



16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



PEACE, JUSTICE, AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS: WHY THEY MATTER

What's the goal here?

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Why?

Peaceful, just and inclusive societies are necessary to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). People everywhere need to be free of fear from all forms of violence

and feel safe as they go about their lives whatever their ethnicity, faith or sexual orientation.

In order to advance the SDGs we need effective and inclusive public institutions that can deliver quality education and healthcare, fair economic policies and inclusive environmental protection.

What needs to be done to address this?

To achieve peace, justice and inclusion,

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it is important that governments, civil society and communities work together to implement lasting solutions to reduce violence, deliver justice, combat corruption and ensure inclusive participation at all times.

Freedom to express views, in private and in public, must be guaranteed.

People must be able to contribute to decisions that affect their lives.

Laws and policies must be applied without any form of discrimination. Disputes need to be resolved through functioning political and justice systems.

National and local institutions must be accountable and need to be in place to deliver basic services to families and communities equitably and without the need for bribes.

How does this goal apply to me, wherever I live?

Crimes that threaten the foundation of peaceful societies, including homicides, trafficking and other organized crimes, as well as discriminatory laws or practices, affect all countries. Even the world's greatest democracies face major challenges in addressing corruption, crime and

human rights violations for everyone at home.

What would be the cost of not taking action now?

Armed violence and insecurity have a destructive impact on a country's development, affecting economic growth and often resulting in long-standing grievances among communities.

Violence, in all its forms, has a pervasive impact on societies. Violence affects children's health, development and well-being, and their ability to thrive. It causes trauma and weakens social inclusion.

Lack of access to justice means that conflicts remain unresolved and people cannot obtain protection and redress. Institutions that do not function according to legitimate laws are prone to arbitrariness and abuse of power, and less capable of delivering public services to everyone.

To exclude and to discriminate not only violates human rights, but also causes resentment

and animosity, and could give rise to violence.

What can we do?

Take a genuine interest in what your government is doing. Raise awareness in your community about the realities of violence and the importance of peaceful and just societies, and identify how you can pursue the SDGs in your daily life.

Exercise your right to hold your elected officials to account. Exercise your right to freedom of information and share your opinion with your elected representatives.

Be the change – promote inclusion and respect towards people of different backgrounds, ethnic origins, religions, gender, sexual orientations or different opinions. Together, we can help to improve conditions for a life of dignity for all.

To find out more about Goal #16 and other Sustainable Development Goals, visit:

<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment>