18.3% in countries with Obstructed civic space , 43.4% live in countries with Repressed civic space and 25.4% in countries with Closed civic space. The CIVICUS Monitor currently rates 42 countries as **Open**, 40 rated as **Narrowed**, 47 rated as **Obstructed**, 44 rated as **Repressed** and 23 rated as **Closed**.

In 2021 CIVICUS reports that over the past year, civil society across the world has faced a variety of legal and extra-legal restrictions. The top ten violations captured by the CIVICUS Monitor 2020 include : **(i)** Protestors detained **(ii)** Harassment **(iii)** Censorship **(iv)** Detention **(v)** Attacks on Journalists **(vi)** Protest Disruption **(vii)** Restrictive Laws **(viii)** Journalists detained **(ix)** Excessive Force used **(x)** Human Rights Defenders Detained. Technology advances have brought increased surveillance on civil society and creates new risks for civic space.

1.2.3. The role of SDG 16 + in promoting civic space

SDG 16 of the 2030 Agenda is the SDG that relates most directly to the issue of civic space. SDG 16 targets include the development of inclusive, participatory and representative decision- making at all levels and the protection of fundamental freedoms in accordance with international human rights standards and national human rights laws. Target 16.10 of Goal 16 commits states to: “*Ensure access to public information and protect fundamental freedoms*” These freedoms include fundamental rights to associate, assemble peacefully and to express views and opinions. These civil and political rights are protected in international agreements and national legislation in many countries and are integral to the concepts of “civic space” and an “enabling environment” for civil society.

Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda therefore can serve as an important lever to support civil society’s attempts to create and defend civic space, and to enable CSOs everywhere to be effective in monitoring and implementing the agenda (See Forus/ADA Report on “[Realising the Promise of SDG 16 to promote and protect civic space](#)” It is essential that sufficient civic space is available for civil society around the world to enable it to fulfil the role envisaged for it as part of a multi-stakeholder approach to the implementation, follow up and review of the universal 2030 Agenda. As the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has stated, ‘*According space to civil society is not optional’ since for most countries human rights are part of internationally agreed upon obligations*”

However, despite the clear aim of Target 16.10 to protect fundamental freedoms, existing global-level indicators adopted to date by the international community to assess progress do not adequately measure the extent to which these basic freedoms are being protected. Unfortunately, the VNRs submitted by UN Member States between the years 2016-2020 have not addressed the issue of closing civic space or how the challenges and systemic barriers facing civil society in achieving the SDGs are being tackled. Between these years, VNR reports have been largely silent on this issue despite increasing calls for action by civil society organizations and others around the world to address the deteriorating human rights situation in many countries and protect human rights defenders and environmentalists.



1.2.4. Leveraging SDG 16 + to strengthen civic space

Civil society must be proactive in advocating for adequate civic space at multiple levels to allow it to play its part in realising the 2030 Agenda's positive vision of multi-stakeholder participation. SDG 16 of the 2030 Agenda can provide important leverage for civil society everywhere in its efforts to create and defend civic space, and to be more effective in monitoring and implementing the agenda.

The UN Secretary General's VNR guidelines has just been updated in January 2021 and they bring some stronger language on participation, inclusivity, accountability as well as national human rights institutions and their role in the VNR reporting (which is often not fully explored) :

https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/27171SG_Guidelines_2021.final.pdf

The Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights identified public participation and civic space as one of the key areas to focus the UN's attention. Under the overall aspiration of the Call to Action, the newly adopted UN Guidance Note on the Protection and Promotion of Civic Space emphasizes that more strategic and effective civic space action hinges on stepping up work around the "3 Ps": Participation of civil society in UN processes, Protection of civil society actors through clear protocols and procedures, and Promotion of civic space and participation in national decision-making processes, both online and offline.

1.3. Building Back Better: SDG16+ as a Blueprint for Recovery , TAP Network

The [Transparency, Accountability, and Participation \(TAP\) Network](#) is a broad international coalition of civil society organizations (CSOs) working together to advance SDG16+ to promote peace, justice, and inclusive societies, and to help enhance accountability for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The TAP Network includes hundreds of civil society organizations operating in every region of the world, with TAP's work evolving to not only coordinate collective global advocacy on behalf of its members, but to also provide indirect or direct support to its members to advance SDG16+ and SDG accountability in their own contexts.

The intrinsic link between SDG16+ and SDG accountability underpins all of TAP's core work, with the strength and unique added-value of TAP lying in its global leadership to mobilize, coordinate and empower civil society stakeholders around the convergence of these issues at all levels. TAP's work also asserts that the efforts to deliver on the SDGs require participatory and inclusive institutions that are accountable to the very people that the 2030 Agenda pledges to "leave no one behind."

Serving as a platform to bring together a wide range of civil society experts and activists, TAP works to help empower partners by providing groundbreaking and innovative capacity building tools and programs, and also learns from and benefits from the invaluable expertise, experiences and unique perspectives of its members. Our flagship resources include the [Goal 16 Advocacy Toolkit](#) (released in 2016 and currently under revision), the [SDG Accountability Handbook](#) and the [Mainstreaming SDG16: Using the VNRs to Advance More Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies](#) published in partnership with the UNDP Global Alliance. More information on our tools and resources can be found here: <https://tapnetwork2030.org/tools-resources/>

TAP also advocates for civil society at the global level and in partnership with a diverse set of stakeholders to build a broad movement for SDG16+ and SDG Accountability. In addition to [a variety of partnerships and initiatives](#), TAP launched [the Campaign for a Decade of Accountability for the SDGs](#)-- multi-stakeholder partnership mobilizing accountability actors from a wide range of sectors to support accountability for the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. In 2019, TAP actively participated in drafting the [Rome Civil Society Declaration on SDG16+](#), which outlines key messages, recommendations, and



a broad call-to-action from civil society collectively around SDG16+. TAP's work seeks to advance and address the recommendations and action plan outlined in the declaration.

Much has changed since the adoption of the SDGs, with the world facing a convergence of slow-burning crises, and acute crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Civil society, in particular, faces existential challenges in many contexts. As we enter this new phase of SDGs implementation, the work of the TAP Network and civil society more broadly becomes more important than ever, to push back on these disturbing trends, and to help ensure accountability for the SDGs at all levels.

1.3.1. The state of the world in the midst of a continuing crisis

Looking back over the first five years of the 2030 Agenda, the world's progress towards realizing the SDGs has not been encouraging. As highlighted in the [Rome Civil Society Declaration on SDG16+](#) even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the international community finds itself well behind in its goals to achieve the 2030 Agenda – with SDG16 progress stagnating or even backsliding on many fronts, and in many countries around the world. With the emergence of the global health crisis exacerbated by governments' dismal response, we have since witnessed an exponential downward trend around the implementation of the SDGs as key actors shifted their focus to responding accordingly²

What has been clear since the onset of the pandemic is that in order to fully overcome this crisis we must frame our response and recovery through the framework of SDG16+. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the deepening cracks that have emerged in society, only serving to magnify the deep inequalities that exist on many fronts while highlighting weaknesses in institutions that have been chronically under-funded and under-supported over past years or even decades.

The pandemic has also underscored the critical accountability relationship between a state and its citizens, with government responsiveness to its citizens more important than ever before. The current reality accentuated by the global public health crisis underscores the need to accelerate progress on SDG16+ around peaceful, just and inclusive societies, and indeed, highlights that progress towards SDG16+ is a prerequisite to advancing gains to push back this global pandemic in communities around the world.

During the first-ever virtual HLPF in July of 2020, the SDG16+ Global Community released a joint call to action calling on the urgent need for the global community to remain steadfast to realizing the commitments made in the 2030 Agenda and SDG16. The [“Act Now on SDG16+”](#) statement calls on governments, the international community and leaders to “urgently make SDG16+ the foundation for reset and recovery efforts, and for building more resilient societies and institutions going forward.” To express support and become a signatory, complete the form [here](#).

The hard work of scientists working tirelessly around the world have yielded the development of several new vaccines, offering hope for an eventual end to the pandemic. As some countries begin the early phases of the vaccine rollout, we find ourselves at a critical turning point in which the global community must work towards leaving no one behind in the vaccine distribution while also forging resilient communities for the future. While many citizens have found themselves frustrated with their government's weak response throughout this crisis, in the midst of this turning point, there is a critical need for transparency and comprehensive accountability for those in power. Ultimately, leveraging SDG16+ is the key to ensure an effective, inclusive, and just recovery and rebuilding – a necessity even more evident in conflict-affected and fragile states³.

² <https://impakter.com/covid-19-and-conflict-is-peace-the-cure/>

³ <https://impakter.com/covid-19-and-conflict-is-peace-the-cure/>



1.3.2. Why SDG16+?

Strong, transparent, and accountable governments, a key element to SDG16+, paves the way for a more effective public health response “rooted in trust and social cohesion”⁴. Trust in public institutions also allows for a fair allocation of key resources and crisis relief to the most vulnerable—paramount to an effective response to the pandemic. Fragile states plagued by pervasive conflict, violence, poverty, inequality, and poor public services are extremely vulnerable to the widespread and compounding repercussions of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

All government emergency responses, regardless of institutional capacity, must take on a “peace-building” approach to avoid potential sources of conflict, while ensuring an inclusive and just crisis response that takes into account the societal cleavages and needs of vulnerable communities. An SDG 16+ – centered approach, that addresses the disproportionate health and socioeconomic effects of the crisis on the most marginalized in our societies, presents the most effective strategy to delivering an effective public health response as it mitigates the pandemic’s potential to deepen exclusion and inequality and inflame sources of conflict⁵. A testament to this fact is the recent mobilizations against police brutality and white supremacy around the world. As a result of a poor public health response, the black community in the United States has disproportionately endured the acute consequences of the pandemic, effectively deepening the existing fault lines of marginalization and inequality.

The degree to which governments and public institutions are accountable to their populations, providing an inclusive response under girded by the commitment of “justice for all,” will determine the outcomes of this crisis⁶. Historical precedence has demonstrated the potential for crises to be exploited for political gain and the suppression of opposition. The propensity for exploitative anti-democratic forces to take advantage of crisis further underscores the need for accountable, inclusive and transparent institutions. Consequently, we must be vigilant to “defend and strengthen our institutions” through the lens of SDG16+.

To effectively manage the crisis there must be a focus on good governance, inclusivity, and “justice for all.” In other words, an SDG16+ approach would “reduce the spill-over effects of this pandemic,” ensuring that the public health crisis does not generate secondary effects of conflict and socioeconomic instability⁷.

1.3.3. An Opportunity to “Build Back Better” through an SDG16+ approach

While the challenges of the pandemic have permeated nearly every aspect of our lives, we are also confronted with an opportunity to build back better than before and create the future we want. As the Secretary-General António Guterres stated, “We must act in solidarity and turn this crisis into an impetus to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”⁸.

Forging a vaccine distribution guided by the principle of universality and the commitment to leave no one behind is one concrete way we can ensure that we build back better through the lens of SDG16+. However, we have already seen small countries and the majority of the global south denied access to the vaccine. Even in countries in the process of vaccinating their population, vulnerable and

⁴ [Ibid](#)

⁵ [Ibid](#)

⁶ <https://medium.com/sdg16plus/sdg16-the-key-to-managing-the-covid-19-crisis-f3f5cb577699>

⁷ [Ibid](#)

⁸ <https://www.un.org/en/un-coronavirus-communications-team/un-working-fight-covid-19-and-achieve-global-goals>



marginalized communities continue to be disproportionately excluded. Not only does this betray the principles of the 2030 Agenda, from a public health standpoint, a short-sided, inequitable vaccine distribution would only fuel the development of dangerous variants that could threaten the effectiveness of vaccines' ability to counter the virus, ultimately undermining the effort to bring an end to the pandemic.

Using SDG16+ as a road map, we can build more resilient societies that are better prepared to confront the existential global challenges. We must also demand more accountable public institutions while forging more peaceful, inclusive and just societies to break cycles of conflict in the long term. In the midst of this turning point after over a year of a worldwide public health crisis, we must double down on our commitment to SDG16+ and the 2030 Agenda, not only to salvage the global goals and ensure no one is left behind but also to create a more resilient and sustainable future⁹.

⁹ <https://medium.com/sdg16plus/sdg16-the-key-to-managing-the-covid-19-crisis-f3f5cb577699>.



Chapter II



2.1. Regional Overview

2.1.1. SDG 16 Plus - Whole of Society approach

SDG 16 Plus is both an outcome and enabler of sustainable development. Its overarching objectives are to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and to build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. While the targets of SDG 16 Plus touch on distinct issues, they are closely linked across the whole set of SDGs mentioned in the paragraphs in the earlier section; there is an opportunity for increased recognition of its contribution to advancing other SDGs and the 2030 Agenda as a whole. As with the rest of the agenda, while governments have a leading role to play, the achievement of SDG 16 Plus requires a whole-of-society approach.

‘Civil society organizations (CSOs) are involved in multiple ways, as implementers and advocates of underrepresented parts of the population such as women, youth, and marginalized groups and watchdogs. The private sector can also make an important contribution to peacebuilding, inclusion, advancing the rule of law and eliminating corruption, which are fundamental for creating an environment conducive to development where business can thrive. Local governments, parliamentarians, CSOs and academia are also critical stakeholders in the implementation of SDG 16 and the 2030 Agenda. Global and regional organizations have an important role to play in achieving SDG 16. They can provide support, expertise and knowledge products, and bring together best practices and lessons learned to the operational levels, to better inform all stakeholders for a better, effective, collaborative and coordinated decision-making process’¹⁰.

The reports below aims at sharing the whole of society approaches taken by the national reports

For example, in **Bangladesh** the ‘SDGs Implementation and Monitoring Committee’ has been formed at the Prime Minister’s Office to facilitate and implementation of SDGs Action Plan. The General Economics Division of Planning Commission under the Ministry of Planning is the SDG Focal Point in charge of the implementation of the national SDG implementation process. Besides, the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister is the Convener of the ‘SDG Implementation and Monitoring Committee’ and the General Economics Division (GED) is the Secretariat. A number of measures have been undertaken for the implementation of SDGs in Bangladesh up to 2030, including mapping of ministries, data gap analysis, formation of *National Monitoring & Evaluation Framework, aligning all the national plans, including the 7th five years plan with the SDGs.*

Bangladesh has introduced Annual Performance Agreement (APA), a results-based performance management system, across the whole public sector assessing individual and ministries’/ agencies’ performance.

Civil Society Initiatives: A national level “Citizen’s Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh” has been set up on 18 June 2016 focusing on the implementation process of the SDGs in Bangladesh.¹³ The objective of the national platform is to contribute to the delivery of the SDGs and enhance accountability in the process.

In **Nepal**, National Planning Commission (NPC) is the official body in Nepal to coordinate with line ministries, government authorities, civil society and private sectors for the successful implementation of the SDGs. The NPC organized series of public consultations and collaborative work of the multi

¹⁰ Democracy and Peacebuilding in the Framework of SDG 16+ Policy Recommendations from an Interregional and Multistakeholder Approach, International IDEA Discussion Paper 1/2020, <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/democracy-and-peacebuilding-in-the-framework-of-sdg-16-policy-recommendations.pdf>



stakeholder working groups on SDGs and approved for Nepal the 16 goals (except SDG 14), 158 targets and 479 indicators (including 245 national indicators). **On SDG 16, Nepal has shown commitment to fulfil all the globally accepted 12 targets and 23 indicators.**

In India, with the passing of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 (hereafter RTE), elementary education for every child between 6 and 14 became a Fundamental right in India, hence legally enforceable. It provisioned for schools within a kilometer from homes with good infrastructure (water, electricity, toilets, playground etc.), trained teachers, a standard teacher-student ratio, No Detention Policy (NDP) and an inclusive environment free of fear and anxiety for all children to learn in an equitable and democratic manner¹¹.

In case of **Lao PDR**, the country has made some progress in improving the lives of women and girls. Near gender parity for primary school attendance (GPI of 0.99) has been achieved, and **women hold 27.52% of the seats in national parliament, a higher number than the world average**. Moreover, the amended Labor Law in 2013 prohibits discrimination in hiring and firing of women due to pregnancy or maternity status. However, There are limited national data on the participation of **people with disabilities** at the national and local level, but existing evidence suggests that people with disabilities face significant challenges in this area. In its concluding observations, the Committee of the ICCPR raises concerns regarding the barring of persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities from political participation. Moreover, a study conducted by SNV and Humanity & Inclusion in Savannaket Province shows that people with disabilities may be excluded from decision-making processes at the village level as well¹². Three village heads interviewed for this study noted that they rarely invited people with disabilities to their meetings, which are conducted between one to three times per month. Women with disabilities in the study group face double discrimination, and were less likely than men with disabilities to attend meetings and training activities. More research and data are needed to understand the scope and depth of discrimination in participation experienced by people with disabilities in Lao PDR

In **Malaysia**, the government undertook a mapping of the development thrust with the SDGs and from the rest of development plan cycle (2016-2020)¹³ the government altered the thrust to six pillars with an emphasis on institutional reform consistent SDG 16. The six pillars mapped to SDGs are:-

Table 1 – Six Pillars Mapped in SDGs , Malaysia

PILLARS	THEMES	MAPPING SDGs
1	Reforming governance towards greater transparency & enhance efficiency of public service	SDG 11, 16
2	Enhancing inclusive development & wellbeing	SDG 1,2,3,5,9,10,11,16
3	Pursing balanced regional development	SDG 6,7,8,9,10,11,16
4	Empowering human capital	SDG 4, 8
5	Enhancing environmental sustainability through green growth	SDG 6,7,12,13,14,15
6	Strengthening Economic Growth	SDG 2,6,8,9,14,16 &17

The strong commitment of **Vietnam** to the 2030's Agenda is reflected in the Decision No. 622/QD-TTg in the National Action Plan for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

¹¹ <https://www.vaniindia.org/admin-latest/images/India%20and%20G20%20Analyzing%20Development%20Policy%20Priorities.pdf>

¹² SNV in Lao PDR. *Understanding factors that affect people with disability in having access to WASH facilities and services in three districts, Savannakhet province* (Vientiane, Lao PDR: SNV in Lao PDR, 2020).

¹³ <https://www.pmo.gov.my/dokumenattached/RMK/RMKe-11Book.pdf>



(SDG NAP). Although SDG 16 Plus is known as a new concept in the 2030's Agenda implementation in Vietnam, under the SDG NAP, the efforts of Vietnam in achieving 3 pillars (peace, justice and inclusion) of the 2030's Agenda are expressed in five policies and mechanisms¹ to deliver SDG 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 16, and 17 which are integrated in SDG 16 Plus. To ensure the transparency and accountability, Vietnam government has issued main documents creating a legal basis for SDG Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). The government has set up national working groups for further implementation of the plan, including a governance group working specifically on SDG16. For instance, the lead agency for target 16.1, 16.2, 16.4 is the Ministry of Public Security (MOPS), for targets 16.2.a, 4.5, 5.1, 5.2, 8.7, 8.8 is the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), for target 16.5 is Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), for target 16.7, 16.8, 16.9 is The Ministry of Justice (MOJ). Moreover, to enhance coordination and cooperation among stakeholders in SDG implementation, numerous forums and dialogues are organized annually, notably the National Conference on Sustainable Development, Business Forum on Sustainable Development and Vietnam Development Partnership Forum (VDPF). Additionally, The UN SDG Technical Working Group was established to cooperate with the GOVN in implementing the 2030 Agenda. Vietnam decided to do the annual report on SDG implementation since 2018.

Thanks to the campaigns of CSOs, the Presidential Office's Human Rights Consultative Committee made a resolution leading the MOI of **Taiwan** in 2013 to begin to promote the ICERD. The Executive Yuan in 2021 will launch four operations which are "(1) reviewing laws and regulations on its compliance with the ICERD, (2) education and training, including teacher training, training materials and agency courses, (3) the national report on ICERD and international review, (4) promotion, including website construction, advocacy operations¹⁴."

Localizing SDGs and Whole of Society Approach in Japan

According to Hamamatsu City Plan for Human Right Policy Promotion, in order to prevent child abuse and for improved early detection and response, personnel are actively put in place including social workers, clinical therapists, and public health nurses, aiming to expand support based on more expert knowledge and techniques, and as part of measures to provide family care environments for victims of child abuse, the city is raising public awareness on its foster parent system (giving lectures at companies and universities, holding salons and training for foster parents) and providing support to foster parents.

