Turning the SDG 16 into Reality
Ensuring Inclusivity and Rightful Access to the Public Institutions

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Background

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), formally known as *Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, adopted by the United Nations (UN) in 2015 is a vision laid out for improving the lives of people across the world over the next 15 years. It replaces and expands on the UN’s previous agenda, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that were adopted in 2000. MDGs were designed predominantly to address the human security concerns in developing countries and met with widely varying degrees of success. As such, the internationally agreed SDGs emerged as a benchmark reference point for a wide range of political, public, and private actors to be engaged with multiple dimensions of development and security. These newly set
global goals are more ambitious than MDGs and are developed to apply to every country, not just the developing world. The SDG goals are broad in contents, but interdependent in nature. Each of the goals has a list of 169 targets to achieve within a specific time frame.

The SDGs cover a range of social and economic development issues including poverty, hunger, health, education, global warming, gender equality, water, sanitation, energy, urbanization, environment and social justice. These targets are meant to be achieved by 2030 by including ordinary people’s voices and pledging to ‘leave no one behind’. However, the critical feature of this new comprehensive framework is explicit, recognizes the substantial impact of violence and insecurity on the development and vice versa stating that “We are determined to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence. There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development”. Now, the challenge lies with this inclusivity goal, known as SDG 16, which stresses on promoting just, peaceful and inclusive societies. Henceforth, SDG 16 “is dedicated to the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, the provision of access to justice for all and building effective, accountable institutions at all levels”. The passage of SDG 16 is, therefore, a milestone, a recognition that people cannot improve their lives without the power to exercise their rights.

The SDG came into effect at a critical juncture of the UN’s history when global military and security engagement continues to increase. The global military expenditure continues to maintain an upward increase, reaching nearly US$1.7 trillion in 2016, while peace and development activities remain deeply underfunded with a spending of US$142.6 billion in 2016. Enormous constraints have been put on UN peace efforts as a result of the Trump administration’s budget cuts, and a third of all US foreign aid was disbursed for military assistance and security assistance in 2015. A recent Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report identified that:

...while governments should be commended for sustaining investment in development during these difficult times, it is unacceptable that—once again—aid to the poorest countries is in decline. Recent signals from some donor countries on future aid levels add a further cause of
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cconcern. Major donor nations have committed to refocusing their efforts on the least developed countries. It is now time, turn these commitments into action. Together, we must pay close attention to where the money is going and what is being included in foreign aid. 7

While SDG 16 recognizes that peace, justice, and accountable institutions are critical to sustainable, transformative, and inclusive development, it also makes it clear that ‘governance’ and ‘development’ cannot be seen in isolation from politics, power and institutions. It lays out complex and comprehensive targets on a range of issues, including reducing violence and corruption, combating trafficking and organized crime, guaranteeing legal identity for all. In doing so, SDG 16 provides a long-awaited and powerful mandate for donors and implementing organizations to develop a coherent focus on these critically important issues. By placing governance problems at the centre, it represents a rare recognition that the most strategic tools available for addressing violence, conflict and promoting long-term peaceful political transition are in fact, peacebuilding, governance and development efforts. What contradicts here is the risk of government agenda based on a narrow definition of security that often tends to project that peace can be achieved through hard measures. While endorsement of SDG 16 is a positive and welcomed development, one has to acknowledge that achieving significant, transformative results on SDG 16 by 2030 is a tall order. The mixed track-record of past donor-supported governance and the rule of law projects is a sobering reminder of this. Despite their best intentions, historically, many grand state-building and institutional strengthening projects have fallen short of their intended goals. 8 Moreover, given the nature of politics and governments in different countries, SDG 16 could be a controversial goal. It met with criticism by many state apparatuses, as it is often perceived to be an encroachment within sovereign authorities of the governments and states. Many governments indicated that SDG 16 should be a technical, economic undertaking and that justice was too political to be included. 9 Therefore, given the trends across the South and the mixed track-record of past donor supported governance and the rule of law projects, the questions that deserve attention are: What are the complex dimensions of SDG 16 that stifles meaningful change in the least developing country? Moreover, how
the state and other stakeholders can respond to these complex challenges need to be examined. The structural analysis of this chapter is built upon different country experiences rather than focusing on one particular country. However, the case of Bangladesh can be considered as a reference point to understand the common cross-regional issues and concerns.

