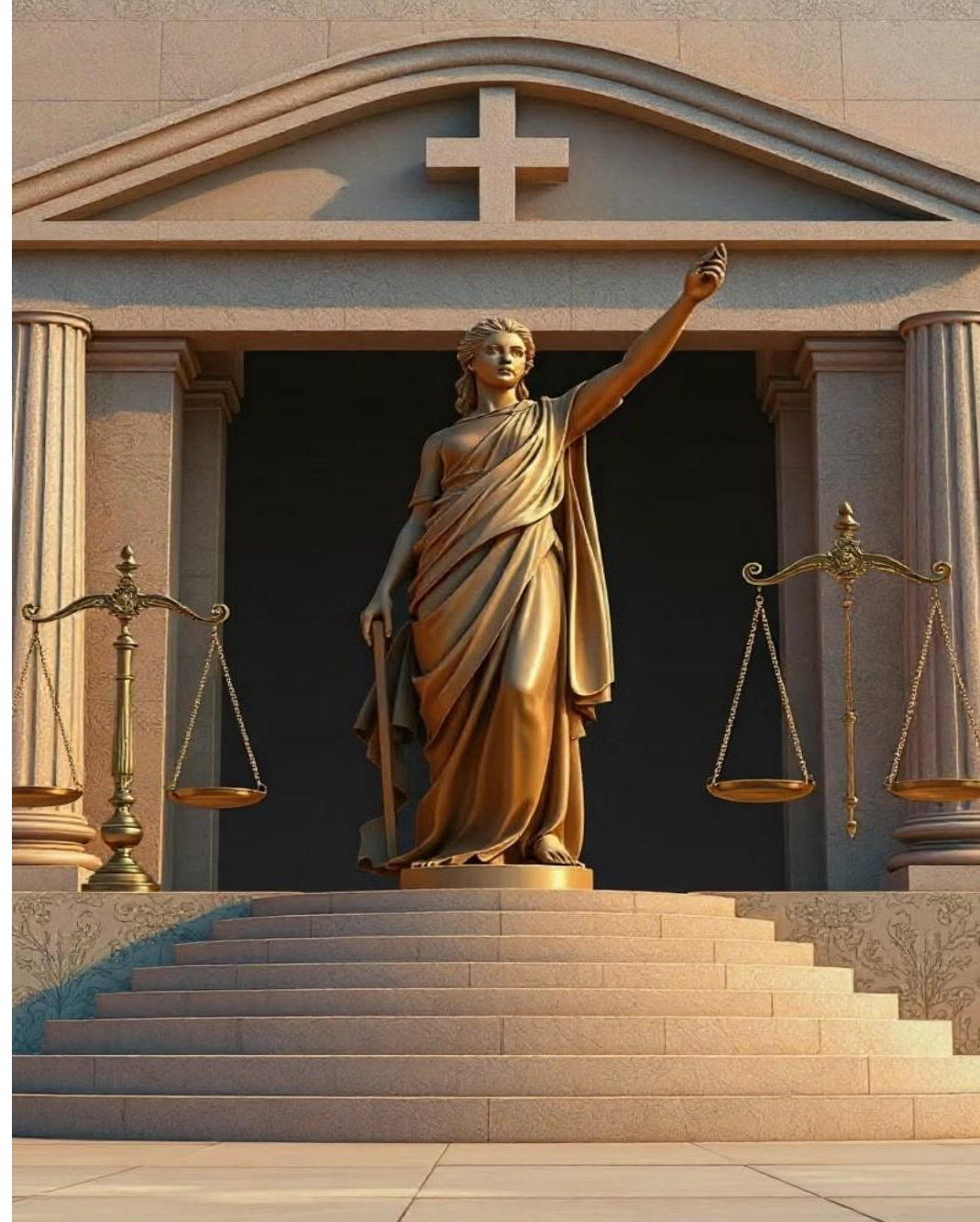


# **Sustainable Development Goals: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions**



# 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



## Executive Summary

Sustainable peace is imperative for socioeconomic progress, with Goal 16 of the UN 2030 Agenda spotlighting themes of strengthening governance, access to justice and inclusive institutions for shared prosperity. Yet from sub-Saharan Africa to Latin America, staggering violence and corruption threaten to undermine trust and destabilise development. Governments and partners need urgent action to transform deeply-rooted drivers of instability into lasting reconciliation and restored social contracts. This paper examines trends, barriers and innovations across SDG 16 indicators through the lens of the Nigerian context.

# Introduction to SDG 16

Peace, justice, and strong institutions are the bedrock for prosperous societies. Without these foundations, achieving sustainable development remains out of reach. The UN 2030 Agenda's [Sustainable Development Goal 16 \(SDG 16\)](#) pledges action towards "promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels."

1

## Reduce Violence

Ending abuse towards marginalized groups.

2

## Transparent Institutions

Developing institutions citizens can trust.

3

## Civic Participation

Encouraging involvement in decision-making.



# Trends in Violence and Conflict

Despite progress, global homicide rates remain high, with over **437,000 people** perishing in homicidal violence in 2019. Latin America and the Caribbean disproportionately suffer from lethal crime, with countries like El Salvador, Jamaica, Honduras, and Venezuela experiencing over **30 murders per 100,000 residents**.

## Latin America & Caribbean

Weak governance, poverty, and urban gang activity fuel violence, triggering forced displacement. Over **5 million people** fled violence in Central America's Northern Triangle (2000–2020).

