How lack of progress on SDG 16 jeopardizes the achievement of the Agenda in South East Asia

Therese Bjork
OHCHR Regional office for South-East Asia
SDG 16
12 targets and 23 indicators
SDG 16 – the accelerator

Source: Pathfinders Roadmap to peaceful, just and inclusive societies
SDG 16 current situation in South East Asia

South-East Asia - Expected Gap

16.b.2 Refugees
16.1.1 Intentional homicides
16.2.2 Detected victims of human trafficking

Source: ESCAP SDG Gateway
16.10.1: Verified cases of killings of human rights defenders, journalists and trade unionists from 2015 to 2019, by sex of victim.

In 2015, 39 killings of HRDs, journalists and trade unionist in SEA.

In 2019, 44 killings of HRDs, journalists and trade unionist in SEA.

Source: Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
SDG 16 current situation in South East Asia

**SDG indicator 16.10.1**

**16.10.1: Verified cases of enforced disappearance of human rights defenders, journalists and trade unionists from 2015 to 2019, by sex of victim.**

In 2015, 3 enforced disappearances of HRDs, journalists and trade unionist in SEA.

In 2019, 5 enforced disappearances of HRDs, journalists and trade unionist in SEA.

Source: Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
SDG 16 current situation in South East Asia

SDG indicator 16.a.1

16.a.1: Existence of independent national human rights institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles

In 2019, 54.5 per cent of countries in SEA have an NHRI that has applied for accreditation.

36.4 per cent of countries in SEA has an NHRI in compliance with the Paris principles.

Source: Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
SDG 16 in the VNRs in South East Asia

- Most VNR reports lack data on the SDG 16 indicators.
- Existing data is rarely disaggregated – lack on LNOB analysis.
- Focus on actions taken and achievement, rather than remaining gaps, challenges and current situation.
1) SDG 16 is critical for achieving the whole 2030 Agenda

2) Yet, we lack data to measure implementation

3) The data we have showed a negative trend at the end of 2019.

Since COVID-19......
COVID-19 and SDG 16

**Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere**

- Some initial brief respite from conflict. Underlying issues remain unresolved.

**End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children**

- Rise in domestic violence during the lockdown.

**Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all**

- Some countries took steps to reduce virus exposure in prisons.
- Emergency measures: increased use of detention for those violating measures.
- Due process and fair trial: limitations on access to lawyers, family visits and trial observation for health reasons.
Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms

- Cash payments, grants, tax rebates and loans to disburse emergency funds – sometimes without anti-corruption safeguards.
- Purchase of medical equipment – risks for corruption.

Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels

- Emergency measures established new decision-making structure which raise concern re. participation and transparency.
- Few women in pandemic decision-making.

Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance

- Equitable distribution of vaccines?
COVID-19 and SDG 16

By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration

- Impact on public information campaigns, and roll-out of registration campaigns and vaccination campaigns.

Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements

- Emergency measures introduced a range of restrictions on fundamental freedoms incl. peaceful assembly and freedom of expression.
- Countries in SEA are ranked towards the bottom (2020 Freedom on the Net report).
- Access to information is critical in fighting the pandemic.
COVID-19 and SDG 16

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

- NHRIs proactive role in monitoring and advocacy, in particular rights of minorities and concerns re. rise in racism and xenophobia.

Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development

- Exposed underlying issues of exclusion, racism and xenophobia.
- Specific groups (often migrants and ethnic minorities) stigmatized and blamed for spread of disease.
Ways to step up implementation and reporting

“What can be measured, can be done”

Indonesia VNR report 2020, which also notes that what is not measured and who is not measured is what/who will be left behind.

- Domestic and international data
- Quantitate and qualitative
- LNOB
Ways to step up implementation and reporting

- Meaningful, safe and effective participation
- The importance of being candid and reflecting on challenges
- Share experiences and learn from each other:
  - Global Alliance for Reporting Progress on Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies: https://www.un-globalalliance.org/
  - Pathfinders for peaceful, just and inclusive societies: https://www.sdg16.plus/about-us
  - Sixteen Plus Forum: https://wfuna.org/sixteenplusforum
- Aim for synergies with other reporting obligations, such as to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and other international human rights mechanisms.
Thank you!

Therese Bjork, OHCHR Regional office for South-East Asia

https://bangkok.ohchr.org/
bjork@un.org