**Complex Dimensions of SDG 16: Dilemma between Peace and Hard Security**

The theoretical challenge regarding SDG 16 stems from the complex concepts and targets linked to SDG 16. The concept of peace itself is a contested concept as it builds upon context, culture and coexistence across the states. Johan Galtung differentiated between two forms of peace outcome: 'positive peace' and 'negative peace.' The complex structures of peace denote 'positive peace' as a thriving peace in which collaboration and inclusive human agencies allow, in Galtung’s words, 'the integration of human society'. Therefore, positive peace is a self-sustaining process that creates institutions based on equity and equality. On the other hand, negative peace can manifest in several ways that include political violence—including wars, genocides, mass killings, terrorism and other violent manifestations of conflict. Negative peace, often unstable or fragile, yet can enable conditions for growth and development in aggregated terms. Therefore, the SDG 16's meaningfulness is dependent on how a state views peace and conflict and responds to these issues. The practical difficulties are more associated with the feasibility and measurement of Goal 16. The idea of 'good governance,' as identified in more than ten targets, is either conceptually impractical or the credible, accurate, relevant data does not exist. However, it can be argued that reliable data may not be available or measuring the success of the targets are difficult, but a global target laid by the UN will ultimately generate demand for the relevant data regarding corruption, exclusion, injustice, and violence. The SDG 16 targets encompassing complex dynamics between institutions and the public is shown in Annex 10.1.

A recent study conducted by the Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) on Bangladesh’s progress toward SDG 16 indicates that a significant number of gaps and challenges exist to implement SDG 16.
The report identified that “several of the targets under Goal 16 are multi-dimensional in the sense that they measure broad concepts like ‘corruption’ which cannot be adequately captured by a single indicator”.11 For some targets, the selected global indicators fail to achieve critical aspects. For instance, the Target 16.4 seeks to combat all forms of organized crime, but no official indicator measures organized crime, nor an indicator related to strengthening the recovery and return of stolen assets.12 However, even if there are official indicators capable of capturing progress towards SDG 16, the relevant data is absent to validate the progress. The formal assessment of progress or review of data for 169 targets generally relies on data generated by the government agencies, particularly the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). The data generated by BBS are often contested due to the inadequacy of documentation and quality of information received from different public offices. However, BBS remains as the principal source to verify and quantify the qualitative progress of SDG.

Geoffrey Sachs identified that

we are not producing any raw data, so we only harvest what is globally available, on a relatively comparable basis. For some of the indicators, we are going to academic studies that have done really interesting things that the official system is just not focusing on. But we are not producing our own data.13

Moreover, politically sensitive targets, such as those related to corruption and governance, require that governments assess their efficiency—illicit financial flows (under Target 16.4) may involve government officials, corruption (under Target 16.5) may affect government elites, while governments may be restricting information, or even targeting journalists, trade unionists or civil society activists (under Target 16.10).14

Given the complexity of the components laid in the SDG 16 and obscurity in measuring its progress and success, the idea of peace and security becomes contested. When it comes to ‘peace’, it naturally includes the idea of security in the discourse of SDG 16. Security and justice are the critical components for peace and development; nonetheless, these two concepts should be defined regarding how people across society experience them. That means, the primary goal of the state and governance is human security, and only by prioritizing human security agenda, a solid
foundation for state security can be built. However, the idea of ‘security dilemma’ persists in developing countries since the concept of security remains as the exclusive domain of the state. The existential uncertainty of the political governments lies in the tensions between the government’s performance and the day to day public aspirations focusing on stable peace and ensured access to justice and rights. Hence, Booth and Wheeler would argue that the term ‘security dilemma’ describes a familiar predicament experienced by decision-makers in a world already overflowing with dilemmas.15