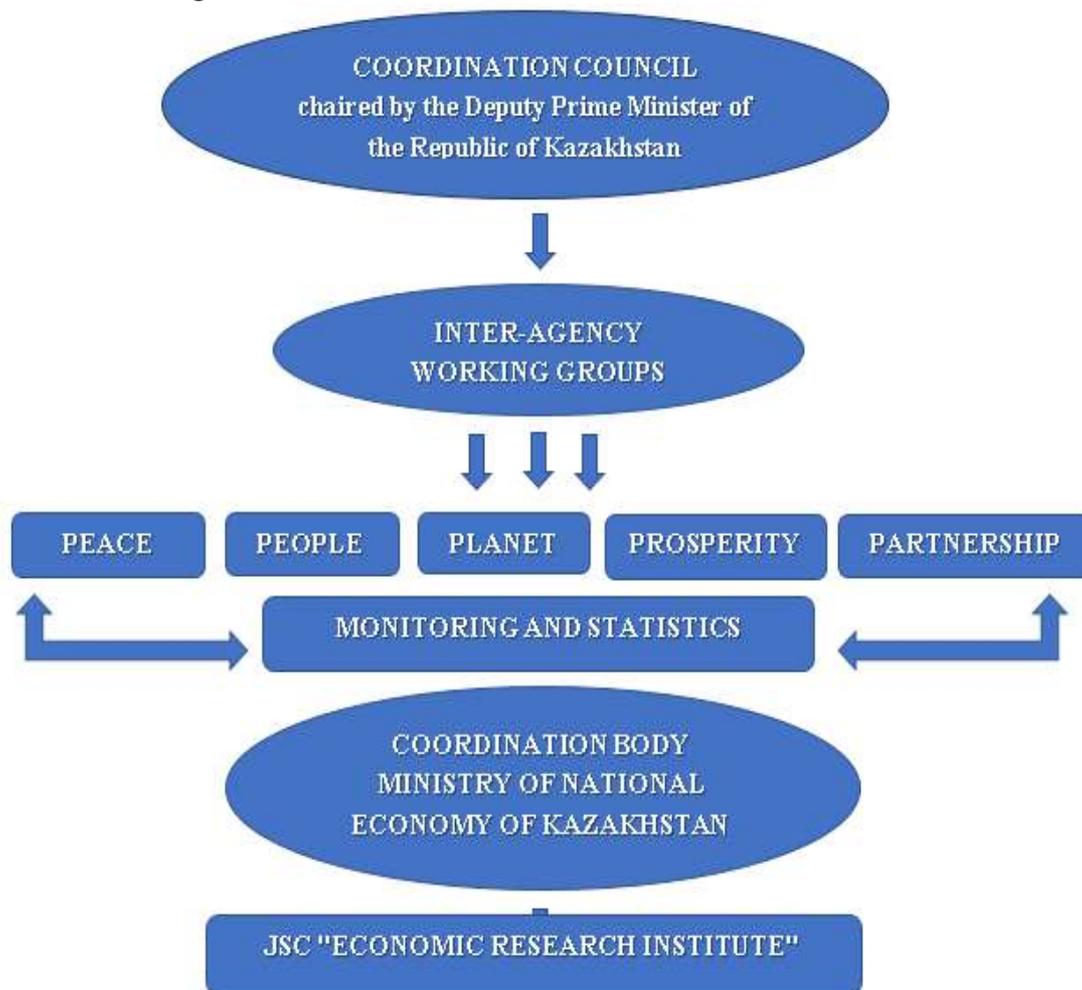
The **Japanese** government released the **National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (NAP)¹⁵ on 16 October 2020 after the declaration of developing NAP following the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) in 2016.** In the process of developing the NAP, the Baseline Study Opinion Exchange on Business and Human Rights was established. The Opinion Exchange Meeting was held to review the current status of Japan's legal system and initiatives regarding the protection and implementation of human rights in the business sector.

In **Kazakhstan**, the SDG national framework is coordinated by the Prime-Minister of Kazakhstan, which by itself justifies the political will and commitment of the country to implement the 2030 Agenda priorities.

¹⁴ Covenants Watch (人權公約監督施行聯盟), 2002, *2020 Parallel Report* (《2020平行報告》), https://covenantswatch.org.tw/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/CW_2020-parallel-report-on-ICCPR-and-ICESCR_online_EN_REV.1.pdf, pp. 35-36, retrieved on 2020/12/15.

¹⁵ <https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000455152.pdf>

Figure 2 - National SDGs Coordination Scheme - Kazakhstan



2.1.2. Challenges

Sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security; and peace and security will be at risk without sustainable development. As with the rest of the 2030 Agenda, while governments have a leading role to play, the achievement of SDG 16 depends on a whole-of-society approach. Civil society organizations are involved in multiple ways, as implementers and as advocates for underrepresented parts of the population such as women, youth and marginalized groups. For its part, the private sector can also make an important contribution to efforts towards peacebuilding, inclusion, advancing the rule of law and eliminating corruption as fundamental to creating an environment conducive to development where business can thrive. Local governments, parliamentarians and the academia are other critical stakeholders in the implementation of SDG 16 and the 2030 Agenda as a whole¹⁶.

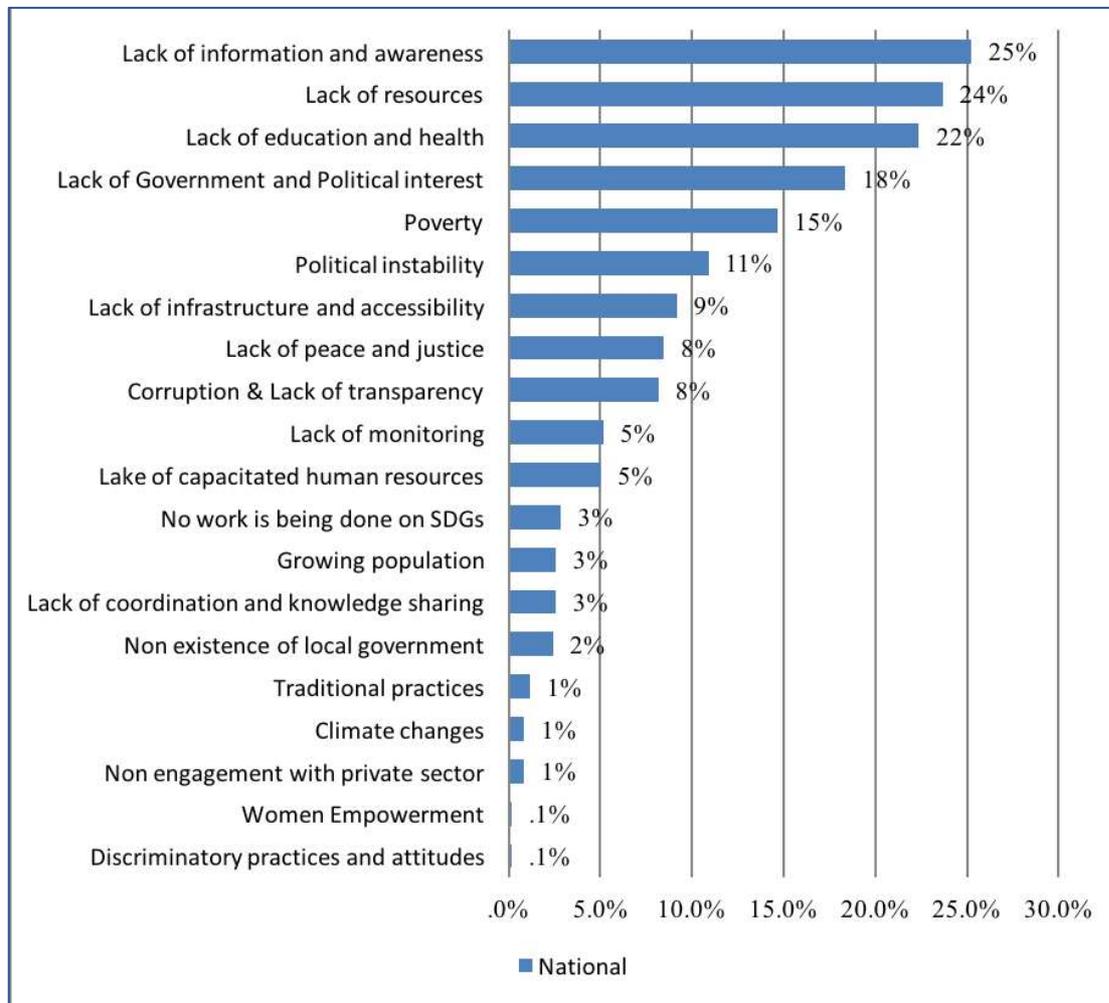
In **Pakistan**, recently the Auditor General submitted the audit report on SDGs at the Public Accounts Committee. The report shares embezzlements in 24 billion rupees fund allocated for the implementation of SDGs in September 2017. None of the Parliamentarians neither from treasury nor from the opposition raised any query on this mismanagement because of their lack of understanding on the nature of utilization of these funds.

¹⁶ https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23672BN_SDG16_LV.pdf



The below table share multiple and chronic challenges for achieving SDGs at district levels as described by the respondents. On average 25% respondents consider lack of information and awareness as one of the major challenge to achieve SDGs.

Graph 1 – Challenges and Difficulties to Achieve SDGs at District Level - Pakistan¹⁷



In **Lao PDR**, recent national data shows that the poorest households, who are mostly concentrated in rural areas, have not benefited equally from the country's economic growth¹⁸. Table 2 below shows the parity index for bottom/top wealth quintiles for various targets of SDG 16 Plus.

¹⁷ Awaz CDS/PDA's CLM-VNR SDGs Survey 2019, The Grapg depicts the percentage of multiple responses of 1294 participants of survey who attended the stakeholder's consultations on SDGs VNR process held in 42 Districts across Pakistan

¹⁸ Lao Statistics Bureau, *Lao Social Indicator Survey II 2017, Survey Findings Report* (Vientiane, Lao PDR: Lao Statistics Bureau and UNICEF, 2018)

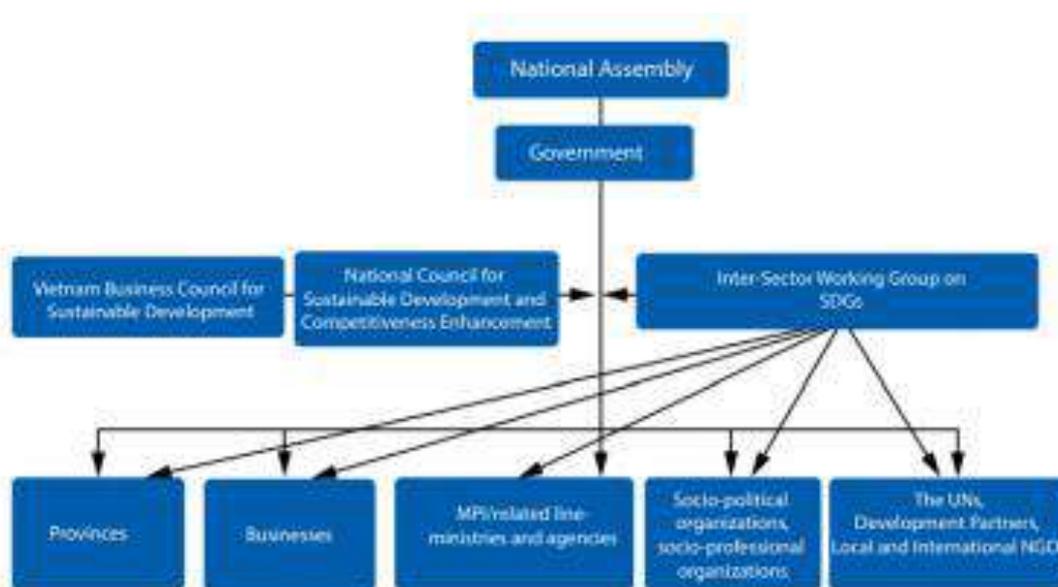


Table 2: Parity index bottom/top wealth quintiles for various SDG 16 Plus targets - LPDR¹⁹

Indicator	Parity Index (Bottom/Top)
1.b: Health insurance coverage for women	0.05
1.b: Health insurance coverage for men	0.05
1.b: Proportion of households who have ever received economic assistance	0.44
1.b: Received any social transfer or benefits in the last 3 months	0.44
4.5: Primary school enrolment	0.79
4.5: Lower secondary school enrolment	0.30
4.5: Upper secondary school enrolment	0.11
8.8: Economic activity considered as child labour for children age 5-11	1.33
8.8: Economic activity considered as child labour for children age 12-14	2.10
11.1: Access to improved source of drinking water	0.59
11.1: Access to improved type of sanitation facility	0.25
16.9: Birth registered with a civil authority	0.58

The level of participation of multi-stakeholders in **Vietnam** remains at the level 2 – the consultative step, which means that non-state actors are given space to voice their concerns and share their knowledge and expertise, but separately from the government’s works. The positive aspect is that the government can benefit from available information and data from a variety of non-state actor groups, however, if concerns and/or advice provided by these actors do not go beyond the meeting room, mechanisms at this level will end up being part of a symbolic participation.

Figure 3: Institutional arrangement for SDG implementation in Viet Nam²⁰



In **Taiwan**, the government need to put more efforts , especially on enactment of the Anti-Discrimination Act (《反歧視法》). The Anti-Discrimination Act should not be a declarative law that can not be really enforced. It is supposed to be the one that can clarify the various discriminations,

¹⁹ Lao Statistics Bureau, *Lao Social Indicator Survey II 2017*

²⁰ Viet Nam’s voluntary national review on the implementation of the sustainable development goals (2018)



regulate the duties of the authorities in combatting the discriminations and provide judicial remedies. Since the discriminated targets are not only the lower social status groups but also Indigenous Nations, SE migrant workers/immigrants and LGBTQ, the MOI, the Council of Indigenous Peoples, the Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Immigration, and the Gender Equality Committee of Executive Yuan need to be the active parties in the enactment process. In addition, the relevant groups, unions, and associations also need to be invited to take part in the legalization process. In all, the authorities need to fully shoulder the responsibility to do the job

In **Japan**, many human rights and governance problems addressed by Goal 16 stem from a lack of inclusiveness and participation in policy and decision making, and a lack of transparency, openness and accountability in governmental institutions. Policy making in Japan is exclusively dominated by government bureaucrats, with a limited role for the legislature. In addition, civil society, including the parties concerned, has often been excluded from policy making. Most of the human rights violations in Japan committed by government agencies occur in detention and correctional facilities, including police detention facilities, detention houses and prisons, and immigration detention centres, and the lack of transparency and accountability in the disciplinary actions taken against detainees in these facilities has always been a problem.

While **in Kazakhstan**, the Interagency Working Group mechanism is currently underdeveloped and needs to be further strengthened by adding real CSOs' inputs. The contributions are needed in kind of expert opinions on thematic topics, active participation in decision making at the national and local SDG platforms with a right to vote and introduce proposals for sustainable positive change. Given the bottlenecks in the human rights sector, such a holistic approach will also help contribute to better ownership of the sustainable development initiatives under the SDG 16 plus at the country level.

'Stakeholders stress that strong political commitment and leadership for building peaceful, just and inclusive societies is often lacking. This may be because advancing peace, justice and inclusion involves inherently political processes. Governments and other actors must deal with the foundations of power in societies, especially those that are emerging from crisis and face major questions of legitimacy and accountability. As a result, many believe that consensus on a national development vision within society is a key building block for accelerated progress on SDG 16+'²¹.

²¹ ENABLING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA THROUGH SDG 16+ Anchoing peace, justice and inclusion, Global Alliance, July, 2019



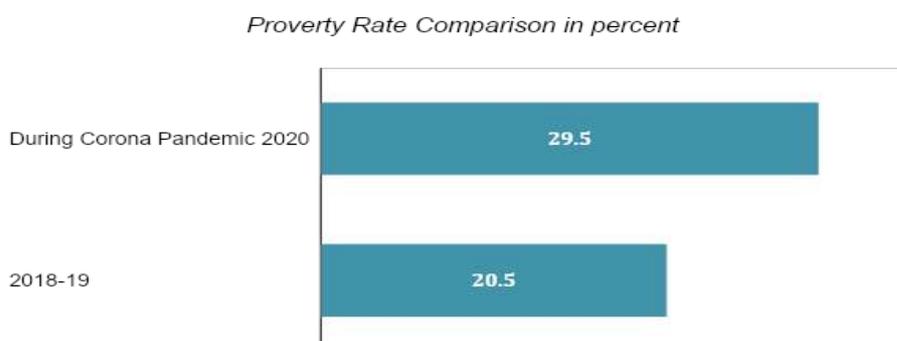
Chapter III

3.1. SDG 16 Plus – Trends and challenges in Data Management

‘Civil society has a crucial role to play in supporting and complementing the work of governments in collecting, monitoring, and reporting on data for SDG16. There are a number of strategic advantages presented by civil society data (i.e. third-party, unofficial, or complementary data not collected by NSOs, henceforth referred to as “non-official data”). First, non-official data collected by civil society can fill methodological and conceptual data gaps in SDG16 data and reduce the capacity strain on NSOs through innovative methodologies and strategic partnerships with official data collectors. Second, many civil society data producers face fewer bureaucratic challenges to collecting and publishing data, allowing them to pilot new methodologies and produce timely, high frequency data. Lastly, civil society data producers are less likely to face less internal resistance to producing data on politically sensitive issues, such as femicide, gun violence, and corruption²². For these reasons, the official data discussed in this report are complemented by robust ‘**Citizen’s led**’ data for the SDG16 + targets review. This Report will also reinforce how non-official data is more important than ever in monitoring the governance impact and response to COVID-19 .

Looking at the trend of SDG 16 + data over the last 5 years in Asia, **Bangladesh Bureau Statistics** showed decline in the poverty rate by the end of 2018-19 fiscal years and while the extreme poverty declined rate declined it showed increase from August 2020, where it rose to 29.5 per cent during the COVID Pandemic..

Graph 2: Poverty Rate Comparison in percent 2018-19 and 2020 (during COVID 19 pandemic)- Bangladesh



Realizing the motto of ensuring quality education (**4.a, 4.7, and 4.5**) to everyone will remain incomplete without understanding education qualities, equal access to education, and promotion of global citizenship. Though Bangladesh government has provided 41.6 million students with books in 2021, the data is not enough to understand the condition of access to education and human rights. For instance, dropout rates are remarkable in Bangladesh.

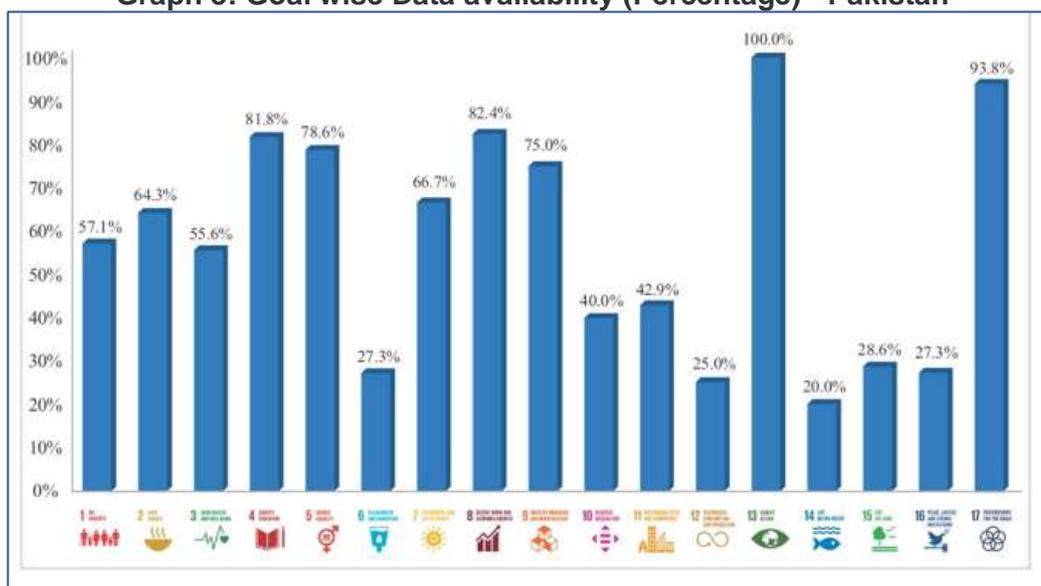
Around five million Bangladeshi children coming from insolvent families are still excluded from the school

According an NGO, Ovibasi Karmi Unnayan Program (OKUP) an average of 590,000 people migrate out of Bangladesh seeking better life abroad and fall victim to human trafficking, sex slavery etc.

