



Where is Latin America?

Reflections on Peace, Security,
Justice and Governance in
the Post-2015 Sustainable
Development Agenda

Renata Avelar Giannini



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Cover photo: A student runs to class, Colombia. Photo: Charlotte Kesl / World Bank

Summary

Latin American governments and societies played an active role in shaping the United Nations 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. One area where the region came up short, however, relates to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice and governance. This Strategic Paper detects a contradiction between the alarming levels of violence and crime in Latin America, and the comparatively low importance attached to SDG 16 during the negotiations from 2013 to the present. The region's diplomats exhibited varied levels of engagement with the key themes of SDG 16, whether peace, access to justice, rule of law, security or governance. Some

governments were concerned with the potential of SDG 16 to securitize development or divert aid away from "core" priorities. Others were uneasy about specific terms, not least the "rule of law". There was no regional consensus on SDG 16 even if governments across the region are prepared to support its current formulation. More positively, Latin America is a hive of innovation and experimentation when it comes to preventing violence, extending justice services, and promoting good governance. As such, the Strategic Paper identifies a number of pathways for governments and civil societies to identify and share lessons from the region.

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Renata Avelar Giannini¹

Introduction

The 2030 sustainable development agenda² offers a potentially transformative, inclusive and universal vision of development from 2015-2030. Instead of focusing exclusively on the Global South, it presents a bold and inclusive vision to “leave no one behind.” There are, however, enormous challenges confronting the creation of such an ambitious development agenda. Balancing what can be realistically implemented, financed and monitored with these lofty aspirations will be central to maximizing its potential for success. Otherwise, it runs the risk of irrelevance or, even worse, throwing development into reverse.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent a bold step forward by emphasizing non-orthodox themes that were either underrepresented or absent in the previous global development framework. Along with the inclusion of new issue areas such as inequality, gender and energy, the framework features a goal on peace, security, access to justice and governance. Specifically, Goal 16 (SDG 16) explicitly urges states and civil societies to “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.” The principal aim is to balance a universal approach with measures that can be tailored to regional, national and local needs and realities.

Notwithstanding recent advances in conceptual thinking encouraged by the United Nations (UN)³ and the World Bank⁴, some governments are still not convinced that the pillars of peace, security, justice and governance are fundamental tenets of sustainable development. The road to including these issues in the post-2015 development agenda was fraught with challenges. It required the incorporation of language and objectives that are considered politically contentious by certain stakeholders and metrics that are difficult to monitor.

In Latin America (LA), governments and civil societies have a major stake in ensuring that safety, justice and governance are at the center of a re-imagined twenty-first century development paradigm. While important advances have been made, especially in terms of reducing extreme poverty and sustaining economic growth, the region still struggles with epidemic levels of violence that undermine the region’s present growth trajectory. There is also considerable experience in LA countries that could be relevant and applicable to the world more generally. This region has a solid track record of delivering development dividends with regard to peace-building, social justice issues, poverty reduction and a range of other areas, including its experience measuring and monitoring the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

¹ The author would like to thank Ivan Campbell, Katherine Aguirre, Nathan Thompson, Robert Muggah and Thomas Wheeler for their invaluable inputs to this paper. Robert Muggah was also involved in an oversight and editorial capacity. An early version of the paper was presented at a CIC/Igarapé Institute event in New York in January 2015, and at the Igarapé Institute/FIP Citizen Security Dialogues in March 2015. Special credit is due to Saferworld for providing intellectual and financial support to this initiative.

² United Nations (2014). Available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/7891TRANSFORMING%20OUR%20WORLD.pdf>. Accessed: August 5, 2015.

³ Some examples include the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, UN Task Team Report, the High-Level Panel Report and the UN Global Compact Report.

⁴ World Bank. (2011) World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development. Washington D.C: The World Bank.

Expertise gained in these areas should be modeled and adapted to other regions, not least in relation to monitoring and evaluating progress on the ground for the post-2015 process.