The security dilemma is a foundational concept because, above all, it engages with the existential condition of uncertainty that characterizes all government-public relations—be it the domestic level or international politics.16 This security dilemma gets to the heart of the state’s standing and views on security, conflict, violence, and protests. The dilemma further gets complicated when security and justice are delivered in uneven terms and equitable distribution of resources becomes a robust phenomenon. Since human experiences of alienation, marginalization and deprivation become inescapable, uncertainty in state-individuals relations emerges as a significant challenge. Insecurity, nevertheless, cannot be directly correlated with uncertainty, since it can appear from other sources, i.e., international or regional politics. Henceforth, SDG 16 seeks to address some of the most complex and intractable uncertainty problems.

The overall phenomenon of insecurity, in South Asia or Africa as examples, remains mostly intra-state or domestic as the conflicting parties compete with established political actors or hence the government to gain access to power and govern. This becomes evident withstanding the fact that the causes of conflicts and tensions between the state and the individuals in these two regions are predominantly comparable though the expressions of conflicts are different. Factors that perpetuate conflicts in these two regions include weak state institutions, opaque governments and personalized politics. For instance, weak state institutions in the Middle East, Somalia, South Sudan, Central African Republic (CAR) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), to name just a few, have been the cause of protracted violence.17

Developing states essentially include weaker institutions due to multiple factors ranging from lack of accountability to transparency to
integrity. As a result, these state institutions are often unable to provide adequate social services, while unequal delivery of services perpetuates perceptions of marginalization among the mass population and generates a lack of buy-in to counter violence, conflicts and radicalization processes at the grassroots level. This, in turn, tends to contribute to a lack of legitimacy for states and governments and this legitimacy deficit is often turning into the source of grievances and political conflicts. This political conundrum further becomes complicated due to a state’s approach to real-time governance.

Bangladesh has been regarded as one of the global good practices in attaining the MDGs. It is also set to achieve the socioeconomic targets of SDGs, especially the ones related to poverty, inequality, hunger, gender, citizens’ empowerment and human development, where Bangladesh has already demonstrated impressive performance. However, there are caveats among scholars and international think tanks regarding the country’s progress in SDG 16, given the quality of public institutions compared to global good practices. For example, based on global experience and the study conducted by the TIB, it can be noted that the SDG 16, in principle, can only be effectively implemented through bottom-up empowerment of the institutions and the public which practically often remains missing in the developing countries. The case of Bangladesh could be brought in here again. Bangladesh scored a rank of 120 out of 157 countries on the SDG Index and Dashboards Report 2017 by the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network. Its overall performance on the index was 56.2, lower than the regional average score of 63.3. Bhutan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka all scored higher than Bangladesh on the index, while Pakistan and Afghanistan scored lower. Bangladesh has a ‘red’ threshold on SDG 16 which indicates that it needs to overcome significant challenges to meet the goals. That means the progress on SDG 16 has slowed due to multiple reasons.

Since the 1970s, top-down governance reform efforts to improve efficiency and effectiveness of financial, public sector and political institutions and legal systems by rewriting laws and importing best practice models from developed countries have often failed dismally. Some pro-public integrity institutions imposed or funded, by donor agencies, became ineffective as these were not grounded in and supported by local practices,
expectations and political priority of the regimes in power. In parallel to
that, even the best laws in the books are not necessarily translating social
inclusion, freedom and rights and effective governance for the public
without local and political empowerment. Henceforth, accountability and
effectiveness of political, financial, bureaucratic, and legal and law
enforcement agencies will determine the effective implementation of SDG
16.