## Sub-Saharan Africa

Grapples with ethnic, political, and religious tensions. Nigeria has seen spikes in internal conflict, particularly from clashes over land and attacks by groups like Boko Haram.

# Peace Building Interventions

Sustaining peace requires holistic approaches, addressing root inequities through dialogue and supporting those in crisis. Local peace infrastructure and citizen inclusion are vital.



## Community Mediation

Bogota's community-based mediation reduced weekly homicide rates by **66%**.



## National Peace Dialogues

Federal and state offices should facilitate dialogues involving youth, women, and community leaders.



## Youth Livelihoods

Initiatives like Cisco's Network Academy provide digital skills, offering hope and job opportunities.

In Nigeria, community-based organisations like the Neem Foundation empower widows, providing counselling and grants to rebuild lives.

# Impact of Violence on Vulnerable Groups

Violence disproportionately affects women, girls, and children in conflict zones. Sexual violence is used as a weapon of war, and children endure long-term trauma.

## Women and Girls

Endemic sexual violence in African conflict zones, with widespread brutality and impunity.

## Children

Over **250,000 minors** perished (2005–2020) in conflicts like Afghanistan and Syria.

## Minorities & Press

Human rights violations against minorities and journalists; over **200 journalists** perished (2017–2021).

In northeast Nigeria, Boko Haram's insurgency has led to thousands of abductions, forced marriages, and the destruction of over **1,000 schools**.

# Disparities in Legal Framework Accessibility

Globally, over 5 billion people lack meaningful access to justice, with women, informal workers, and displaced people facing significant hurdles.

1

## Expand Access

Paralegals and legal aid clinics provide affordable services.

2

## Build Capacity

Public legal education and training strengthen legal understanding.

3

## Promote Equality

Targeted interventions for marginalised groups counter discrimination.

4

## Improve Governance

Grassroots legal empowerment holds authorities accountable.

Despite extensive legal protections in Nigeria, customary barriers and structural inadequacies undermine the rule of law for marginalised communities.

# Government Effectiveness & Corruption

Governance challenges include capacity constraints and corruption. Over **two-thirds of countries** score below 50 on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index.

## Government Effectiveness

Bertelsmann Transformation Index shows stagnating scores for lower-middle-income governments. Public opinion in Africa reveals acute concerns with transparency.

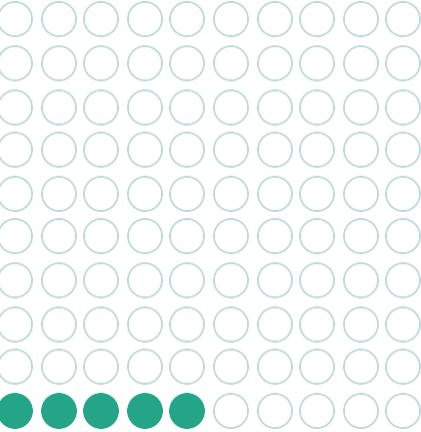
## Corruption Challenges

Low-income regions report high kickback expectations. Due to graft, Nigeria loses up to 15% of its GDP potential annually.

The OSSAP-SDGs should prioritise anti-corruption, instituting digital account tracing and collaborating with youth networks for reporting channels.

# Data for Inclusive Development

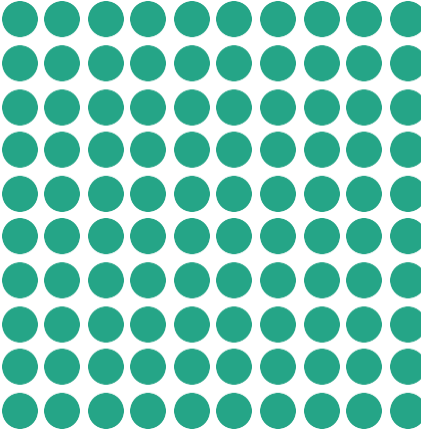
Achieving SDG 16 requires accurate, reliable, and disaggregated data to monitor progress and inform policy.



**5B+**

### Lack of Access

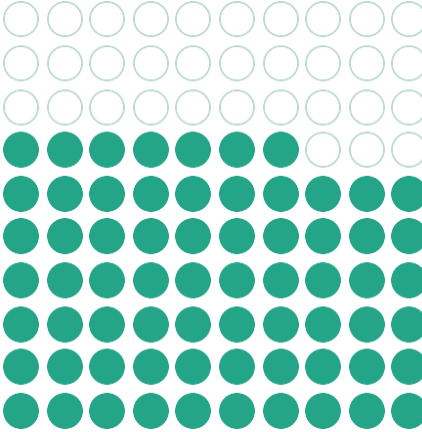
People globally lack meaningful access to justice.



**7000+**

### Participatory Budgeting

Municipalities globally use participatory budgeting.



**2/3**

### Systemic Graft

Countries with systemic corruption issues.

Emerging technologies like satellites, AI, and crowdsourcing can fill data gaps and provide real-time insights into SDG 16.

# Conclusions and Recommendations

Achieving SDG 16 is ambitious for African countries, requiring a step-change as the 2030 deadline nears.

## **Evolve SDG Offices**

Move beyond monitoring to actively unblock barriers and enable breakthrough solutions.

## **Engage Stakeholders**

Convene summits with state authorities, civic, and community stakeholders.

## **Prioritize Actions**

Focus on enhancing transparency, expanding legal empowerment, and accelerating citizen participation.

Realising SDG 16 depends on strengthening institutions and social cohesion through inclusive governance reforms.