²² SDG16DI, Global Report, 2020 - <https://www.prio.org/utility/DownloadFile.ashx?id=2169&type=publicationfile>



Graph 3: Goal wise Data availability (Percentage) - Pakistan



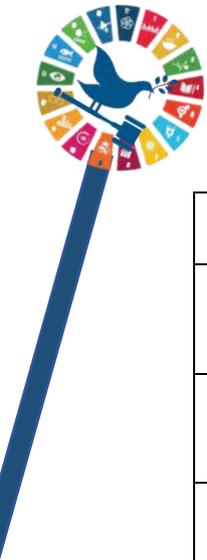
In **Pakistan**, Figure 4, shows that majority of the 8 goals which come under goal 16+ have more than 50% availability of data including 57.1% against goal 1, 81.8% against goal 4, 78.6% against goal 5, 82.4% against goal 8, 40% against goal 10, 42.9% against goal 11, 27.3% against goal 16 and 93.8% against goal 17.

Goal 1(no poverty), goal 5 (gender equality), goal 10 (reduced inequalities), goal 11(sustainable cities and communities) are placed under category-II, that requires relatively longer timeframes and consistent policy support. Whereas no goal 16+ SDG is placed under category-III, that requires even longer gestation period and major institutional reforms to achieve desired outcomes.

In **Nepal**, National Planning Commission (NPC), Government of Nepal launched the Progress Assessment Report 2016–2019 on 8 February 2021. The report published amidst the availability of limited data, has some useful data which would be useful to estimate and evaluate and to generate insights. Some of the useful data especially related to SDG 16 Plus are cited as below:

Table 3: SDG Progress Assessment Report 2016–2019, NPC Nepal, 2021.

Targets and indicators		2015	Target 2019	Progress 2019	Target 2022	Target 2030
4.5.1.1	Gender parity index (GPI) (primary school)	1.02	1.01	1.06	1.01	1
5.a.2	Women's ownership of property (land and house)	26	29.7	33.93	32.5	40
10.1.1.1	Consumption inequality (measured by the Gini coefficient)	0.33	0.28	0.30	0.25	0.16
10.1.1.2	Income inequality (measured by the Gini coefficient)	0.46	0.4	0.32	0.35	0.23
10.1.1.3	Share of bottom 40 percent of population in total consumption (percent)	18.7	17.4	25.7	21.2	23.4
10.1.1.4	Share of bottom 40 percent of population in total income (percent)	11.9	13.1	20.4	14.7	18
10.1.1.4	PALMA Index	1.3	1.22	1.34	1.16	1



16.1.1.1	Direct deaths from armed and violent conflict (number)	1628	-	659		
16.1.3	Proportion of population subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months	23.6	-	13.5		
16.1.4	Proportion of population that feel safe walking alone around the area they live			59.7		
16.2.1.1	Children aged 1-14 years who experienced psychological aggression or physical punishment during the last one month) (percent)	81.7b	60	77.6	44	0
16.2.2	Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age and form of exploitation	0.000369	-	0.0003		
1	Children trafficking to abroad (including India) per annum (reported number)	64c	47	23	34	0
16.2.3	Proportion of young women and men aged 18-29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18			2.1		
16.5.1	People's perception on corruption (percent of people with at least one instance in the past 12 months that require to give a bribe/present) (Corruption index score)	29	21	10	15	0
16.6.1	Primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget, by sector (or by budget codes or similar)	76	81.1	77.9	84.9	95
16.7.2.1	Proportions of decision-making positions held by women in public Institutions	15	20.3	13.9	24.3	35
16.9.1	Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age	58	66	77.2	79	100

In its self-assessment, Nepal Government has ranked the progress of Nepal on SDG 5 and SDG 16 both as 'medium'; whereas in reducing inequality, it is better with the ranking 'satisfactory'.

While in **Malaysia**, According to the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights Prof Philip Alston visits (2019) and his report (2020), the Poverty line Income is too low and therefore called for a higher level in line with the development of Malaysia. The PLI was RM980.00 for a family. Also, availability of little official data from DOSM is another concern and out of the 24 indicators in SDG 16, DOSM has only three, which are fully available as listed below :-



Table 4: SDG 16 Plus available indicators - Malaysia

SDG INDICATORS		Year	Value	Year	Value	Trend
16.1.1	Homicide victims per 100,000	2018	1.0	2019	1.0	Unchanged
16.3.2	Unsentenced detainees as proportion of overall prison population	2018	27.0	2019	27.5	Negative change
16.6.1	Government expenditure as a proportion of budget	2018	102.4	2019	100.9	Negative change

SDG INDICATORS		Year	Value	Year	Value	Trend
SDG 1.1.1	Households below International poverty line (%)	2016	0.0	2019	0.0	Unchanged
SDG 1.2.1	Households below national poverty line (5)	2016	7.6	2019	5.6	Positive change
	Multi-dimensional Poverty	2016	0.0152	2019	0.0110	Positive change
	No of recipients of assistance(*000)	2018	571.2	2019	561.2	Negative change

The government, however, in due time revised the PLI- "The New Economic Planning Unit Minister Dato Mustaphas Muhamad announced that the PN Malaysian government was readjusting the PLI based on the latest 2019 household income figures . He said that "Malaysia revised the PLI to RM2,208 compared with the RM980 rate that has been applied since 2005". However while this readjustment is welcomed, it is noted that the new PLI will not capture adequately the urban poor . This is because based on the median household income released by the Statistics Department which is RM6,561 then the PLI for urban areas should be RM3,280 and RM 2,208.00 would be low. Furthermore it will not capture the reality of deprivation which is far higher in urban contexts. This might not be captured in official data. The call therefore is to review the indicators used to measure the multi-dimensional poverty index or the MPI. There should be a separate indicators for rural and urban"

In **Lao PDR**, data on many indicators on SDG 16 are missing. Some of the key missing data are rate of human trafficking, homicide rate, transparency in budget planning and execution, and reporting of victimization. While, LSIS II provides various useful national data on SDG 16 Plus indicators for example data on the extent to which government support reaches vulnerable populations, including poorest households. LSIS II also provides data of net attendance ratio, child labor, and child marriage disaggregated by sex, wealth quintile, region, and other factors. However, various targets have missing data, especially targets for SDG goals 10, 11 and 17. Some of the missing data are proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against, rate of occupational injuries, and recruitment cost born by employee during migration. The National Regulatory Authority for UXO/Mine Action Sector in Lao PDR (NRA) provides regular data on casualties from UXO and clearance of UXO contaminated land through its annual reports on the 4 targets of SDG 18, "In order to address the continuing issue of unexploded ordinance (UXO) contamination leftover from the Second Indochina War, the Lao PDR has developed an additional SDG to address the needs of the Lao context, namely SDG 18: Lives Safe from UXO"

Table 5: SDG 18 Data and Indicators, Lao PDR.

Target	Available Data	Missing Data
18.1 Zero annual casualties from UXO accidents	<i>Total casualties (injuries and deaths)</i> (NRA Annual Report) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2015: 42 	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2018: 24 	
18.2 UXO contamination cleared from high priority areas and villages defined as poor	<i>Hectares cleared (NRA Annual Report)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2015: 2961 In 2018: 3670 <i>Number of villages defined as “poor” with confirmed hazardous areas remaining to be cleared (VNR)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2016: 2,389 In 2017: 2,389 	
18.3 Identified UXO survivor’s health and livelihoods needs meet	<i>Percentage of registered active-age UXO survivors unable to earn sufficient income with access to basic income security (VNR)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2016: 4.5% In 2017: 5% <i>Percentage of registered UXO survivors mainstreamed into health, education and employment services (VNR)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2016: 13.4% In 2017: 16.5% 	
18.4 Ensure all remaining UXO activities can be fully funded by the government		<i>Percentage of UXO activities funded by the government</i>

As the **Vietnam** 2020 Report SDG Implementation of the Government, the country is likely to achieve 3 (target 16.6 on transparent and effective institution; target 16.8 on legal identification for all and target 16.9 on ensuring information access and fundamental freedom) among the 9 targets. Overall, it will be difficult for Vietnam to achieve SDG16 by 2030. The remaining challenges and difficulties are: (i) increasing, violence against and sexual abuse of children become more serious (target 16.1&16.2); (ii) the reformation of some judicative processes does not follow the laid out roadmap; cases of unjust and wrong trials still take place (target 16.3); (iii) anti-corruption activities have resulted in positive changes, yet failed to bring out notable impacts; corruption is still taking place in serious, complex and delicate forms, especially in banking and finance sector, land use and management, mineral and resource extraction and public investment (target 16.5); (iv) the role and responsibility of the people to participate in local consultation and decision-making, to monitor and comment to the work of the Party and the government is still limited (target 16.7).

Figure 4: Data Source Distribution, Vietnam





In **Japan**, the government has proposed the 2 national indicators on SDG 16.2.1 and 16.2.2. However, these proposed indicators are not sufficient to measure the actual status of as well as the progress of target “end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.

The Japanese government became a pathfinding country for Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children (GPeVAC) in 2018. As part of this, it has established a multi-stakeholder roundtable and working group to End Violence Against Children, that consist of government, civil society, the private sector, and experts. These roundtable and working group is now developing a National Action Plan to End Violence Against Children. Appropriate indicators will also be discussed at these groups in the future²³.

In **Kazakhstan**, the current situation with the human rights implementation necessitates to urgently increase awareness, capacity of state agencies and CSOs; identify national SDG 16 plus indicators to monitor and oversight its implementation; and get acquainted with available best practices on SDG 16 plus localization and implementation for possible replication. In view of above, out of Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies indicators, of crucial importance remain the last two ones.

To sum up, too many national indicators are useful only when the monitoring mechanism are in place which has been a challenge to monitor the progress. Data for only about 40% of the indicators are said to have been available in the target countries on an average. In such situations, observing and monitoring the progress in terms of leaving no one behind seems difficult.

²³The Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children (2021)
<https://www.end-violence.org/>



Chapter IV



5.1. SDG 16+ as an ‘Agent’ of ’ protecting fundamental Rights

Development is a comprehensive and complex economic, social and political process. And this process is about human rights: about the right to development; about economic, social and cultural rights; and also about the civil and political rights which uphold people’s capacity and right to raise their voices, and participate in decisions.

The multiple and overlapping structural impediments that prevent justice from being done, express the relevance of indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights. As the 2030 Agenda recognizes, freedom from fear and freedom from want cannot be achieved in isolation from each other.

This is why the concept of SDG16 *plus* is so persuasive. Because the multifaceted disempowerment of those who are left behind will not be adequately addressed if we adopt fragmented approaches, designed in silos and applied as band-aids.

We need integrated approaches, grounded in broad participation, which build on the mutually reinforcing work of many communities. And it is this integrated, indivisible approach to promoting and protecting all rights which drives the work done by my Office around the world – in close partnership with States, stakeholders and civil society groups of all kinds

5.1.1. Freedom from Fear

Protecting fundamental freedom or freedom from Fear and the functioning of SDG 16 is staggering and other related targets to goal 16 under other goals have varied developments, improvements and progress. The current global COVID-19 health crisis has only made this task more complicated due to many pre-existing challenges to achieving peace, justice, and inclusion. For example, there is a growing evidence that quarantines have **increased rates of domestic violence (target 16.1)**.

In **Bangladesh**, a total number of 4,705 women and children were the victims of domestic violence while 50 percent fell as first time victims by April 2020. A total of 632 rape incidents took place between April and August 2020. On average, 04 women have been raped every day during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Comparing to 2019 the violence against women and girls during COVID-19 has increased by 70%, a drastic rise of the trend.

Figure 5: Increasing Violence against women in Bangladesh during the COVID pandemic, Bangladesh





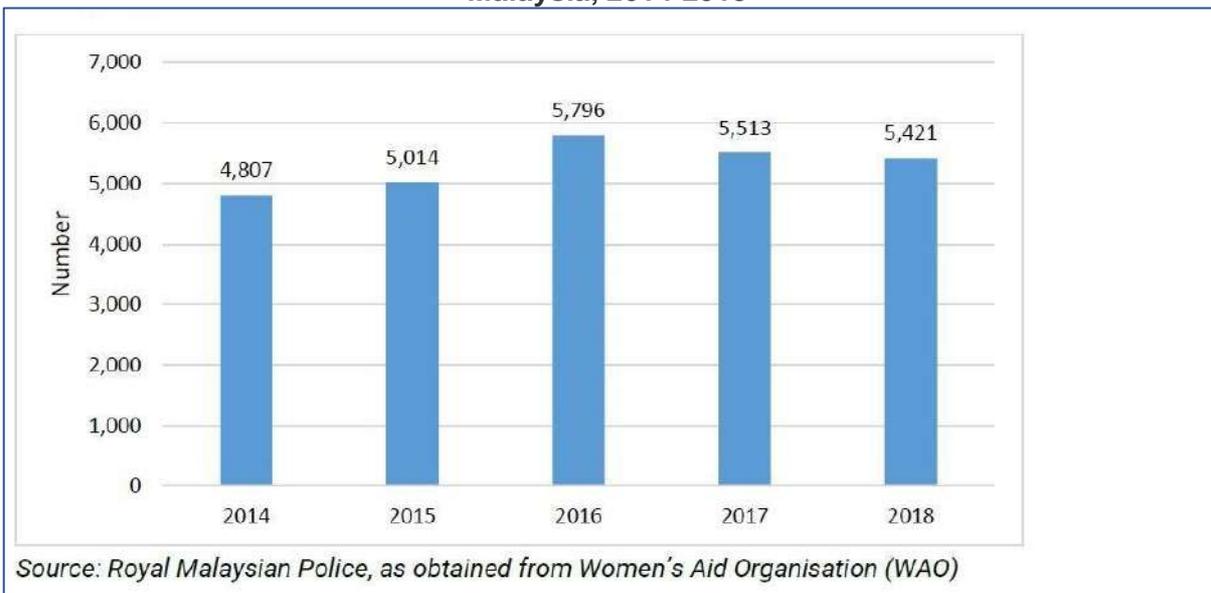
The "Crimes in India -2019" report shows that crimes against women have gone up by 7.3 per cent last year. The crime rate registered per lakh women population is 62.4 per cent in 2019, up from the 58.8 per cent figure of 2018²⁴. According to official sources (National Crime Register Bureau)

About 54 per cent of Indian women reported they paid bribes to get government services and 33 per cent said officials called them repeatedly to harass them, according to a survey report published by Transparency International India²⁵

One in five women experiences intimate partner violence (NAPVAW) and one in four women feeling unsafe walking in city at night (ActionAid, 2016) in **Cambodia**. Public services and tax redistribution has under played investment in public education, health, agricultural infrastructure and input and water management, resulting less responsive and gender sensitive public services and investment.

In **Malaysia**, the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development reported²⁶ that in 2020 there were more than 1,200 cases of sexual abuse towards women and 2,287 cases of domestic violence. However the figures presented by the Police and the Women's Aid Organisation as per the table below indicates a rise from 4,807 cases in 2014 to 5,421 cases in 2018.

Graph 4 Number of Domestic Violence Cases Reported to the Royal Malaysian Police, Malaysia, 2014-2018



The issue of female circumcision or also known as female genital cutting or female genital mutilation is a very contentious matter in Malaysia. It is estimated that about 90²⁷ per cent of Muslim women in the country have been circumcised. The Malaysia²⁸ government during

²⁴ The "Crimes in India -2019" report shows that crimes against women have gone up by 7.3 per cent last year. The crime rate registered per lakh women population is 62.4 per cent in 2019, up from the 58.8 per cent figure of 2018.

²⁵ <https://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/54-indian-women-paid-bribe-to-get-government-services-what-transparency-international-survey-claims/1090745/>

²⁶ <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2020/12/10/domestic-violence-got-worse-during-pandemic/>

²⁷ <https://www.malaymail.com/news/what-you-think/2021/02/06/female-genital-mutilation-should-the-practice-be-continued-kama-kenny/1947445>

²⁸ Ibid



the CEDAW Committee's 2018 review of Malaysia claimed the practice is part of a cultural obligation and is harmless as well as does not have an impact on the sexual health of women.

In **Vietnam**, as per the report of the government, the currently has no statistics on the indicator 16.1.1, but has only data released from the National Survey on Violence against Women conducted by the GSO in 2010 and 2019. The results of this survey are presented in the target 5.2 (indicators 5.2.1 and 5.2.1). Therefore, it is impossible to evaluate the implementation progress of the target 16.1 at present. Number of children as victims has significantly decreased from 3478 to 1584 in 3 years as a result of implementation of a variety of measures and solutions to promote communication, advocacy and coordination in child protection, and prevention and treatment of child abuse cases in localities in a timely and effective manner with minimized injuries for abused children.

Table 6 Proportion of ever-partnered women aged 15 and older subjected to violence (*) by their husbands or partners (%) - Vietnam

	2010		2019	
	At present (Last 12 months)	Lifetime (Any time in life)	At present (Last 12 months)	Lifetime (Any time in life)
Physical	6	32	4.6	26.1
Sexual	4	10	5.7	13.3
Spiritual	25	54	19.3	47
Physical, Sexual, Spiritual	27	58	21.8	52.9

Source : Source: Survey on Domestic Violence against Women in Viet Nam in 2010 and 2019²⁹

In Lao PDR, Despite the fact that about a third of ever-partnered women (30.3%) experience some form of violence during their lifetime, most women do not report their cases. Nearly half of the women (43.2%) who encountered partner violence did not report the incident due to embarrassment and fear of social stigma, and less than 30% sought help from official agencies. Besides the fear of social stigma, low reporting may also be due to the way in which cases of gender-based violence are typically addressed. Oftentimes, cases will go through the customary system first, involving family or village elders, and then go through Village Mediation Units. Only a few cases go through formal systems involving police and courts. Even more problematic, many members of Village Mediation Units and law enforcement personnel have limited capacity on how to address cases in a gender-sensitive and confidential manner.

Recent lockdown measures put girls and women at risk of domestic violence during the pandemic. According to UNICEF, in **Kazakhstan**, 50% of girls are subjected to violent methods of discipline in the family, and 45% experience psychological aggression and violence. Evidence from May 2020 suggests this remains a significant challenge.



²⁹ Source for 2019: https://vietnam.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/1._bao_cao_tom_tat.pdf



According to the Head of the 'Don't be quiet' movement, domestic violence rose at an alarming rate during the pandemic in **Kazakhstan**. The organization's hotline has received 42,000 calls over the four-month lockdown period. However, only 8,000 of those calls have led eventually to trials and just 4,000 have received justice. This is largely due to the limited operation of courts during the pandemic emergency. In this situation, the CSOs and civil activists provided first aid consultations to the women that are subject to domestic violence.

'Violence is perhaps the most significant and destructive challenge to the development, growth, wellbeing, and the very survival of countries around the world. Fatalities resulting from armed conflict are rising in some parts of the world, causing mass displacement within countries and across borders, and resulting in massive humanitarian crises that adversely impact every aspect of our developmental efforts. Other forms of violence – crime and sexual and gender based violence – also remain a global challenge³⁰.

5.1.2. Freedom of Opinion, Assembly and Peaceful Protests:

'Once again, hundreds of thousands are taking to the streets and to digital highways. From Kathmandu to Delhi, moving east to **Bangkok** and Yangon, a wave of discontent is demanding that human rights be upheld. In Kathmandu, **women march** to demand an end to violence and the "deep-rooted patriarchal mindset." Car horns blare and cooking pots bang in the streets of Yangon, a cacophony calling for the release of **Aung San Suu Kyi**. In India, demonstrations of unprecedented scope are raging across the country – "**farmer protests**," cutting across religion, gender, caste, and income divides for the rights of the most vulnerable and precious, those who provide us with food. In Indonesia, **activists** fight against cyber surveillance and stigmatization.