This Strategic Paper (1) maps out several key trends from a review of Latin American country positions during the post-2015 negotiation process; (2) identifies priority areas vis-à-vis SDG 16 and (3) pinpoints lessons learned that are likely to be key for implementation of the upcoming development framework. The paper is based on extensive discourse analysis of Latin American country statements throughout the intergovernmental post-2015 negotiations and qualitative analyses of primary documents and interviews. Its main conclusions are summarized as follows:

- Since the beginning of the formal negotiation process (Jan/2015), Latin American countries have aligned their statements with those of the Group of 77 plus China and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). A regional position vis-à-vis the content of the Declaration, the proposed 17 goals and 169 targets, the means of implementation and the process to define indicators were identified. The region's top priority is poverty eradication and, to some extent, the end of inequality and social exclusion.
- There is an apparent disconnect between LA's comparatively limited engagement with the themes of SDG 16 and the reality on the ground. While many LA countries are struggling with exceedingly high rates of violence and victimization, SDG 16 has not emerged as a key priority area. In fact, some have stated that the connection between high levels of insecurity and reduced development gains is not clear-cut and suggest the inverse may be true. In other words, by tackling poverty and inequality (considered root causes of conflicts and violence) insecurity levels may decrease.
- A regional approach to SDG 16 did not emerge during the intergovernmental negotiations. However, a few shared priorities were identified, namely incorporation of the international dimension of rule of law and governance to the framework.
- Some LA countries were champions of SDG 16. A number of countries – including Chile, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru – positively endorsed the current formulation. Others, including Brazil and Colombia supported the

goal, but expressed reservations. Still others, particularly Argentina, Cuba and Venezuela, registered more serious concerns.

- Many LA countries emphasized alternative conceptualizations when it comes to dealing with specific components proposed for SDG 16. For example, Brazil and others prefer the concept of “access to justice” to “rule of law”. Likewise, some LA countries speak of “anti-corruption and transparency” as opposed to “governance”. Still others emphasize “safety” instead of “security” in order to distinguish domestic from international dimensions of security.
- Meanwhile, many LA countries and cities have promulgated innovative new policies and programs to address the causes and drivers of violence, but these are seldom showcased. An improved articulation between domestic and foreign policies may well serve as an important platform of learned lessons while sharing a key aspect of implementation. In fact, LA countries exhibit considerable expertise in measuring and monitoring progress in areas related to violence prevention, access to justice and governance; these are likely to be key for monitoring and implementing such a bold agenda.

This paper is divided into four sections. The first outlines the background and history of the post-2015 process. It discusses the negotiations surrounding the development of SDG 16, and offers a general picture of how Latin America positions evolved. The second provides a useful background on Latin America context. The following session analyzes the areas of convergence and divergence among LAC countries on SDG 16 specifically. The final session presents a selection of best practices, with a focus on measurement and monitoring in the areas of public safety, justice and governance. The paper concludes with reflections on the importance of SDG 16 for addressing – and potentially reversing – insecurity in Latin America.

1. Introducing peace, security, access to justice and governance in the post-2015 development agenda

The post 2015-development process fostered a more comprehensive and open process, a move away from the more parochial framework of the MDGs, which placed a strong emphasis on poverty reduction across eight goals and 23 targets.⁵ Governments in the Global South, in particular, demanded a more inclusive, transparent, participatory and democratic process. The SDG negotiating rounds succeeded in bringing a greater degree of inclusiveness to the discussions, with input from governments, international agencies, non-governmental organizations and civil society actors. Nonetheless, it has become clear that the now sprawling agenda - 17 goals and 169 targets - may impose implementation and monitoring challenges, particularly among developing countries that lack the requisite resources and capabilities.⁶ In certain areas, the premise of the post-2015 agenda was below international commitments as illustrated by LGBT and sexual reproductive rights, among others.

The final outcome document, “Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,” builds on the 2012 Rio+20 consensus, which articulated three complementary dimensions of development: economic, social and environmental. A thirty-member Open Working Group (OWG) was tasked with developing a proposal for the future SDGs.⁷ In line with the so-called “new development approach”, the OWG included countries from different regions and with vastly different priorities. An innovative system of shared seats made the OWG – and the outcome document it produced – a more representative process.