Challenges in Implementing SDG 16: Institutions and the
Governance Structure

As discussed earlier, the SDG 16 refers to ‘peaceful and inclusive
societies’, ‘access to justice for all’ and ‘effective, accountable and
inclusive institutions’, these politically and socially sensitive terms would
require innovation and out of the box thinking. The complexity of the
challenges facing the developing societies affected by instability and
conflict means narrow approaches that prioritize one over the other will
certainly lose traction. As a result, finding creative ways to integrate
institutional and political efforts to prevent conflict with the promotion of
human rights, justice and the rule of law will remain a challenging factor
for developing states. Generally, law enforcement and justice are seen as
the tools to improve and implement laws. This leads to focusing on
increasing the capacity of law enforcement agencies to improve access to
justice. Certainly, access to an accountable legal and law enforcement
structure helps to manage disputes between people and the institution is
important. Nevertheless, it is only part of what is needed for peace. The
‘access’ alone is no guarantee of the quality or fairness of a justice system,
while equal access to the law is very different from equality before it.21

Along with the justice mandate of the state, economic investment and
welfare play a critical role in facilitating equality in society. Hence, poor
economic investment can lead to the growth of horizontal inequality,
economic degradation can lead to displacement and lack of governance
can open pathways for instability. Jeffrey Sachs mentioned,

We face, most importantly, choices for our time. Will we use power
cynically and to dominate, believing that territory, North Atlantic
Treaty Organization (NATO)’s long reach, oil reserves, and other booty
are the rewards of power? Or will we exercise power responsibly, knowing that generosity and beneficence build trust, prosperity, and the groundwork for peace? In each generation, the choice must be made anew.  

The idea of power, then, still dominates the structure of governance of peace. In some states, justice institutions proactively ensure laws, institutions, and norms that entrench inequality and threaten, while in some states, justice institutions impart power to the public to uphold social agenda over power struggles. These sharp contrasts have a significant bearing on peace and development and measuring the outcomes of SDG 16.

The key to implementation of SDG 16 essentially lies within the effectiveness of the institutions for service delivery and political empowerment, and the interplay between the governance structure and public participation in decision-making processes. Without meaningful and equitable governance, SDG 16 will remain the unattainable factor. If one considers the human history, states with an inclusive, accountable and transparent government, fair and just legal systems have delivered quality services to the public and focused more on the principle of ‘development as freedom’. On the other hand, technocratic totalitarian states or quasi-authoritarian governments with lack of intra-party democracy; in the case of South Asian countries, have focused on trade freedoms and GDP growth, contrary to inequitable resource distribution, for their development.

Therefore, attaining positive peace or sustainable development based on equitable resource distribution can be interrupted depending on how a state views the idea of development. Thus, economic growth does not necessarily mean inclusive and sustainable development. This often creates a concentrated wealth for the elites in exchange for the mass public. The disparity syndrome, regarding rights to justice, freedom of choice, and economic welfare, make infinite possibilities of conflict between the state and the marginalized population. Those with the least voice are the most likely to be left out and left behind by growth-enhancing policies that may inadvertently exacerbate relative or absolute poverty and hurt the most vulnerable. As a result, without reforms in the political institutions
and culture and specific focus on political and legal inclusion, it may remain as an elusive ambition to achieve SDG 16 to prevent conflict and uphold inclusive and peaceful society.

One of the extensive reviews of SDG 16 comes from a research paper commissioned by the Copenhagen Consensus Center (CCC). The paper showed that some of the SDGs targets are barely worthwhile to produce more than US$1 in social benefits per dollar spent.24 However, spending on SDG 16 is likely to benefit the population significantly.

Table 10.1 The Highest Yielding Targets in SDG 16

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflict and Violence Targets</th>
<th>Benefit for Every Dollar Spent</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reduce Assaults</td>
<td>US$17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eliminate severe physical violence as a method of child discipline</td>
<td>US$11</td>
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<tr>
<td>By 2030, reduce the number of countries experiencing large scale wars (1000+ deaths) to 3 or fewer and the number of countries experiencing small scale wars (less than 1000 deaths) to 14</td>
<td>US$5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improving Policing</td>
<td>Likely to be high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls</td>
<td>Likely to be high</td>
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The SDG 16 programmes focusing on reducing violence are unlikely to produce results quickly. Despite the uncertainty of what feasible targets for violence reduction are and how they can be achieved, investment into SDG 16 should become a priority commitment for the states—both donor and receiving countries. The CCC estimates suggest that the costs of violence are high; the welfare cost of collective, interpersonal violence,
harsh child discipline, intimate partner violence and sexual abuse are equivalent to around 11 per cent of global GDP. The cost of homicides is much larger than the cost of civil conflict. However, violence perpetrated at home appears to be the most prevalent form. Domestic abuse of women and children should no longer be regarded as a private matter but a public health concern. That calls for approaching SDG 16 from positive peace perspective that would include building the attitudes, institutions and structures which create and sustain peaceful societies. These same factors also lead to other positive outcomes which many in society would acknowledge are essential.