From Nepal to Myanmar, what seem to be movements motivated by separate interests, have one

thing in common: They are driven by citizens calling for justice and recognition. They are bottom-up, rising from the roots of society, its foundations, with students, mothers, and farmers, who look into each other's eyes and remember that despite their differences, they are all equals in their right to protest³¹.

Civil Disobedience movement have emerged within the country against the **military coup** of February 1, in opposition to the coup, in numerous forms, including acts of civil disobedience, labor strikes, a military boycott campaign, a pot-banging movement (a symbolic act to drive away evil, as a method of expressing their opposition to the coup), a red ribbon campaign, public protests, and formal recognition of the election results by elected representatives. The three-finger salute has been widely adopted as a protest symbol.

February 28 was the deadliest day yet, with **at least 18 people killed** when security forces opened fire on protesters.

³⁰ <https://in.one.un.org/page/sustainable-development-goals/sdg-16/>

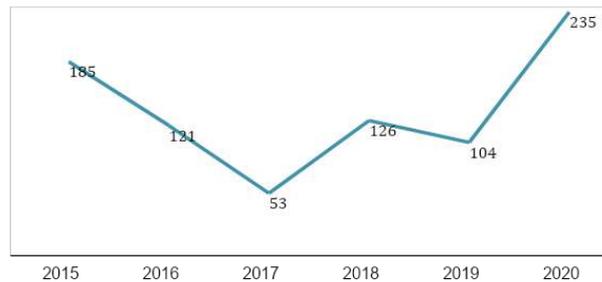
³¹ <https://thediplomat.com/2021/03/offline-and-online-protests-are-sweeping-across-asia/>



International IDEA categorizes the regime type of **Nepal** as "**mid-range performing democracy** since 2008 except for the period between 2013 and 2016 when its democratic performance was low".

Graph 5 Journalist Harassment Incidents 2015-2020, Bangladesh

Journalists in **Bangladesh** are regular victims of legal harassment, intimidation and assaults. Ain-O-Salish Kendra (ask) has recorded 247 incidents throughout the 12 months of 2020 including death threats, torture in custody, false cases, intimidation, death threats, legal harassment, attacks, violence and enforced disappearance. Journalists along with netizens do not get support from police and security agencies, as state actors are also involved in harassment and intimidation.



*In a new turn of events to address the rising COVID-19 cases, the PN government advised the **Malaysian King** to declare a state of emergency³² on Jan 12, 2021 for six months till August 2021. In this context the damaging effect to public accountability and democracy is the suspension of parliament sessions. The Prime Minister announced that "Parliament and the State Legislative Assemblies will not sit until a time set by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong³³". The Opposition leader in Parliament is challenging this declaration as unconstitutional in the courts³⁴.*

According to the Human Right Watch (HRW) Submission to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Kazakhstan as of November 2019, **Kazakhstan's** poor human rights record has regrettably deteriorated since its UPR in October 2014, shrinking the civic space and undermining the life being of ordinary citizens. The authorities abuse the Criminal legislation in an attempt to silence government critics. In 2016 the authorities imprisoned Maks Bokayev and Talgat Ayan, activists for five years who peacefully protested against the proposed amendments to the Land Code. Ayan was released in 2018, while Bokayev was unfairly imprisoned up to the beginning of February 2021 on a variety of trumped-up criminal charges, including *inciting social discord*.

5.1.3. Living in 'Just and Inclusive' Societies

5.1.3.1. Cyber Security and Access to Information

A new cybersecurity law proposed by Myanmar's military, mandates that internet service providers remove online content "causing hate, disrupting the unity, stabilization and peace" of Myanmar. Some proposed offenses carry up to three years in prison and heavy fines. [In a collective letter](#) with more than 160 signatories, civil society across Myanmar decried the bill as a violation of human rights, including "the rights to freedom of expression, data protection and privacy, and other democratic principles and human rights in the online space."

³² Special Announcement of Emergency (2021). <https://www.pmo.gov.my/2021/01/teks-ucapan-pengumuman-khas-darurat/>

³³ Ibid

³⁴ Anwar to challenge PM's 'reckless' emergency move in court.

<https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/01/17/anwar-to-challenge-pms-reckless-emergency-move-in-court/>



“The military is trying to stifle the people’s voices by shutting down the internet – a clear violation of the right to freedom of expression. But Myanmar people will not be silenced,” reports the collective Support Myanmar.

The group has developed a [live map](#) for protestors to be aware of police movements, medical coverage. and road blocks. They have also created protest guides on personal and digital safety.

A march by the LGBTQ community in Yangon, Myanmar Feb. 18, 2021. Photo by Ben Small.

Several governments are justifying internet censorship and [digital state surveillance](#) under the guise of “cyber sovereignty.” The potential for an expansion of the “big brother syndrome” especially in the context of the COVID-19 is raising concerns about civic oppression – with a new digital twist.

In Indonesia, “there have been cyberattacks against activists criticizing government policies in handling COVID-19. The WhatsApp account of a friend and activist was hacked and he was then



accused of inciting riots and hate speech. Cyberattacks and hacking attempts have also targeted journalists and their social media accounts,” says Tatat Sukarsa, from the International [NGO Forum on Indonesian Development](#) (INFID).

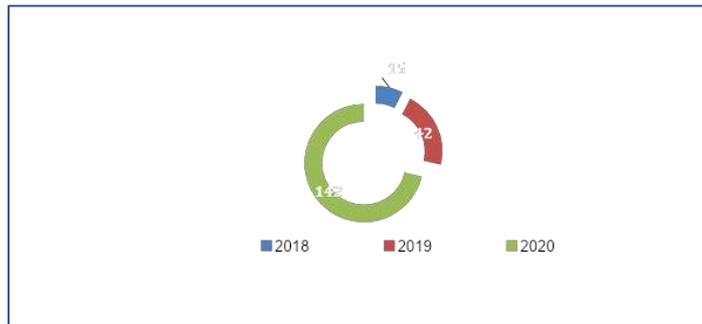
Use of Digital Security Act (DSA): Hastily in December 2018, less than a month for the upcoming 11th parliamentary elections the draconian cyber security law was hastily passed

without much opposition in **Bangladesh**. The DSA was first drafted in 2016. The controversial section 57 of the ICT act has now been replaced in a new label of digital security act, 2018.

The DSA passed on 8 October 2018, is even more repressive than the ICT act that is replaced. The new act is deeply problematic for three major reasons: ambiguous formulation of multiple sections that are vague that they may lead to criminalising of legitimate expression of opinions or thoughts; broad powers granted to authorities which are not clearly defined; and provisions which allow for removal or blocking of content and the seizure/ search of devices without sufficient safeguards. For example is section 21 of the act, which criminalises "propaganda or campaign" against "the spirit of liberation war", and "the father of the nation, national anthem and national flag"; terms which are so vague that they may be used to restrict free speech.



Graph 6 Number of DSA Cases 2018-2020 , Bangladesh



There is no **Data Protection Law** in the **Pakistan** therefore validity and efficacy of the data may also be questioned.

*Pakistan is rated **Partly Free** in the recent Global Freedom House Report 2020 whereas it is **INACTIVE** member of the Open Government Partnership due to non-compliance.. Civic spaces are shrinking and CIVICUS Monitor has ranked Pakistan in **REPRESSED** countries whereas Civil Society Index 2019 ranked Pakistan in **EVOLVING** category.*

*After initially denying the dangers of the virus, the government of **Cambodia** has used the sweeping powers of the emergency law to crack down on dissent (journalists, civil society activists and opposition politicians) in the name of “fighting disinformation”. This is likely to lead to deepening authoritarianism in a country that was already severely strained before the pandemic, with a weakened opposition in exile and severely curtailed civic and media space. Some prominent journalists have been under arrest since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic for allegedly causing chaos by posting comments critical of the Government on social media, or for spreading ‘fake news’. COVID-19 has tightened restrictions on public communication. Reported by several online media outlets - such as The Diplomat, Khmer Times and Bangkok Post, and Human Rights Watch - **Article 222 of the Cambodian constitution used as a basis for establishing emergency conditions has led to the arrest of civilians and opposition activists for expressing their concerns about COVID-19 on social media.***

The recommendations on ensuring fundamental freedoms under the UPR review of January 2020 were not accepted by the **Lao PDR**, especially those regarding freedom of assembly and those that called for revising or repealing specific legislation such as Article 65 of the Penal Code, an article restricting propaganda against the State. As long as the government of Lao PDR is unwilling to make such adjustments to its law and penal code, it will not be able to fully achieve the aims of SDG 16 Plus.

In **Taiwan**, *Personal Data Protection Act* (《個人資料保護法》) was implemented on 2015 December 30 to protect persons from the malicious information gathering. Whereas, *Freedom of Government Information Law* (《政府資訊公開法》) allows the public to access the data and information in accordance with the Law, except which regulated in other laws, the provisions of that law shall prevail” (article 2). Not only the authorities are obligated to actively publish the information related to governance and policies, but Taiwan’s nationals also are entitled to request government for providing the related information. Foreigners may request government information in accordance with this Law only when the laws of their countries do not restrict the nationals of the Republic of China from requesting government information of such country (article 9.). In 2019, 43,000 data bases were open to the public, and they were downloaded 1.2 million times³⁵.

³⁵ National Sustainable Development Network, 2019, *Yearly Report of Taiwan Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Review* (《台灣永續發展目標年度檢討報告》), <https://nsdn.epa.gov.tw/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/2019台灣永續發展目標年度檢討報告.pdf>, p. 365, retrieved on 2020/12/17.

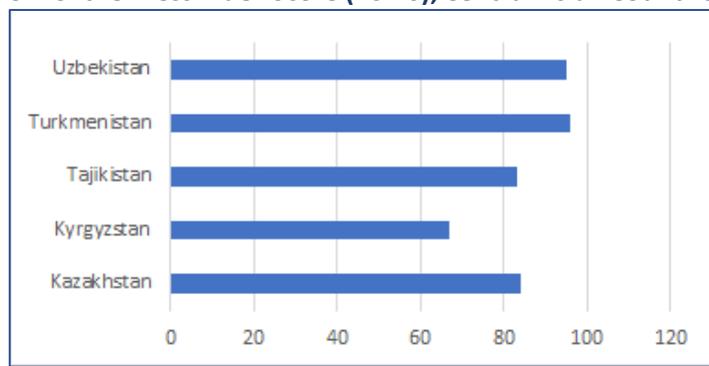


Access to information, including media freedom, is one of the basic human rights threatened by the Government of Japan these days. Although there is no obvious arbitrary detention of journalists in Japan, in February 2016, then Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications, said "if a broadcaster repeatedly broadcasts without political impartiality and does not improve at all even after administrative guidance, we cannot promise not to take any action against it," referring to the possibility of the government ordering the broadcaster to suspend radio waves under Article 76 of the Radio Law for violating Article 4 of the Broadcasting Law³⁶.

In spite of the government measures to improve the public access to information the civic activists more often express concerns regarding the implementation of the fundamental human right to access to information, which inevitably **leads to shrinking civic space** in the Kazakhstan. Thus, the RSF – World Press Freedom Index 2020 assessed Kazakhstan being at the 157th spot (out of 180) in RSF's 2017 World Press Freedom index with a tiny change of 1 score in comparison to 2019.

Graph 7 Freedom of the Press Index Score (16.10), Central Asian Countries

In advance of *Kazakhstan's third UPR, Article 19, the CSO Adil Soz raised concerns that the situation for freedom of expression had markedly deteriorated over the last five years*. It states that the government actively used an overly restrictive legal framework to harass and discourage independent and critical voices, including the media and civil society organizations. The power to block online content has regularly been used against the online media or to completely restrict Internet access, in clear violation of international human rights law and standards.



The Right to Information Act (2017) was proposed to be amended on January 25, 2021, by few treasury members of the Senate of Pakistan to exclude upper and lower house of the Parliament for the provision of any type of information if asked by any citizen of Pakistan.

5.1.3.2. Right to Education

The good news is that, Asia has made some remarkable progress in education. Over the past couple of decades, countries in Asia have been tremendously successful in expanding access to and enrolment in primary and secondary education to all children. More than 617 million children and adolescents worldwide are not achieving the minimum proficiency levels in reading and mathematics (SDG indicator 4.1.1). Nearly half of these children are from the Asia-Pacific region³⁷.

³⁶ "Refusal to answer questions in Diet soared in Abe government", The Asahi Shimbun, 9 Nov 2020 <http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/13914017>

³⁷ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics (UIS). (2018). Skills and innovation in G20 countries (Montreal, Canada).



With the passing of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 (hereafter RTE), elementary education for every child between 6 and 14 became a Fundamental right in **India**, hence legally enforceable. It provisioned for schools within a kilometre from homes with good infrastructure (water, electricity, toilets, playground etc.), trained teachers, a standard teacher-student ratio, No Detention Policy (NDP) and an inclusive environment free of fear and anxiety for all children to learn in an equitable and democratic manner³⁸

Though **Bangladesh** government has provided 41.6 million students with books in 2021, the data is not enough to understand the condition of access to education and human rights. For instance, dropout rates are remarkable in Bangladesh.

Vietnam will achieve SDG Goal 4 by 2030, in which 5/8 targets will be met. These targets refer mostly to primary and secondary education. Vietnam will have difficulty in achieving target 4.5 on the quality of the labour force to meet the labour market demand and will probably fail to meet target 4.3 on vocational training and tertiary education. These issues should be focused in the following years. Especially, more attention should be paid to vocational training for disadvantaged groups such as ethnic minorities and people with disabilities. VSDG4 has the most complete data and information system related to the targets.

The Ministry of Education and Sports in **Lao PDR** have made some efforts to support poor children, such as issuing a decree to provide stipends to poor students and implementing the National School Lunch Program, yet more effort will be needed to reach all children in need. According to LSIS II, only 4.8 percent of children in poorest households have received support for school tuition or school related fees in the last three months.

Japan has introduced Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in the new national curriculum since the beginning of in 2020. Three major concerns related to the ESD are 1): narrow focus on environmental education, which does not cover gender, human rights, equality, inclusiveness, poverty, and justice aspects hence there is a need to focus on integrate citizenship education, 2) has not transformed school governance. ESD aims at not only empowering citizens but also to transforming society. to be taken to reduce violence and bullying at schools. 3) Non-formal education or adult learning and education policy and practices do not give priority on ESD and citizenship education, **UNESCO's 7th International Conference on Adult Education in 2022 will be an opportunity to mainstream citizenship education in adult education and learning policy in Japan.** Japan should endorse "**Safe Schools Declaration**"³⁹

The Ministry of Education (教育部) of **Taiwan**, beginning in 2018, has been promoting the idea **University Social Responsibility (USR)** by encouraging universities to submit the projects to more actively engage in sustainability⁴⁰. According to the idea, universities should be the agent contributing to local sustainability rather than simply the learning and socialization facility. The idea of USR steers schools to design projects by the people-centered and local-grounded approaches.

Impact of COVID Pandemic on education:

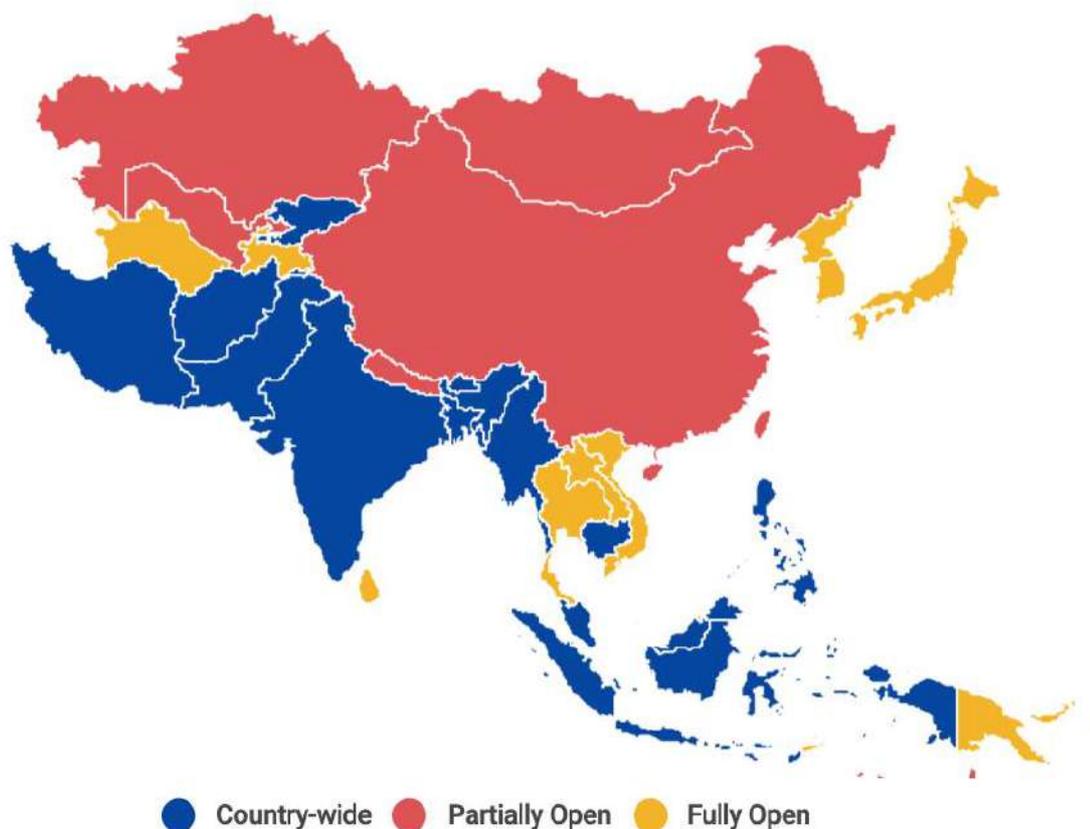
³⁸ <https://www.vaniindia.org/admin-latest/images/India%20and%20G20%20Analyzing%20Development%20Policy%20Priorities.pdf>

³⁹ The Safe Schools Declaration, <https://ssd.protectingeducation.org/>

⁴⁰ Department of Information Services, Executive Yuan, 2019/05/19, "University Social Responsibility Program Promoting Sustainable Local development," <https://english.ey.gov.tw/Page/61BF20C3E89B856/243a330f-788e-418d-af89-17fbbb7b90d9>, accessed on 2020/10/18.



Figure 5 School Closure in Asia caused by COVID 19 – August 2020⁴¹



In Bangladesh, more than a hundred private schools have been put up for sale due to non-payment of fees.

The UN says at least 147 million children are unable to access online or remote learning. In India, only 24% of households have access to the internet, according to a 2019 government survey. Nepal's latest Economic Survey report says that of the nearly 30,000 government schools, fewer than 30% have access to a computer, and only 12% can offer online learning.

The education sector has been greatly impacted with the closure of schools, resulting in disruption of learning, dismissal of teachers, as well as intensified digital, rural-urban and gender divides. In addition, the teachers have been exposed to tremendous stress to adapt to new platforms, teaching methods and workloads to ensure that students are not lagging. Though the governments' claim to be encouraging and providing the necessary support and the use of digital tools to ensure that teaching and learning are not affected, in most of the countries here in the Asia, the public education system has poor infrastructures, the teachers and students have insufficient access to online platforms, teachers have not been adequately trained in the use of technology, and students - particularly in the rural areas - do not have access to internet in most cases and to computers to some extent. Another worrying trend that is being reported is that the contract teachers, teachers in private schools, and the ECE sector in several countries - the Philippines, Nepal and Sri Lanka to name but a few - are either losing their jobs or left with unpaid salaries⁴².

⁴¹ <https://apa.sdg4education2030.org/covid19>

⁴² https://www.worldsofeducation.org/en/woe_homepage/woe_detail/16768/%E2%80%9Cthe-impact-of-covid-19-on-society-in-the-asia-pacific-region%E2%80%9D-by-masaki-okajima



This crisis forces us to rethink the way we live because life will not be the same after this pandemic and business as usual will not be sufficient for this new world order. We need to address not only the educational issues but also comprehensive ones including health, economy and environment as correlative sectors. And hence an *urgent need to strengthen public education system through transparency and accountability provisions and making rule-based approach in implementation of RTE. (16. 3, 16.7.2 and 16.6) apart from ensuring effective governance to improve quality of education at grassroots 16.7.2) through consultative and participatory exercises should be conducted regularly with Civil Society Organizations with a supportive environment for those involved in education sector at the grass16.7.2)*

Special efforts should be devoted to improving the situation of young women in Asia, as more young women than young men are not in education, employment or training (34 per cent of young women against 11 per cent of young men). While South and South-West Asia had the lowest rates of young men not in employment, education or training (10 per cent), it had the highest rates for young women (a startling 46 per cent, meaning almost half of all young women in the subregion were jobless and not in education or training, which puts them at risk of future social and economic exclusion⁴³).

