



United Nations

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

PATHFINDERS

FOR PEACEFUL, JUST AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES
HOSTED BY THE NYU CENTER ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION



International Cooperative Alliance

peace
IN OUR CITIES



UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

A closer look at the SDGs under review: Peace, Justice, Inclusion, and Partnerships as Drivers for Change Insights and Solutions from VNRs and VLRs

10 July, 2026 | 1:15pm- 2:45pm (EST)

Dag Hammarskjöld Library Training Room (L-133)

United Nations Headquarters

- **Hosts:** The International Cooperatives Alliance, UN DESA, Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies at the Center on International Cooperation, New York University.
- **Format:** In-person roundtable discussion.
- **Speakers:** Member states (particularly, but not only, those presenting VNRs at this year's HLPF), UN and other international organizations, civil society, and academia.

Overview

Held in partnership with the International Cooperatives Alliance, UN DESA, OHCHR, Peace in Our Cities, and the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just, and Inclusive Societies, CIC-NYU, this cross-regional and cross-stakeholder VNR Lab will focus on the intersection of the SDGs under review and SDG16, with additional views on how cooperatives and a multistakeholder approach advance sustainable change. As such, it will:

- Highlight how peace, justice, inclusion, human rights, and adaptive institutions underpin progress across the SDGs under review, drawing from Voluntary National and Local Reviews.
- Examine how an SDG16 approach advances accountable and resilient governance at all levels, including through rights-based approaches to infrastructure, green transitions and climate, public safety, and service delivery.

- Elevate cooperatives as mechanisms to reduce inequalities, strengthen institutional trust, expand economic inclusion, and foster social cohesion, with additional attention on building alliances for sustainable urban finance.

Background

With less than four years remaining in the 2030 Agenda, the 2026 High-Level Political Forum is a key opportunity to accelerate SDG implementation and share best practices. Voluntary National and Local Reviews (VNRs and VLRs) can support this process by assessing progress and challenges while identifying policies, actions, and partnerships needed to advance sustainable development. Although not under formal review this year, SDG16 on peace, justice, inclusion, and governance, is [increasingly integrated into VNRs](#), as an enabler across the SDGs and as reflected in national plans and budgets.

This is evident across the SDGs under review in 2026, where SDG16, in name or principle, often serves as a cross-cutting foundation for advancement at national and local levels. Access to justice, the rule of law, and inclusive, accountable institutions are closely linked to protecting water and environmental standards (SDG6), to effective and equitable green energy transitions (SDG7), and to ensuring transparent infrastructure development (SDG9). Similarly, meaningful progress on water, energy, or infrastructure cannot happen in a vacuum of insecurity, whereas reductions in violence demonstrably support sustainable economic growth.

In a rapidly urbanizing world, these interlinkages are most palpable at the city level (SDG11), where energy, water, infrastructure, and climate are increasing demands on social and governance systems. Adaptive, anticipatory institutions are key to ensuring that urban transitions are equitable, rights-based, and responsive to community needs. Some of the most innovative safety and violence solutions have been developed within cities and leverage support from numerous sectors and stakeholders.

To this end, and aligned with the International Day of Cooperatives' focus on peace, cooperative models demonstrate how participatory governance can be translated into practice. By enabling communities and business cooperatives to democratically own and manage economic assets, cooperatives help strengthen trust in institutions, promote economic inclusion, and foster lasting peace.

Ahead of key milestones, including the 2027 SDG Summit and the 2028 Pact for the Future review, this VNR Lab will address the above, amplifying concrete solutions, and sharing good practices and lessons learned based on the following questions.

Guiding Questions

- What do VNRs and VLRs tell us about how peace, justice, inclusion and effective, adaptive institutions have advanced or protected practical progress on sustainable development, and particularly for the SDGs under review this year?
 - Big picture- UNDP Oslo Governance Center drawing from research on VNRs and VLRs
 - Cabo Verde
 - Italy? Tonga? Rwanda? Norway?
- How has an SDG16 approach advanced accountable and resilient governance at all levels, including subnational, through rights-based approaches to green transitions and climate, public safety, and public service delivery and infrastructure?
 - OHCHR
 - Peace in Our Cities
- What good practices from national and local experiences reinforce the principles and practice of transparency, accountability, and multistakeholder decision-making in support of the SDGs and to leave no one behind?
 - Various speakers
- How can cooperatives and social and solidarity economy actors strengthen multi-stakeholder partnerships (SDG17) such that they themselves are anchored in such principles?
 - Various speakers
- How can a twin SDG11 and SDG16 approach build alliances for sustainable urban finance?
 - David Hugh Jackson

Agenda

Opening/Welcoming Remarks

- Andrew Allimadi, Social Affairs Offices, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs



Speakers

- Joseph Njuguna, Director of Policy, International Cooperatives Alliance
- Cabo Verde
- Additional member state
- Global Policy Center for Governance, United Nations Development Programme
- Rio Hada, Chief, Equality, Development and Rule of Law Section, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
- David Hugh Jackson, Non-Resident Fellow, CIC, NYU
- Luisa Portugal, Peace in Our Cities Secretariat



Moderator

- Maggie Williams, SDG16+ Associate Director, Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, Center on International Cooperation at New York University

About Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies (others orgs to be included)

[Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies](#) is a cross-regional and member state-led, multi-stakeholder coalition committed to advancing action on peace, justice, equality and inclusive institutions through the Sustainable Development Goals and beyond (SDG16+). It is convened by 46 governments, works with over 100 partners across civil society, the United Nations (UN), and regional and international organizations, and is hosted by the Center on International Cooperation at New York University.

About the New York University Center on International Cooperation

The [Center on International Cooperation \(CIC\) at New York University \(NYU\)](#) is a think tank and research center that, for over two decades, has been a leader in applied policy, connecting politics, security, justice, development, and humanitarian issues. Our mission is to inform and strengthen collaborative approaches and/or collaboration among national governments, international organizations, and the wider policy community to build trust, prevent and respond to crises—and advance peace, justice, and inclusion at all levels. Learn more on [our website](#) and @nyuCIC on social media.

About the International Cooperative Alliance

The International Cooperative Alliance unites, represents and serves cooperatives worldwide. Founded in 1895, it is one of the oldest non-governmental organisations and one of the largest ones measured by the number of people represented: 1 billion cooperative members on the planet. It is the apex body representing cooperatives, which are estimated to be around 3 million worldwide, providing a global voice and forum for knowledge, expertise and coordinated action for and about cooperatives.

About the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Rooted in the United Nations Charter and guided by the transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) upholds the development pillar of the United Nations. UN DESA is a pioneer of sustainable development and the home of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), where each goal finds its space and where all stakeholders can do their part to leave no one behind. We are a leading analytical voice for promoting inclusion, reducing inequalities and eradicating poverty, and a champion for tearing down the barriers that keep people in poverty.

DRAFT