Therefore, the social and economic benefit of peace represents the ability of the institutions and humanitarian agencies to meet the needs of its populace, and to reduce the factors that lead to grievances, and resolve disagreements and tensions between the state and individuals without the use of violence. For that, SDGs have laid out the necessity for capacity building towards:

1. Low levels of corruption
2. Free flow of information
3. Good relations with neighbours
4. Sound business environment
5. Equitable distribution of resources
6. Acceptance of the rights of others
7. High levels of human capital
8. Well-functioning government

Given the varied definitions of peace and security, based on economic, political and social priorities and contextualization, the SDG 16 encounters five significant challenges.

First, the UN and OECD states have expanded their rules on eligible peace and security activities, expanding the definition of assistance to include additional activities such as preventing violent extremism, migration management and military costs for the delivery of humanitarian relief. This, along with initiatives to even further expand the definition of aid, potentially to include more security-related activities—are being positioned as a way to encourage aid spending on SDG 16. Moreover, the UN is being pressed to play a more significant role in peace...
enforcement efforts through UN peacekeeping activities by embracing a role in combating terror groups. While this might not be the primary objective, given the willingness of most member states to define their enemies as ‘terrorists’, it is easy to see how this risk is diverting aid more towards a military agenda for fighting wars rather than non-violent, preventative and developmental approaches. While encouraging investment in SDG 16 is commendable, it is not immediately clear what further expanding the definition of aid to include more security-related costs would achieve; many of the types of activities that would fall under SDG 16 already count.28

Second, expanding the definitions of security and peace could lead to a narrowing of budgetary expenditure for peacebuilding or humanitarian relief. The budgetary allocation for these initiatives has already become inadequate due to two contrary factors: 1) the donors are on one hand willing to put resources for development assistance, and 2) on the other hand, global powers, as well as developing countries, are spending more on hard and kinetic security. It raises the concern that donors’ security interests are being prioritized at the expense of citizens in conflict-affected countries. This contradiction gears to inadequate responses of the global community toward SDG 16. While the development assistance should increase to build social resilience against conflict and develop mechanisms for evolving and preventative structure of peace, military and security agendas and spending could potentially undermine the growth of social resilience against conflict. This means, the recipient-donor relation should go hand in hand to create a framework to ensure human security in line with socioeconomic development, rather than being distorted by any specific country’s national security interests.

Third, some governments and multilateral agencies put a focus on strengthening linkages between SDG 16 and countering and preventing violent extremism (C/PVE) within the conventional framework of the development agenda. As seen in the case of African states, Pakistan and Afghanistan, there are severe flaws in the C/PVE agenda, many of these are paradoxically acknowledged by the leading proponents of C/PVE.29 Nonetheless, many development actors are embracing the merger between development agenda and C/PVE amid calls for governments to review and evaluate C/PVE activities. These interventions often overlook vital factors
that drive conflict and instability that SDG 16 aims to address, such as corruption and bad governance.\textsuperscript{30} Meanwhile, short-term hard security measures from states are going unchallenged as donors move to ‘partner’ with, and reinforce, states and security services.\textsuperscript{31} The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) recently interviewed voluntary recruits into violent groups from Nigeria, Kenya, Somalia, and Sudan—all countries whose governments receive international support either to fight terrorism or address migration flows: 71 per cent of their interviewees identified heavy-handed government responses as the final trigger that motivated them to join up.\textsuperscript{32} This aligns well with much of what we know drives conflict and terror attacks around the world, but is being poorly addressed in the C/PVE and counter-migration agendas that are threatening to undermine peace and development work. Responses also neglect the role of civil society in change and transformation with C/PVE efforts, engaging civil society more as amplifiers of government and donor perspectives.\textsuperscript{33}

Fourth, the use of SDG 16 to strengthening state capacities to combat terrorism and crime, may well be a cause of concern. What remains as a problem is the state’s ability to make a distinction between security and public safety. In many countries, e.g., Bangladesh, Pakistan or India, views on security either lie within the framework of terrorism or focus on traditional security, i.e., armed forces development. In between, concerns regarding public safety, such as law enforcement against criminal acts, remain a subject to political consideration rather than an accountable implementation of law and law enforcement. It is unlikely that the government and the community’s views on terrorism will shift to ‘whole of society’.

Moreover, the political perception of counterterrorism, without any doubt that terrorism has become a regular phenomenon, is often seen as a political issue by government agencies. This current fact and perception can be used to justify ‘train and equip’ assistance to security forces to ‘foster peace and development’. However, providing training and equipment to governments “who lack the political will to undergo meaningful reforms and improve public security may directly lead to less peaceful societies, more displacement and terror”.\textsuperscript{34}

Fifth, the contemporary global political architecture has become complicated due to the rise of refugees and displaced movements. Henceforth, refugees lie at the heart of world politics. The causes and
consequences of, and responses to, human displacement are intertwined with many of the core concerns of international affairs. However, all of the SDGs are relevant to people in crisis, but refugees are not explicitly recognized in the language of goals and targets, and only a handful of indicators call for disaggregation by status. At the country level, refugees are not commonly included in national development or sector plans. For example, Kenya’s national development plan, Vision 2030, does not refer to refugees or displacement. However, the case of the stateless and displaced citizens of Myanmar origin living in Bangladesh, known as Rohingya refugees, can be cited here. Almost a million Rohingya people have fled ethnic cleansing and state-led terrorism in Myanmar to seek refuge across the border in Bangladesh. This cross-border movement, of whom more than half are women and children, has caused the most significant human movements after the World War II on the ground of persecution and genocide. As a result, Bangladesh has become affected by a large-scale humanitarian crisis. Bangladesh has included the crisis into its national policy-making as well as given due cognizance to the welfare of this population at the expense of high scale costs for their settlement and relocation. This creates inconsistencies in measuring the global progress made regarding SDG 16 goals.

**Addressing the Challenges: The Way Forward**

The challenges and concerns related to SDG 16 persist as it includes complicated technical issues and strong political will. In many cases, the best technical solutions are well known, yet they are not implemented by the key stakeholders—government, civil society organizations, and the communities. As most aid practitioners would confirm that change is unlikely to take place unless shifts in context give impetus to power structures or those in power are interested in putting political capital for the purpose. It happens, especially in the case for issues, such as corruption, exploitation, violence, and illicit financial flows, which often persist because they serve the interests of dominant groups and actors. This creates a situation where conflict can emerge that will question the legitimacy of a state. As a result, this may provide a route to thwart growth and stability or create a situation worse than it was. This clearly shows a
necessity for strong political maturity to balance between strengthening political institutions and accountability of the integrity and law enforcement agencies. In this context, SDG programmes may become hostage to political party’s priorities, as the vested interests and motivations of patron-client actors can make the process of equitable growth restrained and their motives at the end of the day may not change over time. Achieving sustainable and quality outcomes in this dynamic and deplorable context will require out of the box and innovative thinking as well as strong willingness to push the boundaries of traditional approaches and practices.