The legalization of the same-sex marriage in **Taiwan** contributes to building a stronger institution to protect the fundamental rights of people of both homosexuals and heterosexuals equally in enjoying their freedom of marriage. the Judicial Yuan responded by confirming that the rights of the LGBT community have been protected by court ruling, and that the referendums could not surpass the Constitutional Interpretation⁴⁴.

5.1.3.3. Illicit financial Flow (IFF) and Corruption:

(IFFs), defined here as ‘money illegally earned, transferred, or used that crosses borders⁴⁵’. More specifically, they are ‘the proceeds from both illicit activities, such as corruption (bribery and embezzlement of national wealth), criminal activity, and the proceeds of licit business that becomes illicit when transported across borders in contravention of applicable laws and regulatory frameworks (most commonly in order to evade payment of taxes)⁴⁶. According to GFI's President Raymond Baker, "Illicit financial flows are the most damaging economic problems faced by the world's developing and emerging economies

To illustrate the role that IFFs play in Asia, this section looks at three different types of IFFs: **the cross-border trade in illicit goods; the illegal cross-border trade of legally acquired goods; and the illegal use of funds produced by cross-border trade.**

⁴³ iLOSTAT, iLO modelled estimates, November 2018.

⁴⁴ Taipei Times, "Marriage Law 'Cannot Contradict' Ruling," 2018 November 30, <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/front/archives/2018/11/30/2003705194>, accessed on 2020 December 17.

⁴⁵ World Bank, 'Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs)', 7 July 2017, , accessed 16 October 2017.

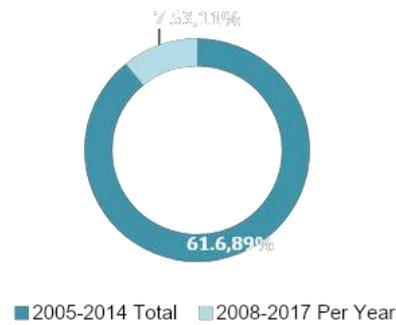
⁴⁶ Dev Kar and Devon Cartwright-Smith, 'Illicit Financial Flows from Developing Countries: 2002–2006', Global Financial Integrity, December 2008, p. 7.



A number of reports released by Global Financial Integrity (GFI) in recent times have pinpointed **Bangladesh** as being among the worst affected countries to the scourge of trade-based money laundering (TBML)." According to GFI, USD 61.6 billion was siphoned out of Bangladesh between 2005 and 2014, which is equivalent to 25 percent of its

GDP in FY 2016-17. Between 2008 and 2017, Bangladesh lost a staggering USD 7.53 billion per year on average to trade mis-invoicing, which accounted for 17.95 percent of Bangladesh's international trade with all its trading partners during the period.

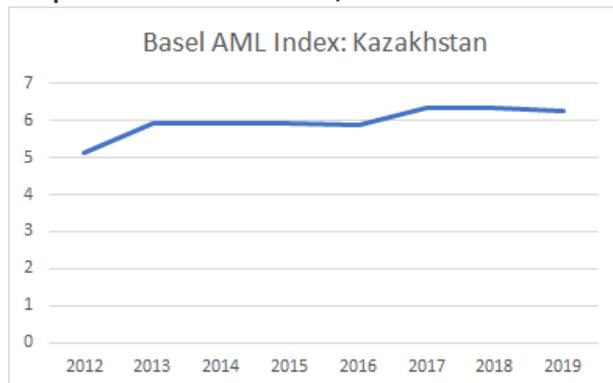
Graph 8, Money Siphoned off Bangladesh in USD (Billion)



Sadly, Bangladesh meets almost all the requirements necessary to make it a perfect victim of large-scale money laundering—including the fact that its government's policies have fallen far short of disincentivising money laundering and have, in fact, facilitated it at times. That has mostly happened because, as Dr Iftekharuzzaman wrote, the perpetrators of the crime have usually been "tied to the power structure" and hence have often "determined the terms" that have allowed them to get away with it.

Pakistan is also placed in the grey list of Financial Action Task Force (FATF) for the last thirteen years. although Pakistan had made a significant progress, it was still to fully comply with three of the 27-point action plan it had been presented with in June 2018 when it was first put on the "greylist". The three points on which the FATF has sought urgent action by Pakistan pertain to effective steps — in terms of financial sanctions and penalties — against the terror funding infrastructure and the entities involved. After assessing the measures taken during the June session, the FATF would verify the implementation and test the sustainability of reforms undertaken by Pakistan to this end.

Graph 9 – Basel AML Index, Kazakhstan

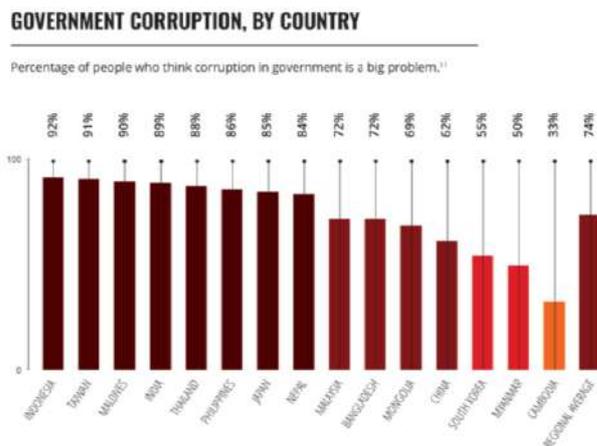


Based on special recommendations of the FATF (Financial Action Task Force on Combating Money Laundering), the financing of terrorism, terrorist acts and terrorist organizations has been recognized as a criminal offense by Kazakhstan. Since 2011 **Kazakhstan** has been a member of the EGMONT group, which obliged the Committee of Financial Monitoring of Kazakhstan and the anti-money laundering and combating financing the terrorism (AML/CFT)

relevant actors to seek additional responses and modern approaches to newly emerged threats and improve its legislative base. The annual report of the 2020 Basel AML Index ranked Kazakhstan **73rd among 141 countries** in terms of the level of risk in the area of illegal money laundering and terrorist financing, meaning there is more work ahead.



Graph 10 , Government Corruption, By Country



A key factor that facilitates such IFFs is weaknesses in cross-border administration or policing, particularly corruption. Although not an exhaustive analysis of the source of funds relevant to this section’s focus countries, these case studies were selected based on the importance attributed to them by the national CSO platforms who authored the national reporting, as well as the impact these types of IFFs have on several of the focus countries. A notable theme running through the research is that there are not necessarily clear-cut ‘regional’ trends when examining these countries, given that there

are many unique national features for each country as to the source of funds and who is involved.

While Asia is diverse in both size and scale, most countries **still struggle to improve their anti-corruption efforts**. Despite limited examples of progress, some bright spots exist where countries have made substantial gains to build integrity. Few key economies such as India (40), Indonesia (37) and Bangladesh (26) experienced slow progress in anti-corruption efforts, with several government commitments to reform not yet materialising effectively

While it is true digitization does reduce corruption and technology has been able to track and reduce corruption, there is a need to put an end to the culture of bribery which still exists in **India** at enormous levels⁴⁷. While international rankings and surveys point to increased forms of corruption in India there is a need for specific reporting on transparency and accountability measures through recognition of civil society led reports and critiques. About 54 per cent of Indian women reported they paid bribes to get government services and 33 per cent said officials called them repeatedly to harass them, according to a survey report published by Transparency International **India**⁴⁸

Table 7 Global Bribery Risk Index 2019

Country	Rank	Risk Score
Bhutan	52	41
India	78	48
Sri Lanka	111	55
Nepal	116	56
Maldives	124	57
Pakistan	153	62
Myanmar	157	64
Afghanistan	168	66
Bangladesh	178	72

Bangladesh has ranked 178th in the latest global bribery risk index, 2019 Trace Bribery Risk Matrix said. According to the report, Bangladesh scored 72, surpassing other countries in South Asia. This score is a composite of the four domain scores, which are weighted and combined to produce the overall country risk score. In terms of risk score, India ranked 78th, Pakistan 153rd, Afghanistan 168th, and Myanmar ranked 157th in the index. According to this year’s Trace Matrix data, Somalia, South Sudan, North Korea, Yemen and Venezuela presented the highest risk of bribe demands. Each country is given a score from 1 to 100 for each domain and for the total bribery risk. A higher score indicates a higher risk of business bribery.

⁴⁷ <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-records-highest-rate-of-bribery-in-asia-survey/article33184156.ece>

⁴⁸ <https://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/54-indian-women-paid-bribe-to-get-government-services-what-transparency-international-survey-claims/1090745/>



According to Transparency International, **Bangladesh** has scored 26 out of 100 in 2019, two points lower than the 28 in 2017.. Among the eight South Asian countries Bangladesh continues to be the second worst after Afghanistan.

The 1 **Malaysia** Development Berhad (1MDB), a sovereign wealth fund scandal rocked the nation and in the Post General Elections in May 2018 saw the arrest of the former Prime Minister Dato Seri Najib Tun Razak who was Prime Minister from 2009 and 2018 was found guilty by the High Court on July 28, 2020 and was sentenced to 12 years for abuse of power, money laundering and breach of trust⁴⁹. The case is now under appeal.

“Some 71% of Malaysians think that Government corruption is a big problem, with Parliament, the police and Government officials ranked the highest for the perception of corruption among public institutions, said Transparency International – Malaysia. (TI-M)”¹

The Ministry of Justice’s Agency Against Corruption (法務部廉政署), established on 2011 July 20, is responsible for cracking down corruption and bribery in **Taiwan**. The total numbers of prosecuted bribe cases decreased from 375 in 2011 to 271 in 2018. The prosecuted objects include public servants, representatives and citizens. According to the *2019 Yearly Report of Taiwan Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Review*, in 2019, the prosecuted cases are 279, totally amount to 805 individuals. The conviction rate in 2019 was 67.2% and it is expected to reach 73% in 2020⁵⁰. However, we have not seen the latest statistics of the 2020 conviction rate until submitting this paper.

In **Kazakhstan**, modern state model has been introduced to prevent corruption through an Open Government electronic platform consisting of five open data portals. A Republican Special Monitoring Group, led by CSO is currently active under the Anti-Corruption Agency of Kazakhstan with regular raids to the regions of Kazakhstan to widely involve civil society representatives in the fight against corruption and increase their public control skills to prevent and combat corruption in the remote regions. In spite of ongoing reforms and undertaken measures, corruption still prevails in the country.

Graph 11, Kazakhstan Corruption Index



Corruption is widespread in the executive branch, law enforcement agencies, local government administrations, the education system, and the judiciary in Kazakhstan, according to human rights CSOs.

According to Transparency International, **Kazakhstan** scored 34 points out of 100 on the 2019 Corruption Perceptions Index, by taking lead among the Central Asian countries. This place Kazakhstan shared with the Philippines, Zambia, Nepal, El Salvador and Swaziland.

⁴⁹ Najib Razak: Malaysian ex-PM gets 12-year jail term in 1MDB corruption trial (2020) <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-53563065>

⁵⁰ Agency against Corruption, Ministry of Justice (法務部廉政署), 2019, *Statistics of Corruption Cases Investigated from July 2000 to December 2018*, <https://www.aac.moj.gov.tw/media/199115/statistics-of-corruption-cases-investigated-from-july-2000-to-december-2018.pdf?mediaDL=true>, retrieved on 2020/12/17.



Most **Mongolians** seem to have lost faith in Parliament. In fact, more than half (56 per cent) of citizens think most or all parliamentarians are corrupt. This is unsurprising, because for many years, corrupt officials used stolen money to run for Parliament or used their power to channel money to companies to which they have ties⁵¹. In addition, many parliamentarians use their position to allocate high-level government jobs to family members or friends⁵².

In November 2018, Mongolia's anti-corruption agency (ACA) investigated a big scandal involving loans to small and medium-sized enterprises.⁵³ They found that more than two-thirds of parliamentarians channelled low-interest loans to their own companies and each company received similar amounts of cash⁵⁴.

In response to the investigation, in March 2019, parliamentarians amended several laws during an emergency legislative session and fired the chief prosecutor, chief judge and head of the ACA, filling those positions with loyalists from their personal connections⁵⁵. Unsurprisingly, investigations stopped and public trust in parliamentarians dropped.

As of August 2020, only four parliamentarians had received any punishment for their role in the scandal. Most simply escaped justice⁵⁶.

5.1.3.4. Equal Participation

In its 2015 original [“power of parity” report](#), MGI established a strong link between gender equality in work and in society—the former is not achievable without the latter. MGI's Gender Parity Score (GPS) uses 15 indicators of gender equality in work and society to measure the distance each country has travelled toward parity, which is set at 1.00. Overall, Asia Pacific has a GPS of 0.56, slightly below the global average of 0.61—both high levels of gender inequality

⁵¹ *Associated Press*, “Mongolians protest over alleged theft of government funds”, March 2017, www.apnews.com/article/99e964560df3438a8dc7b36818b14e4e

⁵² <http://chuham.mn/index.php?newsid=8870>, https://procurement-notices.undp.org/view_file.cfm?doc_id=222046

⁵³ *South China Morning Post*, “A scandal in Mongolia: heads roll in government after US\$1.3m SME fund embezzlement”, November 2018, www.scmp.com/news/asia/east-asia/article/2171965/scandal-mongolia-heads-roll-government-after-us13m-sme-fund

⁵⁴ Transparency International, *Using open data to expose corruption in Mongolia*, October 2019, <https://www.transparency.org/en/blog/using-open-data-to-expose-corruption-in-mongolia>

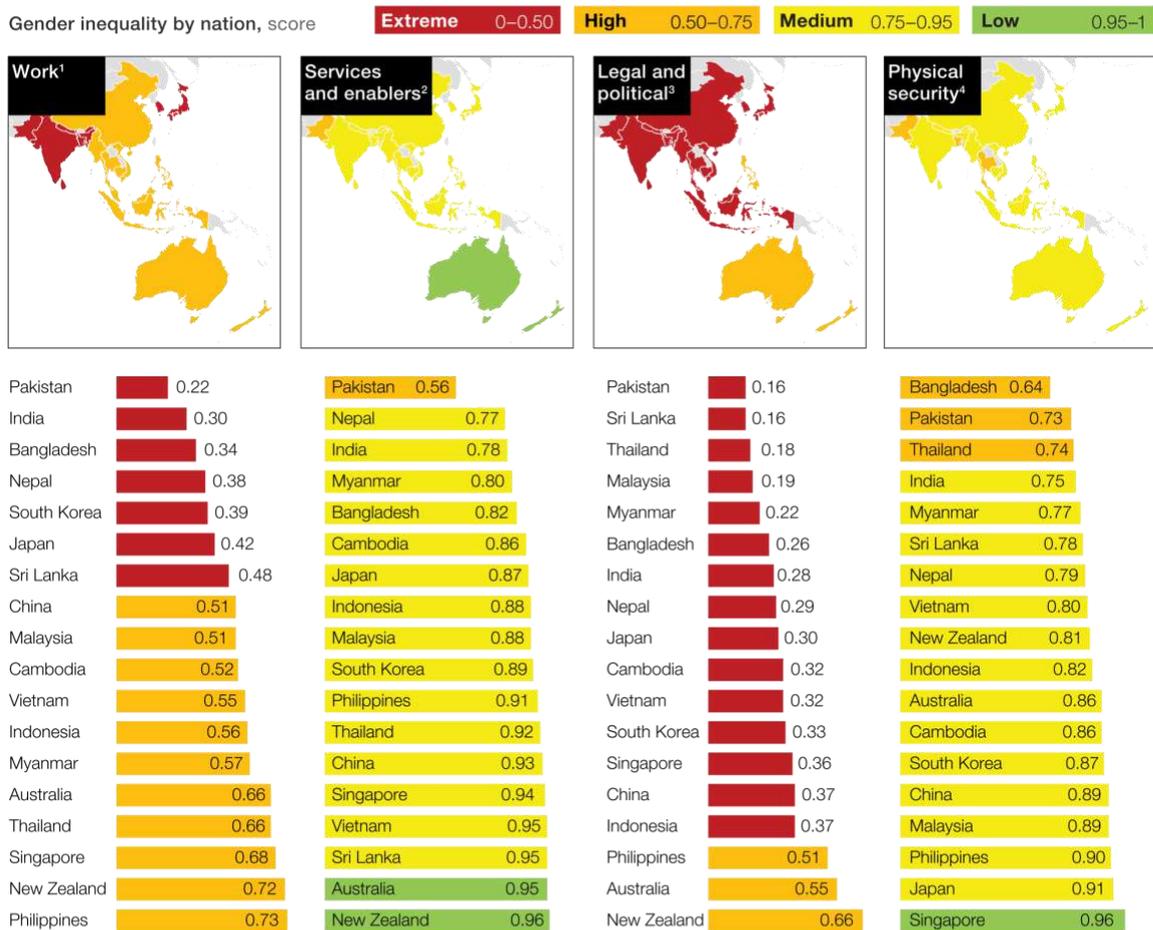
⁵⁵ <https://blogs.ubc.ca/mongolia/2018/political-parties-%D0%B6%D0%B4%D2%AF-implications/>, <https://www.transparency.org/en/press/parliament-of-mongolia-should-uphold-the-independence-of-the-judiciary>

⁵⁶ <https://news.mn/en/793826/>



Figure 6, Gender Inequality index in Asia-Pacific

Gender inequality is high overall in Asia Pacific, with significant variations among countries.



Note: GPS calculations use a sum-of-squares method with equal weighting of indicators. Numbers are rounded to two decimal places. Color coding is based on actual, not rounded, values.

¹Comprising labor-force participation, professional and technical jobs, perceived wage gap for similar work, leadership positions, and unpaid care work.

²Comprising unmet need for family planning, maternal mortality, education, financial inclusion, and digital inclusion.

³Comprising political representation and a legal-protection index.

⁴Comprising sex ratio at birth, child marriage, and violence against women.

McKinsey&Company | Source: McKinsey Global Institute analysis

The six countries furthest from gender parity in work are Bangladesh, India, Japan, Nepal, Pakistan, and South Korea. China does well on female labor-force participation but can improve its share of women in leadership—as can most countries in Asia. Gender inequality also remains high across the region in the sharing of unpaid care work⁵⁷.

In Nepal, the proportion of women in decision-making positions in public institutions was 13.9 percent in 2019. Although the participation of women in overall has increased, no progress has been made in terms of participation in the decision-making positions in public life. There has been significant in proportion of seats held by women in parliaments and local governments, number of enterprises owned by women and women's ownership of property (land and house).

⁵⁷ <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/gender-equality/the-power-of-parity-advancing-womens-equality-in-asia-pacific#>



There has been progress in increasing women's opportunities in decision-making at the national level in **Lao PDR**. Between the 7th and 8th legislature, there was a 2.5 percent increase of women as elected officials, and women currently hold 27.52 percent of the seats in national parliament, a higher number than the world average⁵⁸. One of the reasons for limited participation of women at the local level may be the strict criteria for gaining political affiliation at every level of governance. Eligibility for earning Party Membership is based on a minimum level of education, economic status, and reputable moral-standing, and women face difficulties in meeting this requirement as they tend to have less opportunities to obtain higher levels of education and participate in formal employment compared to men⁵⁹. Also, the reality on the ground is much more complex, and largely rooted in gender roles. Women not only struggle with low levels of literacy and Lao language ability (for ethnic women), but also restrictive social norms that encourage them to listen to their parents and husbands, with the result that the majority of women in rural communities are shy and not confident to speak out. It is also considered improper for women in many (especially ethnic) communities to go far from the home, or travel to other villages especially without their husbands, and it is not considered a woman's role to join village meetings (the rationale being that they work in the home so they are uninformed about issues in the wider world outside the home). Furthermore, women are burdened with heavy work loads and childcare responsibilities that mean they rarely have time or energy to engage in local governance activities, even meetings, much less leadership positions.