Since at least 2010, hundreds of non-governmental organizations, UN agencies and governments have come together to advocate vigorously for the goals and targets that would comprise the basis for future SDGs. Hundreds of regional consultations, events and surveys took place in diverse locations and contexts around the world. There were also a number of associated expert reports, including those produced by the High Level Panel (HLP),⁸ the Sustainable Development Solutions Network,⁹ the UN Global Compact,¹⁰ the UN Secretary General¹¹ and multiple reports from different agencies, departments and commissions from the UN System.¹² The OWG also delivered an outcome document that presently forms the basis of UN member states’ formal negotiation process. While unable to limit the number of goals and targets, the OWG outcome document nonetheless represents an important achievement and consensus.

5 See: The Economist (2015). Available at: <http://www.economist.com/news/international/21647307-2015-will-be-big-year-global-governance-perhaps-too-big-unsustainable-goals>. Accessed: June 8, 2015.

6 There is increased concern over the monitoring and implementation phases. In order to measure progress it will be necessary to define indicators that are aligned with the broader goals and targets. The agenda has now 17 goals and 169 targets and National Statistics Offices were given the primary responsibility of tracking indicators and reporting to the United Nations. Many developing states will need to strengthen their national capacities. The inclusiveness and transformative nature of this agenda will also depend on developed states’ willingness to provide the necessary support, along with international agencies, civil society organizations and other key actors. For more information on indicators, see: Saferworld (2015) “Measuring peace from 2015: an indicator framework at work”. Available at: <http://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/view-resource/891-measuring-peace-from-2015-an-indicator-framework-at-work>. Accessed: June 15, 2015.

7 The OWG was mandated by UN Resolution A/67/L.48/rev.1 of the General Assembly (January 22, 2013). Available at: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/L.48/Rev.1&Lang=E. Accessed: June 8, 2015.

8 See: United Nations (2015). Available at: www.post2015hlp.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/UN-Report.pdf. Accessed: June 29, 2015.

9 See: Sustainable Development Solutions Network (2015). Available at: <http://unsdsn.org/>. Accessed: July 1, 2015.

10 See: United Nations (2015). Available at: www.unfoundation.org/assets/pdf/global-compact-report-1.pdf. Accessed: June 29, 2015.

11 See: United Nations (2015). Available at: <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/publications/synthesis-report.html>. Accessed: July 1, 2015.

12 See: United Nations (2013) https://www.unodc.org/documents/about-unodc/Post-2015-Development-Agenda/UNODC_-_Accounting_for_Security_and_Justice_in_the_Post-2015_Development_Agenda.pdf. Accessed: July 1, 2015.

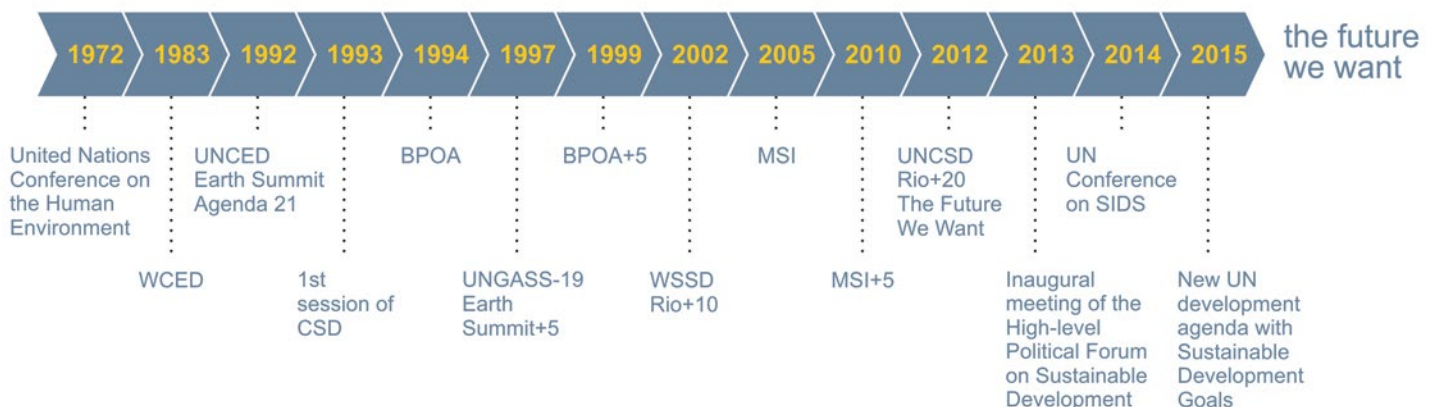


Press conference on outcome document for UN Summit on Post-2015 Development Agenda. UN Photo/Mark Garten