Drawing on the experiences of Africa and South Asia, evaluating the effectiveness of SDG 16 will remain complicated. Credible data and statistics on justice delivery or satisfaction and access to rights component could be a formidable challenge. However, this can be measured in two ways: 1. Estimating the proportion of people, from all those who faced injustice in the past year, who tried to resolve it using any institutional channel—the courts, but also administrative and customary institutions—and felt the outcome was just. 37 2. Measuring how many citizens can access independent legal support that they find helpful. These two indicators would anchor Goal 16 in real experiences. 38 The first one overtly brings the issue of injustice into focus. The solution lies in providing accountable and transparent justice delivery system which will require strong political and social oversight and monitoring. Social auditing of democratic institutions, public and private sector should be introduced that will need solid political support. The second issue highlights the government’s understanding and vision to ensure legal empowerment of the public. That means the success of a just society can only be measured by the government’s efforts in delivering mechanisms to empower the public to question the government and its institutions. As such, how much importance the government gives to legal empowerment efforts and to ensure the independence of the justice and law enforcement institutions will ultimately decide the progress to peaceful society. As such, justice and law enforcement will not only require investment in state institutions, but will also need the participation of the public, civil society, media, and NGOs. After all, it is empowered citizens that create responsive governments. 39
Moreover, the rapidly changing geopolitics and geostrategic realities should be brought into consideration. With the ongoing civil war in Syria and long-term crises in several other countries, including Myanmar, the current figure of nearly 20 million refugees is unlikely to decline in the foreseeable future. The global situation further includes more than half of the refugees are below the age of 18 and are forced to live in irregular situations. The lack of access to underline determinants of health, such as, food, water, sanitation and security, and to essential health care services, that are particularly important for vulnerable populations, such as, women and children. All of these situations link security and SDGs strongly. That puts the risk of seeing the SDG 16 from the prism of securitization too. However, by reinforcing the institutional links between the states and liberal multilateral institutions and reforming the institutional reforms, developing nations can keep the SDGs high on the political agenda and find sustainable solutions for insecurity and stability.

Henceforth, prioritizing of spending on SDG 16 requires scrutiny given the volatile global politics. The Post 2015 Consensus Expert Panel identified that reaching SDGs by 2030 do more than US$15 of good for every dollar spent. The report, published by the Panel mentioned that: “If the UN concentrates on 19 top targets, it can get US$20 to US$40 in social benefits per dollar spent, while allocating it evenly across all 169 targets would reduce the figure to less than US$10. Being smart about spending could be better than doubling or quadrupling the aid budget”. Studies led by Thomas Schelling, along with Kydland and Stokey, indicate that smart spending—focusing primarily on the development targets where a state can achieve the most—would necessarily be the same as doubling or quadrupling the aid budget. This is mainly an important finding at a time when donor budgets are under constraint. That means spending on SDG 16 should remain as one of the major priorities. The work of the Expert Panel could be a definite game-changer for the developing or the least developing countries for the UN negotiations over the period to come. With limited resources across the table, governments should forego the instant gratification of promising everything to everyone, and instead prioritize the most effective development goals.

Although the inclusion of SDG 16 is a significant achievement in itself for the international community, and meaningful recognition of how
violence and conflict can undermine development, its progress requires measurement of implementation of its targets. As such, data and information regimes have to be strengthened by the developing states. This will undoubtedly come with numerous methodological issues, implementation and practical matters around data collection and statistical capacity of the state institutions. At this stage, globally comparable data is either not available or only available for a limited number of countries. Currently, there is not enough official data or statistical capacity available at the national level to accurately measure SDG 16 in a comparable cross-country way. What lies for states such as Bangladesh is to increase considerable investment in data generation that would be credible and verifiable. This will require coordination with multiple stakeholders including public and private sectors, academia, CSOs, and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs). However, given the complex choices and issues relating to SDG 16, Amartya Sen once told heads of state in September 2016 that reducing goal 16 to anaemic indicators “is like trying to cancel the French Revolution because liberté, égalité, and fraternité could not be precisely measured”.