Women in Lao PDR hold 27.52 percent of seats in national parliament.

However, women constitute only...

- 0 percent of Provincial Governors
- 8 percent of Deputy Provincial Governors,
- 6 percent of District Majors,
- 2.6 percent of Village Chiefs.

The **Cambodian** Women's Resilience Index in 2019 showed Cambodian women and men have 56/100 and 59/100 resilience index respectively. The study found the least resilient capacity are access to sustainable income and livelihoods, access social protection, access to and control over natural resource and limited infrastructure (ActionAid Cambodia, 2019). Cambodia value for 2018 is 0.474, ranking 114 out of 162 countries. 19.3% parliamentary seats are held by women, 15.1%. For every 100,000 live births, 161.0 women die from pregnancy related cause.

Progress in gender equality in Viet Nam (target 5.5)

In Asia-Pacific, Viet Nam is one of the few countries with female deputies making up more than 25% of seats in the National Assembly. The number of female deputies holding important positions in the National Assembly agencies has risen recently. Women in the 2016-2021 term make up 26,72%, an increase of 2.62% as compared to the previous term.

However, this percentage remains lower than the target of more than 35% set out in the National Strategy on Gender National Equality in 2011-2020. In particular, Viet Nam has the first- ever Chairwoman in the National Assembly (14th National Assembly), a Vice Chairwoman out of four Chairpersons (accounting for 25%), five women out of 18 members of the Standing Committee of the National Assembly (accounting for 27.8%); 3/13 Committees, Councils and Bureaus led by women (accounting for 23.1%); five Vice Chairwomen out of 34 Vice Chairpersons of Ethnic Council and Committees (accounting for 14.7%) and 13 female members out of 45 standing members (accounting for 28.9%).

⁵⁸ Gender Development Association (GDA), *Key Challenges in Gender Development since the 2nd UPR Cycle of Lao PDR* (Gender Development Association, 2019); IPU Parline, "Lao People's Democratic Republic: National Assembly."

⁵⁹ GDA, *Key Challenges in Gender Development*



The first-ever Chairwoman in the 14th National Assembly – Mrs. Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan



Source: Report 454/BC-CP by the Government on 17/10/2017 regarding implementation of the national gender equality target

According to the *Current Endeavors of Gender Equality in Taiwan*, “proportions of women serving as local government heads and elected representatives has increased, further expanding women’s power and political participation.” Female accounted for 16.7% of special municipal mayors while accounting for 37.5% of county/city magistrates/mayors, which is a significant increase of 31.2 percentage points compared to the previous election. “In 2018, women accounted for 35.8% of special municipal councillors, 32.1% of county/city councillors, and 24.9% of township/city representatives.” In terms of female in the legislature, the numbers amount to 47 persons (41.59%).

In **Japan**, married couples must have the same surname under the civil code. CEDAW states it is indirect discrimination against women as over 90% of women takes their husband’s names. According to public opinion in 2017 (n=2,952), 42.5% of the respondents were in favor of a system that allows couples to have the choice of having separate surnames.

In 2019, **Japan's** Gender Gap Index (which quantifies gender inequality over the course of a year in 14 categories, including social and cultural prejudice, employment between men and women, and the wage gap) was the lowest among the G7 countries and ranked 121st out of 153 countries worldwide (compared to 110th in 2018). It ranks 121st among 153 countries in the world (110th in 2018). Even more, the field of politics is lagging behind higher education and employment in closing the gender gap as the ratio of male to female members of the Diet and the ratio of female ministers to male ministers rank 135th and 139th, respectively, the lowest in the world. The Act on Promotion of Gender Equality in the Political Field enacted in 2018 only requests political parties to have as equal numbers of male and female candidates as possible. No enforcement measures are stipulated in the Act. In addition, the target year which was to have achieved 30% of women in decision making and leadership positions, was withdrawn and instead changed to be “at the earliest time in the 2020s” in the Fifth Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-2025. This lack of political will indicates that the pathway to achieving gender justice is still far away in **the country**.

Mongolian women share little more than half of the country’s whole population and almost 50% of people with tertiary education. 2020 parliament election resulted in 13 women Parliamentarians out of 76. The new government established month ago has 4 women ministers. Local elections were last October 2020. Law in court was revised and approved in January 2021. At capital city assembly 9 women were elected out of 45. At district level women were 54 out of 291. In rural MONGOLIA at aimag level women are 126 out of 771. At soum level 2164 women out of 7062. Woman chairman of CRA in one aimag and one soum. One district has a woman governor.

Looking at the sub-regional trend in Asia, it's worth noticing that the empowerment of women is progressing in the East and North-East Asia, which now has the highest proportion of women in



parliament among Asia-Pacific subregions. More than 50 per cent of women of the corresponding age group were enrolled in tertiary education in 2017, a rate that has doubled over the past decade. While East and South and South West Asia it has some of the highest levels of the representation of women in deliberative bodies of local governments at over 40 per cent, the subregion also has the highest levels of violence against ever-partnered women by their current or former partner

The proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments has increased to 19 per cent, from 13 per cent in 2000 (yet the proportion remains below the world average of 24 per cent).

Special efforts should be devoted to improving the situation of young women in Asia (the Pacific subregion is an exception), as more young women than young men are not in education, employment or training (34 per cent of young women against 11 per cent of young men). While South and South-West Asia had the lowest rates of young men not in employment, education or training (10 per cent), it had the highest rates for young women (a startling 46 per cent, meaning almost half of all young women in the subregion were jobless and not in education or training, which puts them at risk of future social and economic exclusion). The gender gap in the share of youth not in education, employment or training was at 36 per cent in South and South-West Asia and 11 per cent in South-East Asia, compared to only 2 per cent in the Pacific. Thus, to be successful, strategies for youth employment, education or vocational training must consider the gender dimension to account for issues particularly affecting young women⁶⁰.

Discouragingly, there has been little to no progress in decreasing the share of youth not in education, employment or training, or in reducing the gender gap in that indicator since 2015⁶¹.

⁶⁰ Asia and The Pacific SDG Progress Report 2020, United Nations Publication

⁶¹ iLOSTAT, iLO modelled estimates, November 2018



Chapter 5



5.2. Engagement and Roles of Parliamentarians in national SDGs mechanism and Review process (especially on SDG 16 Plus) in the last 5 years

As elected representatives of the people, parliamentarians have critical roles to play both in driving forward and reviewing the implementation of the SDGs which give them the opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to improving people’s lives and the health of the planet and play an important role in localising the SDGs especially in addressing local issues especially impacting vulnerable communities at the grassroots. Implementing the SDG framework requires engaged and committed parliamentarians in order to enable, empower, and encourage governments to act, while holding them accountable to their commitments. A key aspect of such accountability is maximizing the use of tools at the disposal of parliamentarians to ensure that no-one is left behind in the design and implementation of actions to achieve the 2030 Agenda, and that such actions reach first those most at risk of being left behind. The analysis below aims at looking at the role of parliamentarians in the target countries over the last 5 years.

In **Bangladesh**, the Government had disseminated responsibilities and designated ministries to take care of particular sections in a five-year plan and involved parliamentarians with the process. Ministries like Economic Relations Division (ERD), Ministry of Housing and Public Works, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Ministry of Local Government to carry out the duties. A high powered Inter-Ministerial Committee on SDGs Monitoring and Implementation has been formed with the Principal Coordinator (SDGs Affairs) in the Prime Minister’s Office as the Chair to coordinate SDGs monitoring and implementation. The Committee comprises of Secretaries from 20 Ministries/ Divisions; and the General Economics Division (GED) of the Planning Commission is the secretariat of the committee which coordinates implementation at the policy level along with monitoring and reporting SDGs attainment status. The Committee has completed the task of priority setting and contextualising global goals with the national ambitions and the ministries have identified

Figure 7 Mapping of SDGs , Pakistan

relevant goals and targets and reflected these in their respective sector plans as well as in their annual performance appraisals (APAs).

After the adoption of 2030 Agenda for social transformation by UNGA in September 2015, the national Parliament of Pakistan was the first amongst the world to adopt the SDGs as National Development Goals (NDGs) in March 2016. SDGs Secretariat⁶² was established at the Parliament House and National Parliamentary Task Force on SDGs was also formed for the oversight on the implementation of SDGs in 2017. The national task force is comprised of 50 (30 female and 20 male) Parliamentarians representing all provinces and regions as well as all parties. One of the major achievement of SDGs Secretariat at Parliament House is the SDGs Legislative Mapping considering all the 17 goals that also includes 20 new or amendment



⁶² <http://sdgsecretariat.com/>



laws at national, provincial and regional levels related to the goal 16+ targets. **Contextualization of SDGs at local level and synchronization with existing policies, plan and legislation is a big gap that need to be addressed in order to have a context specific holistic plan to deal and address national, subnational issues as well as international pledges made by government of Pakistan for sustainable development** backed with clear plan of action with short, medium and long term costed strategies. implemented yet any province in true letter and spirit.

In **India**, parliamentarians have not adequately engaged on SDG 16+ given that advocacy by civil society on these areas is very issue specific. While many parliamentarians, political parties underline the need for promoting peace there has been very little effort put towards conferring it an institutional policy goal under the ambit of the SDGs and specifically SDG 16. Efforts have been taken by CSOs working on SDG 16 to sensitize rule-makers, decision-makers to be aware of the need of working towards SDG 16, but more effort requires to be put in making them partners in implementing SDGs.

The Parliament of **Cambodia** does not have official procedure to monitoring and evaluate the SDGs implementation. SDGs was regulated by the Executive Branch. Parliament has legislative power. The bi-cameral Cambodian parliament consists of a National Assembly and Senate. However, the Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Framework was regulated by Prime Minister at Executive Branch in 2018.

In **Lao PDR**, the 8th NSEDP (2016-2020), was closely related to the SDGs, with 60% of its indicators linked to SDGs. Most action and monitoring related to SDGs is delegated to individual ministries, with SDG 16 being the primary responsibility of the Ministry of Home Affairs, meaning the National Assembly has little additional involvement after approving the NSEDP.

In addition to ensuring the 8th NSEDP was linked to the fulfillment of the SDGs, the National Assembly has also been involved in some direct actions relevant to the implementation of SDG 16 Plus. For instance, *the National Assembly was active in engaging with the USAID-funded LUNA project, which involved increasing transparency and accessibility of Lao laws to the general public through an online, public gazette of legal regulations at the national and provincial levels. Such action ensures government transparency, enhancing access to justice and supporting increased inclusivity through this broadened access.*

In 2020 the APPGM SDG⁶³ undertook a pilot program in ten parliamentary constituencies and for 2021 another 20 new constituencies have been added. This localising agenda is funded by a special grant by the Ministry of Finance and supported by the Economic Planning Unit which is the lead agency. This is a bi partisan⁶⁴ approach in localising SDGs.

In addition to the local action, another parliamentary role is the monitoring of SDG policy formulation which is the formulation of development policies and plans, annual budget allocations and through parliamentary question time to Cabinet members on SDG delivery impacting economic, social and environment concerns in **Malaysia**.

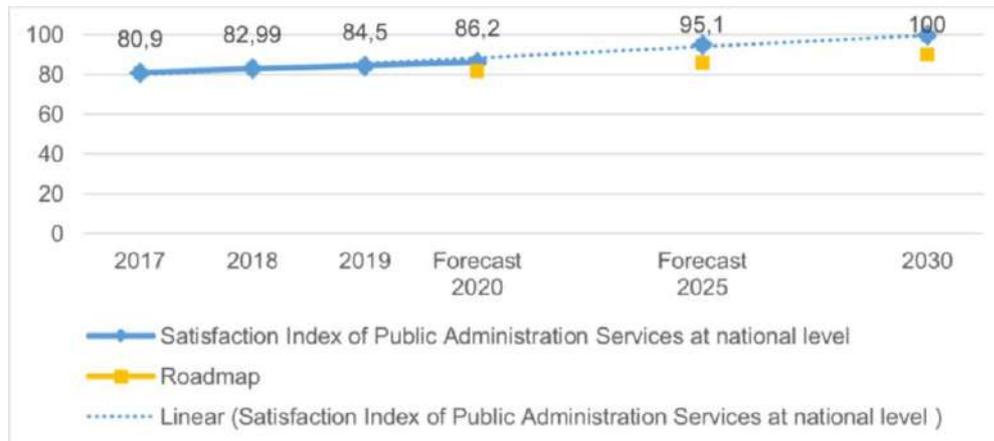
As early as April 2015, **Vietnam** has actively engaged in the process of developing Agenda 2030 by being the host country of the 132nd Inter-Parliamentary Assembly which includes parliamentarians from 130 global legislatures to endorse the [Hanoi Declaration - The Sustainable Development Goals: Turning Words into Action](#). Parliamentarians explicitly committed that “as representatives of the people, we are responsible for ensuring that each and every voice is heard in the political process

⁶³ Close monitoring needed to achieve 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — DOSM (2020) <https://www.theedgemarkets.com/article/close-monitoring-needed-achieve-2030-agenda-sustainable-development-%E2%80%94-dosm>

⁶⁴ Denison Jayasooria (2020) A small spark of hope for bipartisan cooperation in SDGs. <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/505817>

without discrimination and irrespective of social status”⁶⁵ and parliamentary one need to make efforts to raise awareness of people on how the goals are relevant to their own life.

Graph 12 - Satisfaction Index of Public Administration Services (SIPAS) , Viet Nam



Source: Ministry of Home Affairs and expert's

In order for indigenous to safeguard their dignity and honour through the education based on indigenous subjectivity, the Legislative Yuan approved the amendment of the *Education Act for Indigenous Peoples* (《原住民族教育法》) on 2019 Jun 19 in **Taiwan**. According to the Law, “the government shall protect the right of indigenous peoples to education, and train and educate the skilled people they require” (article 1). “The government shall promote indigenous education based on the principles of diversity, equality, autonomy, and respect and shall give priority to giving serious consideration to the requirements of indigenous peoples for historical justice and transitional justice” (article 2). “Despite having enacted the Education Act for Indigenous Peoples, established the Indigenous Curriculum Development Collaboration Center and the indigenous education policy meetings, the government still fails to establish an indigenous peoples-centered educational system with the core concept of indigenous peoples as subjectivity.

The SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles, revised in December 2019 by the **Japanese** government, describes the role of Parliamentarians in achieving SDGs as below;

“As stated in the 2030 Agenda, members of the Diet are deemed to play an integral role from the perspective of effective implementation and accountability. In order to realise a society where “no one will be left behind” in Japan, the Diet and local assemblies are expected to listen to the voices of citizens from all over Japan so that their voices are reflected in national and local government policies. Moreover, parliaments are expected to cooperate with administrative agencies, civil society, and international organisations and propose concrete policy options to solve social issues we face at both national and regional level⁶⁶.”

In **Mongolia**, the Prime Minister created a multi-stakeholder SDG Committee in order to foster SDG work and dialogue around the country’s VNR process. This served to activate other SDG structures and coalitions amongst CSOs and some have requested it continued to exist.

In 2016 the SDGs were presented in the Senate of the **Republic of Kazakhstan** and received full support from the side of national authorities and the Parliament of Kazakhstan. The initiative resulted

⁶⁵ Hanoi Declaration: www.ipu.org/conf-e/132/rpt-gendebate.htm

⁶⁶ The SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles (Revised in Dec 2019), https://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/sdgs/pdf/jisshi_shishin_r011220e.pdf



in adoption of a Statement by the Senate⁶⁷ parliamentarians, which notes the need to promote the application of sustainable development principles and their integration into the national legal framework. Further developments on the SDGs implementation by interested stakeholders, including the parliamentarians are currently in progress without any specific outcomes at this stage.

However, in reality, the citizen's participation is still limited and formalistic due to the lack of effective mechanisms to protect the transparency and accountability of state agencies in the planning and implementation of public policies. The legal mechanisms for people to comment on the formulation of legal documents are still incomplete and also, the legal framework for the organization and activities of social organizations remains limited.

The parliament has been criticized of not voicing citizen enough and the role of civil society organization/CSO in discussing SDG somehow is more active than parliaments. The lack of parliament's participation or people's participation in many world's agenda has been notified too (Raunio, 2006). This is puzzling as parliament is a formal and legal political institution to represent people at the national level. Furthermore, parliaments and international parliamentary forums exist and discuss the SDG topic in their agenda sessions regularly⁶⁸.

These parliamentary discussions and forums about the SDG have somehow been buried or not widely notified. Many parliaments has not yet engage SDG into their works (UN World Public Sector Report 2018). Therefore, to achieve the regular and transparent engagement, parliamentarians need to build open and respective parliamentary committees which will release more parliamentary information, encourage better outreach by legislators and implement specific strategies to improve the position of women and members of vulnerable and marginalized groups hence active citizens participation.

5.3. Role of CSOs in implementation, progress , Monitoring and Review of SDG 16+

An important element that is to be taken into consideration to understand the slow progress of SDGs implementation even in its 6th year is the CSOs shrinking space in Asia. Civil society actors have actively engaged in the process to monitor and report on the status of the SDG implementation and to hold governments accountable for their global commitments. They also contribute through different initiatives to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

According to the CSO Sustainability Index for Asia, only nine countries offer an enabling environment for CSOs to work towards the SDGs. The situation is even severely worsening regarding freedom of expression and association as there have been cases of threat, imprisonment, murder and financial coercion to silence CSOs which have been addressed in almost all the country reports.

Almost all Asian countries have shaped some form of national structures in line with the 2030 Agenda and, in one way or another, most have built separate bodies to monitor the SDGs. *“Local authorities and the CSOs play a very important role in the localisation of the SDGs as well as other global agendas.*

The section below, also aims at looking at the role of CSOs in the target countries:

The first initiative for SDG implementation was mainstreaming the SDGs into the context of **Bangladesh**. After contextualizing the goal, the GoB had taken up a 7th five-year plan to achieve SDGs and assigned ministries in particular sections in order to achieve the best results. For example, to achieve the goal of clean water and sanitation Gob involved Ministries like Local Government Division and Water Resources. In 2015 GoB formed an Inter-Ministerial Committee on “SDG monitoring and Implementation” consisting of 20 Secretaries lead by the Chief Coordinator. GoB had held a survey to assess how much funding it needs to implement SDGs and also introduced an independent

⁶⁷ Upper Chamber of the Parliament of Kazakhstan

⁶⁸ <http://wroxtonworkshop.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/2019-Adiputri-.pdf>



development finance assessment with a title “Strengthening Finance for the 7th Five Year Plan and SDGs in Bangladesh”. An interest was expressed among NGOs, CSOs and GO to work together to achieve SDGs. In 2018 SDG Implementation Review (SIR) was held with GO and development partners where NGOs shared their thought on the progress of SDG implementation in Bangladesh.

In **India**, many CSOs are carrying out independent work on peace and security, justice delivery and institutional governance. However, there is lack of convergence on SDG 16 + given that it requires convergence and partnership with government on issues of transparency and accountability, ethical governance etc. In 2018, Commonwealth Human Rights Institution (CHRI) released a dataspace report on SDG 16 which was critical in breaking the data points of SDG 16. The report has helped map the data landscape of SDG 16 and is an accelerator and baseline blueprint to work on SDG 16+

Apart from lobbying for civil space, CSOs in **Nepal** have played an important role to build awareness and capacity of community-based organizations, CSOs as well as the government agencies through dialogues, meetings, talks, trainings, workshops and publications. A CSO platform called Nepal SDGs Forum was established in February 2016. Nepal SDG Forum’s province committees have been formed in all the seven provinces and are actively engaged in their roles. Thematically focused organizations and networks are associated with Nepal SDGs Forum. Evidence based advocacy, especially issue-based advocacy, led by various CSOs legitimate the inclusive process with ownership so that all the active movements established and issues are recognized. Research, collecting data, preparing monitoring report, review of budget from SDG perspectives, awareness and localization efforts are some ways CSOs have been engaged. Initiatives of Nepal SDGs Forum are contributing to strengthen multistakeholder approach.

