

## Joint Statement on behalf of the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies High-level Political Forum, July 2023

This statement is made on behalf of the members states, member of the Pathfinders. Pathfinders is a member state-led, cross-regional and multistakeholder coalition committed to building more peaceful, just and inclusive societies, in keeping with the UN Charter, through the realization of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goal targets for peace, justice, equality and inclusion (SDG16+).

Halfway to 2030, “the SDGs are in deep trouble” and SDG16 is no exception, being one of 7 SDGs for which no target is on track. In fact, 5.1 billion people still lack meaningful access to justice, 1.4 million are killed every year due to violence, and 71 percent of the world’s population live in places where inequality has increased.

As global polarization and distrust remain at an all-time high, there is a strong need to rebuild the social contract between people and the national and international institutions mandated to serve them.

The **universality of SDG16+**, and the need for its advancement across all countries is clear:

Societies with lower levels of violence, political instability and gender inequality are more productive, have better access to information and suffer less from corruption and ineffective governments. Reduced inequality and exclusion not only benefit the most vulnerable in society, but all members – more equal societies have better sustained growth rates, and better performance on health and education goals. Rule of law and inclusive people-centered justice enables people to claim their full rights, to access non-discriminatory legal processes and to resolve basic employment, property and family disputes, along with fair treatment in the criminal justice system. In turn, anticorruption and institution-strengthening efforts, including the protection of executive, judiciary and legislative institutions from state capture, are critical to sustained progress across the SDGs from the local to the global levels.

The setbacks in achieving SDG 16 targets are not insurmountable. We have evidence-based solutions to reduce violence, provide access to justice for all and

tackle inequality and exclusion. If implemented, leveraged, and invested in, they can produce and incentivize progressive policies and initiatives that rebuild trust, address issues that matter most to people, and help realize the larger 2030 Agenda.

Going forward, we, the country members of Pathfinders, are therefore strongly convinced of the need to recommit to SDG16, as both a transformative goal and a transversal enabler of the larger 2030 Agenda.

In order to achieve progress, ahead of the SDG Summit and World Social Summit, and building on the outcomes of the latest SDG 16 Rome Conference, we commit to the following:

First, **deepen commitment to meet SDG 16+**. Based on national contexts, we recommit to action on peace, justice, equality and inclusion as an outcome and enabler of the 2030 Agenda.

Second, bolster the use of digital technology and **fill the data gaps** on SDG16+ . We welcome efforts to strengthen SDG16+ indicator data collection domestically. To this end, we encourage all SDG 16+ stakeholders to amplify and advance crucial research and knowledge on SDG16+ interlinkages.

Third, **strengthen transparency and accountability** around SDG16+ implementation, including in national development plans, action plans and strategies, and as related to the VNR process.

Fourth, pursue a **consensus-based inter-governmental approach to financing** for peace, justice, equality and inclusion, with an eye to the SDG Summit, the Financing for Development Forum, the upcoming IFI meetings, and the differential needs of distinct countries.

Finally, **galvanize the political will** for a multistakeholder approach, to **leave no one behind**, and to realize more peaceful, just and inclusive societies for current and future generations.

To conclude, agreeing to peace, justice, and inclusion as integral to a universal development agenda was groundbreaking. It is an advance that should not be forfeited.

Thank you.