International interest for peace, tolerance, and justice, and catastrophic history of wars, conflicts and violent extremism, has made SDG 16. If developed countries hope to promote and preserve peace and stability, and the developing states hope to eradicate poverty, violent conflict, injustice, and build meaningfully accountable institutions by 2030, a balance among political ambitions, national interests, national security agenda, and socioeconomic complexity needs to be considered in their engagement with each other. Development assistance and cooperation should continue to grow instead of being reduced to increase security expenditures. This would require developing robust, evolving and trust-based relationships with highly motivated and dynamic individuals, CSOs and NGOs to ensure that the communities owned development solutions and designs based on local needs. Henceforth, investment in peacebuilding and peace preservation should remain as the focus of security discourse. Both the government and development actors should, then, avoid the traditional approaches to aid and development that often assume that sociopolitical change can be designed along a linear path and that solutions to complex problems can be developed upfront at design.
Annex 10.1 SDG Goal 16: Targets and Indicators

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<th>SDG Goal 16 Targets</th>
<th>SDG Goal 16 Indicators</th>
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<tr>
<td>16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere</td>
<td>Indicator 16.1.1: Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age &lt;br&gt;Indicator 16.1.2: Conflict-related deaths per 100,000 population, by sex, age and cause &lt;br&gt;Indicator 16.1.3: Proportion of population subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months &lt;br&gt;Indicator 16.1.4: Proportion of people that feel safe walking alone around the area they live</td>
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<td>16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children</td>
<td>Indicator 16.2.1: Percentage of children aged 1–17 years who experienced any physical punishment and psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month &lt;br&gt;Indicator 16.2.2: Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age, and form of exploitation &lt;br&gt;Indicator 16.2.3: Proportion of young women and men aged 18–29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>16.3 Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all</td>
<td>Indicator 16.3.1: Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to the competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms &lt;br&gt;Indicator 16.3.2: Unsentenced detainees as proportion of overall prison population</td>
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<td>16.4 By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime</td>
<td>Indicator 16.4.1: Total value of inward and outward illicit financial flows (in current United States dollars). Indicator 16.4.2: Proportion of seized and small arms and light weapons that are recorded and traced, in accordance with international standards and legal instruments</td>
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<td>16.5 Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms</td>
<td>Indicator 16.5.1: Proportion of persons who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months Indicator 16.5.2: Proportion of businesses that had at least one contact with a public official and that paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months</td>
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<td>16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels</td>
<td>Indicator 16.6.1: Primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget, by sector (or by budget codes or similar) Indicator 16.6.2: Percentage of the population satisfied with their last experience of public services</td>
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<td>16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels</td>
<td>Indicator 16.7.1: Proportions of positions (by sex, age, persons with disabilities and population groups) in public institutions (national and local legislatures, public service, and judiciary) compared to national distributions Indicator 16.7.2: Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability, and population group</td>
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<tr>
<th>SDG Goal 16 Targets</th>
<th>SDG Goal 16 Indicators</th>
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<tr>
<td>16.8 Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance</td>
<td>Indicator 16.8.1: Proportion of members and voting rights of developing countries in international organizations</td>
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<td>16.9 By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration</td>
<td>Indicator 16.9.1: Proportion of children under five years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age</td>
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<td>16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements</td>
<td>Indicator 16.10.1: Number of verified cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists, associated media personnel, trade unionists and human rights advocates in the previous 12 months</td>
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<td>16.a Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime</td>
<td>Indicator 16.a.1: Existence of independent national human rights institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles</td>
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<td>16.b Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development</td>
<td>Indicator 16.b.1: Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months by a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Notes


Bangladesh in International Peacebuilding: Discourses from Japan and Beyond

11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
14 TIB, 2017, op. cit.
16 Ibid.
18 TIB, 2017, op. cit.
20 Ibid.
21 Will Bennett and Thomas Wheeler, “Justice and peace go hand in hand – you can’t have one without the other”, The Guardian, 26 October 2015.
23 Terra Lawson-Remer, “How can we implement sustainable development goal 16 on development?”, Brookings, 01 October 2015.
26 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
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30 Anna Möller-Loswick, op. cit.


33 Anna Möller-Loswick, op. cit.


36 Debra Ladner, op. cit.

37 Stacey Cram and Vivek Maru, op. cit.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.


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44 Ibid.