Despite the coercive regulatory environment towards the civic spaces, freedom of speech & expressions, right to information etc. the CSOs are being engaged by the governments for policy level interventions and encouraged to sensitize masses on SDGs. Pakistan has already presented its first Voluntary National Review Report at UNHLPF 2019. CSOs in Pakistan played their role while engaging citizens and collecting their voices on the process and progress of SDGs in Pakistan. Although the official VNR 2019 does not reflect on goal 16+ targets however the citizens’ voices report on review & progress in implementation of SDGs in Pakistan published by [Pakistan Development Alliance](#)⁶⁹ Moreover, SDGs Citizens’ Watch Pakistan Program launched the first ever SDGs Citizens Scorecard and reflected the results through [SDGs Citizens’ Dashboard](#)⁷⁰

CSOs are aligned and closely backed up by the two key umbrella NGOs in **Cambodia**, including the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC) and the NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGOF), who are holding space at the Planning and Poverty Reduction Technical Working Group (PPR TWG), the working group that oversees the implementation and monitoring of CSDGs and National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP). Through them, youths and civil society could collectively convey their inputs and recommendations for further improvement to different ministries, government institutions, development partners, and UN agencies in Cambodia.

In order to understand how civil society perceived about the localization and implementation of the SDG 16, the CSOs has conducted regional consultation workshop to collect inputs from CSOs at provincial level engaging 15 provincial NGOs networks to discuss on Goal 16 monitoring and

⁶⁹ Pakistan Development Alliance is the largest coalition of NGOs and CSOs in the country, working together for better governance & accountability towards the achievement of SDGs. PDA has 114 member organizations from all across the country representing youth, PLWDs, women, transgender community, elderly people and religious minorities etc.

⁷⁰ <http://pda.net.pk/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/SDGs-Citizens-Watch-Pakistan-Program-Dossier.pdf>



evaluation for providing inputs and recommendation on the Progress Report 2019 on the Achievement of the Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs).

Local Civil Society Organizations play an important role in achieving the 18 Lao SDGs (17 international SDGs and SDG 18 – Lives Safe from UXO) through continuous effort and local expertise in **Lao PDR**. CSOs work under relevant government ministries in line with the priorities of the National Socio-Economic Development Plan in order to make contributions to achieving the 18 SDGs, including SDG 16 Plus.

The Government of **Lao PDR** has improved the working environment for Lao CSOs in previous years, in particular improving its relationships and increasing collaboration with CSOs at the local and national levels, as well as facilitating increased relationships between CSOs. In addition, it has continued to approve new organizations that have applied to register as local CSOs. This has resulted in a current total of 188 CSOs, with 85 CSOs that have been officially approved (56 Non-Profit Associations-NPAs and 29 Foundations) and 103 CSOs whose applications are processing under Decree 238 on NPAs, which underwent revision in 2017.

The Lao CSO Coordination Office (LCCO) is a national CSO network that focuses on capacity building, coordination, partnership, information exchange, learning and policy engagement at the local, national, regional and international levels.

In 2018, LCCO organized a national CSO consultation workshop on the SDGs and the Voluntary National Report (VNR) to discuss the draft VNR and consolidate inputs to provide comments to the VNR and national SDGs process. A CSO statement with recommendations was submitted to UNDP and the government of Lao PDR included the CSOs' feedback in the VNR report of July 2018.

In **Malaysia**, the CSOs resolved in Oct 2015 after the UN agreed to the 2030 Agenda to establish an Alliance or Network of organisations working on SDG issues drawing together all the interested organisation working on economic, social and environmental concerns. The members of the Malaysian CSO SDG Alliance were instrumental in meeting with the Speaker of Parliament in mid-2019 on the setting up of a parliamentary group on SDGs which eventually materialized by Oct 2019 as the All Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia (APPGM) on SDGs. and the Alliance became the secretariat. With funding from the Ministry of Finance in 2020 and for 2021, the Alliance is working with 30 members of parliament on the localising of SDGs in Malaysia.

The Alliance has been invited by the Economic Planning Unit of the Prime Minister's Department to be a member of the VNR Steering & Technical working committees to prepare the VNR which will be presented at the High Level Political Forum in July 2021 as Malaysia has agreed to present its second VNR Report.

Over the last 5 years, NGOs in **Viet Nam** have actively joined in national or international organisations and accompanied with the people and authorities in implementing development programs at the local level across the country, supporting communities to improve: food security, nutrition health, child protection and development, employment training, livelihoods, clean water and sanitation, gender equality, education, technology innovation and social development. Action for CSO Development Alliance Vietnam (CSA Vietnam) and LNOB Viet Nam are the two leading CSO networks working on SDGs implementation and review process have been well acknowledged by the government.



Figure 8: Possible Roles of Civil Society Organizations in Vietnam Goal 16 Plus Progress , Vietnam

Inform and engage citizens (i.e: organize citizen campaigns on promoting gender equality, protecting women and girls' rights, etc.)
Connect and bring actors together (i.e.: constructing business-CSOs workshop/network)
Build capacity (i.e: creating training programs for CSOs how to link their work to the 2030 Agenda and to integrate Human right-based approach in their strategies)
Raise awareness (i.e: public reports, newsletters, documentary films, video on social and environmental issues in association with Human right-based approach; run roadshow against all forms of violences in schools, universities; etc.)
Provide advice (i.e: participate in writing VNR 2018, in consultancy workshop for the 2020 National SDG Implementation Report; etc.)
Activate data (i.e: provide 45% available citizen - driven data on SDG 16 Plus as of December 2020)
Increase transparency and foster accountability (i.e: critically examine and challenge the views and the data of government on annual national SDG reports, promote information shared by private sectors on the impacts of their activities/practices on sustainable development and their difficulties as well.

The SDGs **Japan** has annually published policy recommendations, “SDGs Bottom-Up Action Plan”, as a Japanese civil society’s answer to SDGs Action Plan, which has announced also annually by the Japanese government. The SDGs Bottom-Up Action Plan supplements the national plan from a “bottom-up” perspective of civil society to jointly facilitate progress toward SDGs achievement. In the version of 2020, it includes more than 180 recommendations from CSOs and submitted to the national SDGs Promotion Roundtable Meeting.

The recommendations follow basic principles of “sustainable society”, “leaving no one behind” and “reaching the furthest behind fast”. They are accumulated voices from CSOs in Japan. SDG 16 targets, especially about governance, transparency, and participatory decision-making are necessary for assessing the justice of the government⁷¹.

The CSOs network of **Mongolia** prese their first joint report on SDGs and targets related to their areas of work and challenges faced in 2019. The CSO report reviewed the current conditions of the implementation of SDGs and targets which are directly related to CSO activities as well as the challenges faced. The CSOs believe that implementation of SDGs directly depends on the inclusion of SDGs in national policies and programmes of Mongolia and their coordination. For this purpose, they have specifically reviewed the inclusion of the solutions, measures to ensure implementation of SDG targets and indicators in the MSDV-2030 adopted in 2016, “Three pillar development policy” ratified by the resolution 42 of the Government in 2018, Government platform for 2016-2020 and its action plan and relevant national programs, policy papers of the sectors. Participation of civil society organizations Member organizations of the “SDGs and CSOs” network cooperated to finalize the report on implementation of SDGs

So far, it seems that no CSOs in **Taiwan** pay much attention to and try to design their project or campaign or monitor government in accordance with the SDG 16+, except for Taiwan AID. Probably

⁷¹ SDGs Bottom-Up Action Plan 2020 (SDGs Japan, 2020)

https://918e59d6-07d0-49f8-a75d-62b41ffe7d11.filesusr.com/ugd/d7b557_4af618c6d28b4b79bc4e0204a6a12b89.pdf

*English version represents only a part of the original recommendations.



because, in Taiwan, most of the CSOs are the ones with social welfare or environmental protection orientations. Indeed the human rights CSOs have campaign for the enactment of the related laws, judicial remedies, but, according to our understandings, the SDG 16+ itself is not exactly incorporated into the ideas of their programs/campaigns.

Recently the Government and the Parliament of the Republic of **Kazakhstan** indicated a need to increase the efficiency of Social service Procurement (SSP) projects and introduce a monitoring and evaluation mechanism into the SSP system. In view of the above, local CSO, Civil Society Development Organization - ARGO, helped advance the model of monitoring and evaluation of state social procurement, and increase the capacity of state officials and CSOs, which significantly contributed to the application of a more accountable and transparent SSP system in the country.



the local CSO activists helped introduce the changes in the national Internal Migrant Registration Regulations with the support of the USAID/ARGO Partnership for Innovations Program. The CSO activists identified and engaged in dialogue and cooperation with relevant authorities, bringing to light gaps and corruption risks in the registration process. The initiative assisted more than 220 stateless people, orphans, conditionally released prisoners, and etc. able to access social support and health care services⁷². Due to these efforts children under the age of 14 have a reduced burden for registration, and, therefore, greater access to social care

In an open letter to the President, human rights defenders noted that government agencies often classify information about the spending of two billion tenge allocated to combat the pandemic as "for official use" and suggested legislative amendments to existing regulations. In its response, the Ministry of Information and Public Development of Kazakhstan recognized the need to change the procedures and announced the formation of the working group with the participation of civil society representatives.



The CSOs act as a catalyst of change and provide services that are complementary to the ones by the government agencies. So far, the civil society representatives haven't been involved in any monitoring activities with respect to SDG 16 plus implementation. Most likely this is due to the recent acknowledgment of the 2030 Agenda by the national authorities as key strategic targets of development. More time and patience are needed to involve interested stakeholders and, specifically, the civil society, into the decision making process on the SDG 16 localization, implementation and oversight on the way to a sustainable development path. This is the first attempt to provide a critical overview of the SDG 16 plus targets implementation through the civil society organizations' lense. Even though the CSOs were not involved in any specific assessment of the SDG 16 plus implementation in the country as discussed above, below are the most successful stories on the SDG 16 plus localization, delivered under the initiative of Kazakhstani CSOs in close partnership with the national/local authorities and other interested stakeholders:

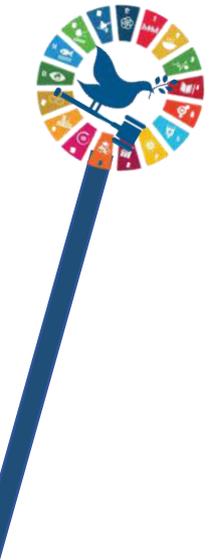
⁷² <https://csocentralasia.exposure.co/gaps-in-the-law-trap-vulnerable-groups>



Based on the examples from the target countries, it could be safely recommended to include development actors to foster an enabling local environment to overcome the challenges of SDGs implementation: institutional capacity building for CSOs; encouraging and supporting national governments in dialoguing with CSOs and local actors, planning and budgeting to include CSOs in national goals; encouraging decentralised and local participation; and developing projects that are need rather than donor-driven.

Systemic barriers

Despite the progress made, none of the social sustainable development goals would be collectively achieved by 2030 and that there could even be regression in relation to some of the goals until the number of systemic barriers were identified, such as: the availability and reliability of data; lack of political will; weak capacity and technical know-how; inadequate mechanisms, structures to recognise financial opportunities and access available financial resources.



Chapter 6



6.1. Recommendations

6.1.1. National Institutions

6.1.1.1. (Bangladesh)

- *Reducing Inequality especially gender inequality and gender based violence should be key focus-* So, to ensure proper and adequate implementation of SDG 10 on reducing inequalities, regional disparities issues must be addressed. Moreover, all sorts of gender inequality and gender based violence should be addressed and legal instruments should be applied focusing on SDGs goal (5.2) Violence against women and girls, (16.2) Violence against children, (5.1) Discrimination against women and girls
- *Illicit finance flow loopholes should be stopped-*It is almost beyond the means of Bangladesh to ensure the necessary finance to achieve the SDGs. Internal or domestic resources can play a vital role in this regard. The trend of illicit financial flows traps the Government in a shortfall situation in terms of domestic resource mobilization. The current money laundering laws and policies are not able to control these incidents. Because it is impossible for Bangladesh to stop illicit flows alone, global coordination and support is needed to control the situation, encourage Government to stop tax dodging by MNCs and illegal mobilizing of resources.
- ***Downward accountability, addressing corruption and building democratic institutions is a must to achieve SDGs-***Government has prepared a development and progress report for donors and other development partners. The spirit of the liberation war and the people's fight for freedom was democracy, socialism, secularism and nationalism. But unfortunately, Bangladesh seems to be leaving these spirits continuously. The reality of free and fair elections, free media, and an independent judiciary, rule of law, autonomous local government and independence of different constitutional commissions is a bit far from the desired level. This situation will surely hamper accountability for development.
- *Strengthening the Judiciary for ensuring Justice for all-* It would be better increasing transparency and access to information makes the judiciary more independent, effective, and inspires confidence from and adherence by its citizens in its judgments and judicial institutions. It can also have a powerful positive effect on external perceptions of a country's judicial system.

6.1.1.2. India

1. To institutionalize peace committees in conflict areas and study its work in mitigating violence over a specific period of time
2. Promoting civil society legitimacy in bringing grassroots data and gaps in institutional frameworks for government policy
3. Enlarging the scope of SDG 16+ with administrative officers responsible for law and decision-making

6.1.1.3. Nepal



- Take urgent measures in order to improve governance, transparency, accountability and effectiveness of the implementing agencies and empower the oversight bodies at all levels: federal, province and local.
- Introduce rules, regulations and programmes and implement them in order to safeguard the fundamental rights of the people, as enshrined in the constitution of Nepal and/or enacted into relevant laws.
- Create and strengthen forums and systems for learning and sharing of lessons, best practices, innovative solutions, constructive feedback and insights. Put emphasis on Goal 16 as a critical enabler and accelerator as it cuts across many themes and the SDGs.
- Establish policy, institutional, implementation, monitoring and reporting mechanisms with participation of CSOs at the local government level.
- Institutionalize participatory review of SDGs at the province and local government levels.
- Create alternative ways, in participation and mobilization of CSOs, for meeting the data gaps.

6.1.1.4. Pakistan

- [National Commission for Human Rights](#) is non-functional since June, 2018. Government of Pakistan should immediately appoint new commissioners and chairperson of the Commission. Furthermore the government should adopt all legislative, policy and institutional measures necessary to ensure that the NCHR is able to carry out its mandate fully and in an effective and independent manner, and in full conformity with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights as per the Paris Principles.
- [National Commission on the Status of Women in Pakistan](#) is also non-functional since 2018 as the chairperson of the commission has yet to be appointed. The government is urged to appoint the chairperson as early as possible. The government should also strengthen its efforts to provide the Commission with sufficient financial and human resources to carry out activities throughout the country.
- According to the [Law & Justice Commission of Pakistan](#) there are more than 120 laws which are discriminatory in nature. Therefore the government should take all necessary measures, including the adoption of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation, to ensure that its legal framework provides full and effective protection against discrimination in all spheres, including the private sphere, and prohibits direct, indirect and multiple discrimination on the basis of religion, political opinion, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity or any other reason that does not provide rightful space and choices of life to the citizens of Pakistan.
- Government should **expedite the legislation relating to violence against women** at the federal and provincial levels particularly on early, child and force marriage restraints, and curbing domestic violence. The government should ensure that the laws comply with international human rights standards. Furthermore, the government should effectively enforce the anti-honour killings and anti-rape laws and other relevant laws criminalizing violence against women and domestic violence, and monitor their enforcement on regular basis.
- Government should call the Commission of Inquiry **Report on enforced disappearances and initiate legislation for the criminalization of enforced disappearance** and put an end to the practice of enforced disappearance and secret detention.
- Government should review the **coercive policies and regulatory frameworks towards NGOs** and create rightful spaces for them to ensure freedom of expression and association
- Government should **immediately announce local government elections** and form local governments all across the country as per the directions of the supreme court of Pakistan. Goal



16+ targets may not be achievable without functional and financially empowered local governments

6.1.1.5. Malaysia

Towards strengthening the partnership between the stakeholders.

- There is a need to review the partnership model where CSOs as permanent members of the planning, delivery and monitoring process. The Malaysian CSO SDG Alliance has been working closely with the Economic Planning Unit since 2015 when the first meeting of SDGs after Sep 2015 was held. Although they are members of the National Steering Committee (NSC) on SDGs and have been in constant touch the participation has been consultative and ad hoc. The NSC has only met twice namely in 2016 and 2019. We are now in a series of consultations and engagements on the preparation of the 2021 VNR. CSOs are calling for a regular meetings yearly for review and monitoring of SDs at the Federal, State and local levels.

Strengthening data collection

- Out of the 247 indicators the DOSM has only 51% or 128 indicators. DOSM has also disaggregated them to the district well which is very good for agencies. However this is not comprehensive enough and therefore we need to secure the remaining data.
- There is a need to undertake a narrative or interpretative writing of what is working and what is not noting the achievements, challenges and opportunities. Currently DOSM in addition to the data provided does indicated the trend such as positive change, negative or unchanged.

Strengthen the cross cutting nature of SDGs in delivery of services as well in monitoring & evaluation

- While there is a very strong call for the cross cutting nature of SDGs however for a majority of agencies the delivery is still very silo in focus due to the mandates of each agencies. Therefore there **needs to be multi stakeholder teams at the local level** which is also multi-disciplinary in nature.
- There is a need to foster the intuitional mechanisms for the greater appreciation of the cross cutting nature such as **gender mainstreaming**, climate change, poverty and inequality agenda from a very strong human rights perspective of leaving no one behind.

6.1.1.6. Cambodia

1. The government should lobby the United Nations Resident Coordinator/UNDP in Cambodia and UNESCAP to support developing a “Cambodia CSO/Government Road Map to SDGs 2021-2030.” It is also relevant to mobilize resource to ensure that the government will establish an independent national human rights institution by 2023 (as per UPR recommendation), and monitor the implementation of SDGs recommendations by the government and relevant bodies.
2. The government should ensure that the Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs) 16 align with the Global SDGs 16 in order to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all level. In this regards, rather than reporting only three targets under CSDGs 16, Cambodia government should extend the scope of implementation and reporting to be align with the Global SDG 16.



3. The Ministry of Planning should develop knowledge management hub for CSOs and other line ministries to do research studies, stakeholder reports, and disseminate information through all channels. So, the quality of data will be circulated by line ministries and CSOs engaging in their relevant field of CSDGs goals and processes.
4. The government seemed to lack of an effective mechanism to localize SDG 16 from the global level to the national and down to the local level. We observe that the national government has limited human resources or understanding on SDG 16. As the result, the local authority has not properly received knowledge about SDG 16 and this will influence the whole implementation of this particular goal. These challenges are attributed to two main reasons: resources availability and coordination among stakeholders.
5. The government, especially the Ministry of Planning, should establish effective mechanism to ensure that inputs and recommendations from all stakeholders, including CSOs and Development Partners, will be implemented properly on SDGs implementation and the voluntary national review. The government should allocate budget to support public sensitization program on public awareness of SDGs to public servants and the general public, especially among younger generation.
6. The government to ensure that CSDGs and SDGs 16 are well integrated into the National Strategic Development Plan with sufficient resource allocation and financing for those priorities. It is important to enable private sector to finance and support the implementation of SDG 16.
7. Develop communication strategy and raise public awareness on SDGs and Human Rights for the government institutions. The government should involve CSOs and private sectors to engage in the SDGs framework by ensuring inclusive participation in the planning, implementation, feedback, monitoring and evaluation. The government should ensure policy and national framework in place to promote full and efficient participation of women, people with disabilities and people living in poverty to have equal opportunity to leadership and benefits at all levels.
8. The government should lobby the National Assembly and Senate to establish a monitoring and reviewing mechanism of CSDGs to hold the government agency to be more accountable to SDGs. We observed that there was lack of mechanism to ensure the stakeholders' inputs, especially from CSOs, in the whole VNR report process of the government in 2019. Civil society organization wanted an open, transparent and inclusive participatory approach in VNR process. The Ministry of Planning did not make a template or format sample for stakeholders to submit the VNR report.

There are some specific recommendations to be addressed shortly for the national government as the following:

- The government should ensure that the Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs) 16 align with the Global SDGs 16 in order to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all level. In this regards, rather than reporting only three targets under CSDGs 16, Cambodia government should extend the scope of implementation and reporting to be align with the Global SDG 16.
- The government should ensure that CSDGs and SDGs 16 are well integrated into the National Strategic Development Plan with sufficient resource allocation and financing for those priorities. It is important to enable private sector to finance and support the implementation of SDG 16.
- The government should translate and integrate SDGs 16 to sub-national level via its Decentralization and De-concentration (D&D) Reform, Public Administrative and Public Financial Reform to local and provincial authorities.
- The government should consider CSDGs and other targets of Global SDGs 16 as the permanent goal to be reviewed.



