

ADVANCING GOOD GOVERNANCE in International Development

Peace, Security, and Governance in Goal 16: How Do We Tackle This?

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Rhodes House, Oxford

Plenary: Perspectives on Governance from the Global South: Building Institutions, Capacity and a Robust Private Sector

This session examined the sensitivities and ramifications of Goal 16 from a range of perspectives from the Global South. The panel emphasized the importance of citizen involvement in Goal 16 issues as well as collaboration between the public and private sectors. Panellists also considered the issues raised by the universality of the Sustainable Development Goals (“SDGs”). The session concluded with a discussion of the challenges of implementing Goal 16 and ways to measure progress.

Key Points from the Session

- 1. The SDGs are all interlinked; thus a global social contract is needed for their implementation.** Panellists noted that Goal 16 cannot be addressed in isolation. Rather, good governance is implicated in all the other SDGs, from health to poverty reduction to education. This necessitates all countries working towards a renewed “global social contract.” Panellists stressed that the success of the SDGs will lie in our ability to unite as a global community.
- 2. Empowering individuals is key to Goal 16.** Making progress on issues of peace and governance in the Global South requires strong societies and governments. This in turn necessitates a strong political opposition and well informed citizenry. We must counter the tendency of power to centralize “up,” and shift power downwards to the people. Panellists provided examples of governments in the Global South which have sought to supplement nationally-enforced laws with local customs and decentralized decision-making.
- 3. Goal 16 requires bottom-up efforts to tackle corruption.** To establish the overall goal of peace, it is imperative to consider ways to prevent and address corruption. Public policy should deal with persons who take bribes in the same manner as it deals with those who offer bribes. Panellists highlighted that educating youth in ethics and key governance principles is crucial to fostering a broader culture in which Goal 16 can be fully implemented.
- 4. Engaging the private sector is imperative to making progress with Goal 16.** Panellists highlighted increased private sector engagement with the SDGs as part of a broader move towards inclusive business. It was noted that Goal 16 issues – such as rule of law, anti-corruption, and peace – underpin the basic business model of any private company. Thus, prioritizing progress with Goal 16 issues will allow private companies to thrive financially, become more inclusive, and contribute to broader economic development. Businesses should seek partnerships in implementing Goal 16.
- 5. The universality of Goal 16 requires different ways of thinking.** Unlike the Millennium Development Goals, the SDGs apply to both developed and developing countries. This necessitates that the developed world take a hard look at its own governance and institutions. For example, addressing development in Africa requires tackling tax havens in Europe. It also requires Western donors to closely examine the effect of their aid expenditures. We must shift from viewing development as something done to the Global South, to viewing development as a collective process of global transformation.

Emerging Questions

1. How can intergovernmental organizations play a more active role in partnering with the private sector?
2. How do we foster a well-informed citizenry which can advocate for progress with Goal 16?
3. How do we measure progress with Goal 16 and with the SDGs broadly?
4. How do we make institutions at all levels more relevant and agile?