- The government, especially the Ministry of Planning, should establish effective mechanism to ensure that inputs and recommendations from all stakeholders, including CSOs and Development Partners, will be implementing properly on SDGs implementation and the voluntary national review.
- The government should allocate budget to support public sensitization program on public awareness of SDGs to public servants and the general public, especially among younger generation.

Key Action Plan and Proposal to CSOs/Development Partner/United Nations in Cambodia

- a. Mobilizing a CSOs Working Group on Cambodia SDGs, especially those who work on enabling environment and civic space, and to engage with the government on thematic focus by conducting joint M & E. In addition, CSOs should advocate the public about the national budget allocation to support public sensitization program on public awareness of SDGs to public servants and the general public, especially among younger generation. The awareness on SDGs and CDGs in general, including the SDG 16 in particular is extremely low amongst the general public and a vast majority have not even heard about it.
- b. Develop communication strategy and raise public awareness on SDGs and Human Rights for CSOs Working Group and the government institutions. Within this regard, CSOs should work very closely with the government, especially the Ministry of Planning, to establish effective mechanism to ensure that inputs and recommendations from all stakeholders, including CSOs and Development Partners, will be implementing properly on SDGs implementation and the voluntary national review.
- c. Lobby the United Nations Resident Coordinator/UNDP in Cambodia and UNESCAP to support developing a “Cambodia CSO Road Map to SDGs 2021-2030.” It is also relevant to mobilize CSOs to advocate the government to establish an independent national human rights institution by 2023 (as per UPR recommendation), and monitor the implementation of SDGs recommendations by the government and relevant bodies.
- d. Lobby the National Assembly and Senate to establish a monitoring and reviewing mechanism of CSDGs to hold government more accountable to SDGs. We observed that there was lack of mechanism to ensure the stakeholders’ inputs, especially from CSOs, in the whole VNR report process of the government in 2019. Civil society organization wanted an open, transparent and inclusive participatory approach in VNR process. The Ministry of Planning did not make a template or format sample for stakeholders to submit the VNR report.
- e. Raise CSOs the government awareness and capacity building on SDGs and Human Rights. In addition, it is important for CSOs to lobby the government to review CSDGs’ targets and indicators by integrating more global SDGs’ targets and indicators into CSDGs, and to engage private sector and CSOs into the government’s platform for monitoring and evaluation of SDGs implementation in Cambodia. CSOs advocates the government to ensure that CSDGs and SDGs 16 are well integrated into the National Strategic Development Plan with sufficient resource allocation and financing for those priorities. It is important to enable private sector to finance and support the implementation of SDG 16.



6.1.1.7. Japan

Collaborate with stakeholders to make national-level principles, action plans, and review reports

The government of Japan needs to periodically report the progress of SDG measures on international forums, such as UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) and UNESCAP Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD). In such reports, it is essential to publish relevant data in accordance with the guidance of the UN Statistical Commission or recommendations from stakeholders. Setting clear criteria to evaluate if measures are on a track to achieve targets is also important.

Refer to the “SDGs Bottom-Up Action Plan” for national policy-making⁷³

The SDGs Japan has annually published policy recommendations, “SDGs Bottom-Up Action Plan”. The SDGs Bottom-Up Action Plan supplements the national plan from a “bottom-up” perspective of civil society to jointly facilitate progress toward SDGs achievement. In the version of 2020, it includes more than 180 recommendations from CSOs. The recommendations follow basic principles of “sustainable society”, “leaving no one behind” and “reaching the furthest behind fast”. They are accumulated voices from CSOs in Japan. SDG 16 targets, especially about governance, transparency, and participatory decision-making are necessary for assessing the justice of the government.

Apply SDGs-centered measures for leaving no one behind⁷⁴

“Transforming our world into a sustainable society free of poverty, leaving no one behind”

This is the philosophy underlying the SDGs, the global guidelines adopted by the United Nations in 2015. The Civil Society Network on SDGs (SDGs Japan), aim to achieve the SDGs through the inclusion of diverse stakeholders from the perspective of civil society. In the midst of the pandemic that has transformed our society, “SDGs-centered measures” are necessary to achieve the principle, “leaving no one behind⁷⁵”.

- The governments must safeguard to eliminate discrimination, prejudice, and misinformation related to COVID-19, and to ensure that all rights, including human rights.
- The Japanese government should establish independent national human rights institutions to strengthen and protect the human rights, complying with the Paris Principles, as recommended by UN human rights committees.
- The governments should establish independent human rights institutions, which are based on universal human rights norms and standards, in accordance with the Paris Principles.

⁷³ SDGs Bottom-Up Action Plan 2020 (SDGs Japan, 2020)

https://918e59d6-07d0-49f8-a75d-62b41ffe7d11.filesusr.com/ugd/d7b557_4af618c6d28b4b79bc4e0204a6a12b89.pdf

⁷⁴ Recommendations and the role of civil society (August 12, 2020)

https://918e59d6-07d0-49f8-a75d-62b41ffe7d11.filesusr.com/ugd/d7b557_022886e192c243fa8ff4839ec08965dc.pdf

⁷⁵ Civil Society Practices toward “Resilient Societies” (October 21, 2020)

https://d7b557ca-e496-4292-be6d-a6bfb1e38152.usrfiles.com/ugd/d7b557_1832a8d2d0cb4b23a55f5df63870f0ae.pdf



- The government of Japan should hold regular consultations on the implementation of SDG 16, in line with multi-stakeholder dialogues at the SDGs Promotion Roundtable. The minutes for those consultations should be published.
- In order to promote SDG16+, the government should become a member of the Pathfinders, a group of 36 UN member states, international organizations, global partnerships, civil society and the private sector for peaceful, just and inclusive societies, and translate key documents into the Japanese language⁷⁶.

6.1.1.8. Taiwan

- Taiwan government needs to be more actively enacting the laws related to human rights, such as the Anti-discrimination Law, Refugee Law, and others. In addition, the USR is a good way to achieve the practice of SDG 16+. After all, the law is not enough on its own while education can change the collective understandings of the society. Then, in order to the most degree see the SDG 16+ achieved in Taiwan, government's actively engagement in making law and implementing USR is necessary.

6.1.1.9. Kazakhstan

- Strengthen the mechanism of inclusive public participation in the 2030 Agenda localization and implementation, specifically, the vulnerable and marginalized groups (elderly, ethnic minorities, women, youth and children);
- Align the national legislation and law enforcement practice in the field of ensuring and protecting human rights with the fundamental principles of international law and international standards of human rights. The efforts should be introduced to revise the legislation on the freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication; the freedom of peaceful assembly and association in line with the international standards;
- Promote better public participation in the VNR development through the presentation of civil society case studies.

6.1.1.10. Vietnam

- First of all, to upgrade the level of participation of multi-stakeholders in Vietnam from the second level (the consultative engagement) to the highest level (the partnerships of knowledge), the meaningfulness of the interaction can be undermined when a government tries to co-opt stakeholders through the partnership. It is possible, for example, for a government to collaborate with CSOs to buy their allegiance.
- Vietnam government needs to recognize and create an enabling environment for CSOs, local and international NGOs, community-based organizations, etc. that should be given legal endorsement. In addition, it is necessary to develop a framework for engagement, contribution and collaboration between CSOs and specific indicators for the implementation of the National Action Plan; to create an enabling environment for local CSOs to access and mobilize diverse resources for development; to strengthen the roles and capacities of CSOs

⁷⁶ Narrative Report on the State of National Implementation of SDGs: Focus on SDG 16 (JANIC, 2020)

https://www.ianic.org/blog/2020/11/27/sdg16_report/



and invest in partnerships at the stages of planning cycle, consultation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

- Another recommendation for government is to implement better monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the SDGs in the annual National reports, which increase the engagement of CSOs, community-based organizations and local and international NGOs in monitoring and contribution to the report, and recognize the data provided by citizens. For instance, the report writing process should include the participation of all stakeholders from the beginning.
- A separated budget for investing in capacity building and in SDG implementation is also very of essence in order to develop specific strategies and plans for SDG implementation at all levels.
- One more recommendation is that Vietnam government should strengthen measures to 'Leave no one behind' in the implementation of the SDGs. The engagement of children and young people in SDG implementation should be taken into account since their voices, contributions and actions are known as the key factors for the success of the SDGs and later.

6.2. Regional Institutions:

On Multi-stakeholder Partnership

- Regional Forums on goal 16+ need to be created for more collaborative actions to influence governments towards peaceful, inclusive and just societies
- Multi-stakeholders engagement processes need to be initiated under the umbrella of UN for regional peace, trade & development, enhanced civic spaces and freedom of expression and association
- CSOs in Asia can build solidarity through multi—stakeholder dialogues and international monitoring to exchange good practices and effective response to Covid-19 by using international frameworks such as VNS, UPR or human rights treaties. It is crucial to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.
- There is a case of having not an integrated follow-up system for the SDGs on a national level, and a weak multi-stakeholder engagement mechanism for inclusive and integrated societies. In some countries, the SDGs was one of the national strategies for promoting “export-oriented” economic growth in science and technology fields ignoring human rights. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, exploitation of freedom of expression, hence, anonymous defamation, is at stake due to the absence of technology ethics⁷⁷.
- Understanding these current circumstances, we demand all stakeholders to establish a comprehensive policy coordination system for SDGs implementation with a multi-stakeholder engagement mechanism at a regional level.
- Facilitate a regional multi-stakeholder platform to foster regional dialogue, cooperation and peer learning for SDG 16 plus policy innovations;

Revamping Regional Institutions

⁷⁷ The Statement of North East Asian Civil Society 2020 (November 4, 2020) https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/The%20Statement%20of%20North%20East%20Asian%20Civil%20Society%202020_Summary.pdf



- Regularize the annual sessions of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) to combat poverty, inequality, climate changes, terrorism and violent extremism
- Alongside National government's initiative regional institutions can strengthen the partnership with the government to collaborate for ensuring the availability of concrete protection measures for journalists, bloggers and HRDs identified as at risk of violence, tailored to the individual's specific needs. Provide training to law enforcement authorities in the safety of journalists, bloggers and HRDs, including how to ensure the protection of those at risk.
- Regional level organizations can work together to foster a standard and quality education system, in terms of accessibility, quality, and career oriented skill based education. That will ensure employment and entrepreneurship skills for financial solvency, social mobility and reduced inequality. For these School-level management and teacher training should be improved, coordinated and monitored.
- Regional partnerships with the bigger resources and better capacity from their members need to provide to the weaker national members more strongly the supports (technical, financial and human resources) and to create an enabling environment for local CSOs to be able to access SDG16 Plus principles and then plan an initial and even detailed roadmap to achieve a peace, justice and inclusive society.

Innovative Solutions

- Support networking, exchange of knowledge and ideas and develop learning and sharing platforms.
- Identify common issues and challenges and make lobby and advocacy.
- Support for innovative solutions to the obstacles to meeting the SDGs and realizing 'leave no one behind'.

LNOB

- Regional and Global Cooperation needed for Safe Migration and to reduce child & women trafficking and sex slavery.
- The principle of leaving no one behind should involve youth to use their potential for transforming our world to sustainable development, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Regional and International Organizations should consider youth as the driving force to realize this global agenda and Beyond by Investing in youth allow the whole nation to harvest fruitfully in the long run.
- Marginalized people or groups such as women, people with disabilities, elderly, youth, and migrants are often suffered from the violation of human rights. Issues are largely due to the vulnerability resulting from discrimination, social obstacles, and the lack of access to policy-making.
- Expand and institutionalize space for CSOs and people under vulnerable situations to be engaged in decision-making process
- To institutionalize peace committees in conflict areas and study its work in mitigating violence over a specific period of time
- Regional institutions have the advantages of understanding the national situations better hence it should be a plausible responsibility of the regional organizations to conduct the guidelines on the Sustainable Development Goal 16 Plus associated with Human right-based approach and "No one leave behind" principle for specific regions. For instance, the indicator 5.3.2 among SDG16+ "plus"
- Ensure equal access to education for all



Ensuring Safe Civic Space

- Promoting civil society legitimacy in bringing grassroots data and gaps in institutional frameworks for government policy
- Enlarging the scope of SDG 16+ with administrative officers responsible for law and decision-making
- Refine current laws and policies to effectively eradicate gender-based Violence

Capacity Building

- Strengthen the capacity of civil society, government and business stakeholders to get a better notion of the SDG 16 plus and, thus, encourage its better implementation at the national level;
- Encourage and support the national and local civil leaders' participation in the SDG-related regional and global meetings.

6.3. Global Institutions:

- Global funding agencies and bilateral donors should invest on local civil society organizations for more sustainable, inclusive and participatory solutions for addressing chronic issues related to freedom of expression and association, civic spaces and liberalization of conservative societies
- Support civil society organizations for them to mobilize, participate, strengthen accountability and then to support governments in meeting the SDGs.
- G20 should provide financing for SDGs especially goal 16+ to ensure more peaceful, inclusive and just societies
- Official Development Assistance (ODA) for developing nations should be linked with progress on goal 16+ targets.

SDG 16 should be annually reviewed by the UN HLPF

As part of the current UN HLPF Review process underway, an annual review of SDG 16 by UN HLPF should be agreed, similar to the annual review which takes place of SDG 17. This is because SDG16 is linked with all other SDGs, & peaceful, just and inclusive societies underpin the entire 2030 Agenda, Similar to SDG17 on the Means of Implementation, SDG16 targets can be viewed as outcomes themselves, and importantly as enablers of progress towards the entire 2030 Agenda. Additionally, SDG16's focus on improving responsive governance, bolstering institutions at all levels and strengthening multilateralism are critical to implementing the 2030 Agenda, with these areas representing important issues that warrant a focus at the HLPF each year.

The international community should develop "civic space indicators" linked to SDG 16

Despite Target 16.10's clear aim to protect fundamental freedoms, the global-level indicators adopted by the international community to assess progress towards achieving this target do not at present adequately measure the extent to which they are being protected. There is an urgent need for the international community to develop additional global indicators (and ideally supplementary nationalised indicators) to allow for systematic review of the efforts by UN member states to protect the fundamental freedoms of their people, in accordance with Target 16.10 of the SDGs and in line with international human rights standards and national human rights laws. These new & expanded civic space indicators should include structural and process as well as "outcome" indicators.



The international political community should launch an initiative to support and invest in civil society globally

The international political community, international institutions, donors of development assistance and philanthropic organisations and foundations should play a stronger role in efforts to preserve civic space. A proposal for co-ordinated international action to support civil society and civic space everywhere is the Forus “Global Initiative” published in 2018 . (see links : <https://forus-international.org/en/resources/88> and <https://forus-international.org/en/news/forus-a-positive-agenda>). This is a blueprint for investment in, and the strengthening of civil society internationally It calls on the international community to develop an international initiative for civil society that will increase its capacity, independence and future impacts. The paper calls for the creation of essential institutional infrastructure and supportive political and social eco-systems for civil society everywhere to enable it to participate effectively in multiple levels of governance from local to global (ie the 2030 Agenda). The Global Initiative outlines eight key pillars of action for civil society in the 21st Century including a specific pillar of action to promote an enabling environment & civic space for CSOs globally.

- Contribute to promoting rule of law and human rights and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance.
- Promote and enforce global partnership for development.

Leave No One Behind

- A stronger commitment and urgent action are required from all to combat sexual and gender-based violence. UN and development partners should commit to work hand in hand with the government of Bangladesh to do more to stop sexual and gender-based violence.
- SDG’s implementation relies on domestic resource mobilization which requires action to stop loopholes and so-called tax havens for money laundering activities, which should be done through a global coordination system through the UN or through inter-state action. CSOs are demanding UN Member States take action to upgrade the UN Tax Committee into a UN Tax Commission, and to prepare Internal Bank and Tax Transparency laws and rules that reduce the practice of “Race to Bottom” by countries seeking to attract foreign capital.
- Suggestions for future strategies to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs for the Decade of Action (2020-2030).
- **Global conversation from a risk-based view of transformational trends towards a positive,** possibility focused perspective that recognizes global megatrends as an engine for advancing socio-economic development.
- **Elaborate a practical and positive approach for businesses and countries** to leverage possibilities associated with ongoing global transformations, many of which will be accelerated by the COVID 19 crisis.
- **Launch** tailor-made donor assistance programs at the regional and national levels to enhance the implementations of 2030 Agenda and SDG 16 plus, in particular. The technical assistance should include relevant expertise, targeted, *inter alia*, to expand the civic space so that no one is left behind in achieving the SDGs.
- **Systemic change requires transformational policies -identified a set of characteristics common to countries** that have demonstrated successful growth and increased wellbeing. In this context, successful growth means growth that improves living standards and societal wellbeing and cohesion.
- **Because Taiwan so far can not have the membership of most of international organizations due to the One-Chine Policy imposed by China. Even the Covid-19 pandemic engulfed the world, Taiwan is still more or less the orphan left behind by the international health system, the WHO. The CSOs indeed can attend the international CSOs conferences/seminars. However, if the CSOs from China are also present in the same conferences/seminars, Taiwan**



CSOs nationhood does not be officially recognized. Therefore, one of our recommendations to regional and global institutions is to appeal that they should courageously recognize Taiwan's nationhood by name of either Taiwan or its official name R.O.C. with no fears of P.R.C. irrational and unreasonable protests/intimidations.

Multi – Stakeholder Partnership

- In order to achieve SDG 16+, it is important to involve various stakeholders in the preparation of national-level guiding principles, action plans, and follow-up reports, as well as increasing the transparency of the policy-making process. CSOs have proposed that the role of third-party committees composed of diverse stakeholders, including CSOs and marginalized people, should be strengthened.
- As many countries challenge in integrating global SDG indicators into national monitoring systems and in meeting the full data needs by 2030, they need to develop national indicators to improve SDG data coverage through proxy indicators or alternative data which are available in each country. It is also recognized that not all the multiple aspects of targets are addressed by the global indicators and that countries should complement the global indicators with additional nationally relevant indicators⁷⁸.

On Indicators

- To enforce SDG implementations meeting regional, national, or local demands, follow-up processes and sharing information globally are needed.
- Also, Analysing gaps and achievement on SDG16+ should be evidence-based. It is important to invest in the inclusive measurement systems that lead on effective implementation, as well as annual revision scheme of global indicators.
- Strengthen the monitoring of national mechanism on SDGs' implementation in countries with special focus on peaceful, just and inclusive society;
- **Both MDGs and SDGs are declarative principles. There are indicators to evaluate if and/or to which degree they are achieved, indeed. The political and law contexts are different in different countries in terms of the degrees of development, democracy and others. Therefore, different indicators designed in accordance with such different context perhaps will bring more fruits to the promotion of the SDG 16+.**

Recommendations on Contextualising COVID-19

- The UN HLPF and regional bodies should standardize the modality of VNRs and its presentation in a more effective manner to follow up member states efforts to implement SDGs in the context of COVID-19.
- The UN should encourage member states to present their next VNRs with reflections on their responses to COVID-19, including safeguarding human rights of citizens and residents.
- The UN HLPF and regional bodies should standardize the modality of VNRs and its presentation in a more effective manner to follow up member states efforts to implement SDGs in the context of COVID-19.

⁷⁸ SDG 16 Indicators (SDG16 Hub, 2021), <https://www.sdg16hub.org/landing-page/sdg-16-indicators>



- The UN should encourage member states to present their next VNRs with reflections on their responses to COVID-19, including safeguarding human rights of citizens and residents⁷⁹.
- Develop and introduce the SDG 16 plus global indicators, which reflect the arising challenges of COVID-19 pandemic and associated threats;

Proposed Indicators:

1. Number of peace led committees in conflict areas
2. Access to justice to marginalized groups such as Dalits, tribals, women
3. Level of good governance in public services
4. Measuring effective transparency and accountability of governing schemes and policies
5. Measuring public engagement in institutional assessment of SDGs

⁷⁹ Narrative Report on the State of National Implementation of SDGs: Focus on SDG 16 (JANIC, 2020), https://www.ianic.org/blog/2020/11/27/sdg16_report/