Despite intense intergovernmental negotiations over the content of the outcome document, it remained as it was with few modifications. The intergovernmental negotiations focused, instead, on issues related to the preamble, the means of implementation, the follow-up and review and reporting processes. The final text was agreed upon August 2nd and will be endorsed by heads of state in late September. It includes the goals and targets proposed by the OWG, including the contentious SDG 16. The preamble also highlighted that the 17 goals and associated targets focused on five key areas (the “5 Ps”) critical for humanity, one of which is peace.¹³

In the meantime, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda,¹⁴ negotiated in parallel, addressed the financing aspect of the entire agenda and proposed concrete policies and actions. An Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG indicators, made up of a core group of 27 national statistics organizations (NSOs), will identify global indicators for each target by March 2016. The High Level Political Forum (HLPF) will play a central oversight role, ensuring that the 2030 Agenda remains a key priority of national governments. Besides providing political leadership, the Forum will also carry out a system-wide coordination role, facilitate sharing of experiences, and recommendations. The HLPF will meet every four years for follow-up and review. This process will be bolstered further by an annual Progress Report prepared by the Secretary General, as well as by statistical data produced by national and regional systems.

Figure 1. International development agenda over years



Source: Sustainable Development Platform

¹³ The “5 Ps” are: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership.

¹⁴ United Nations (2015). Available at: <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffd3/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/07/Addis-Ababa-Action-Agenda-Draft-Outcome-Documents-7-July-2015.pdf>. Accessed: August 5, 2015.

Contentious issues included the inclusion of goals on climate change and inequality, as well as disputes related to sexual and reproductive rights. SDG 16, in particular, posed a particular challenge. Originally, SDG 16 supporters proposed two goals – one on governance and justice and another on peace related issues.¹⁵ Given the nature of these themes, the goal was subject to intense disagreements and was the last to be negotiated prior to the release of the outcome document in July 2014. Notwithstanding the challenges, the language of Goal 16 reflects a lengthy bargaining process. It also reflects the priority attached to governance (“an honest and effective government”) and peace (“protection from crime and violence”) by more than 7.5 million people who voted on the My World Survey (see Figure 1)¹⁶, as well as the priorities of regional groupings, such as the Common African Position. Most importantly, the goal and its 12 targets emerged from the intergovernmental negotiations largely unchanged.

Goal 16 prioritizes strategies for promoting peaceful and inclusive societies (see Box 1). It includes 12 targets, two of which are related to the implementation of the goal. The remaining targets focus on reducing levels of violence and deaths,

improving public security, increasing access to justice and promoting more effective, transparent and accountable institutions of governance, among other priorities. At the same time, the The Inter Agency Expert Group is working to establish adequate indicators, with inputs from a range of civil society groups, international organizations and UN agencies (e.g. the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP), the UN Technical Support Team and the UN Statistical Department). In addition, the Praia City Group of National Statistics Offices (NSOs), whose expertise is official governance, peace and security statistics, has been tasked with assisting in the development of SDG 16 indicators. Because peace, justice and governance have only recently been accepted and adopted as a universal development focus, another challenge is building consensus on indicators to measure accountability or access to justice.¹⁷ A good start would be to learn from those who have had past successes in measuring these issues and share best practices.¹⁸

Box 1. Goal 16 and its targets

Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

- 16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere.
- 16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children.
- 16.3 Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels, and ensure equal access to justice for all.
- 16.4 By 2030 significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen recovery and return of stolen assets, and combat all forms of organized crime.
- 16.5 Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all its forms.
- 16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.
- 16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.
- 16.8 Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance.
- 16.9 By 2030 provide legal identity for all including birth registration.
- 16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.
- 16.a Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacities at all levels, in particular in developing countries, for preventing violence and combating terrorism and crime.
- 16.b Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development.

15 The two goals, proposed by the HLP, were Goal 10 – Ensure Good Governance and Effective Institutions, and Goal 11 – Ensure Stable and Peaceful Societies.

16 In Latin America, protection against crime and violence were among citizens’ core concerns. Roughly 2 million people in the region took part in the survey.

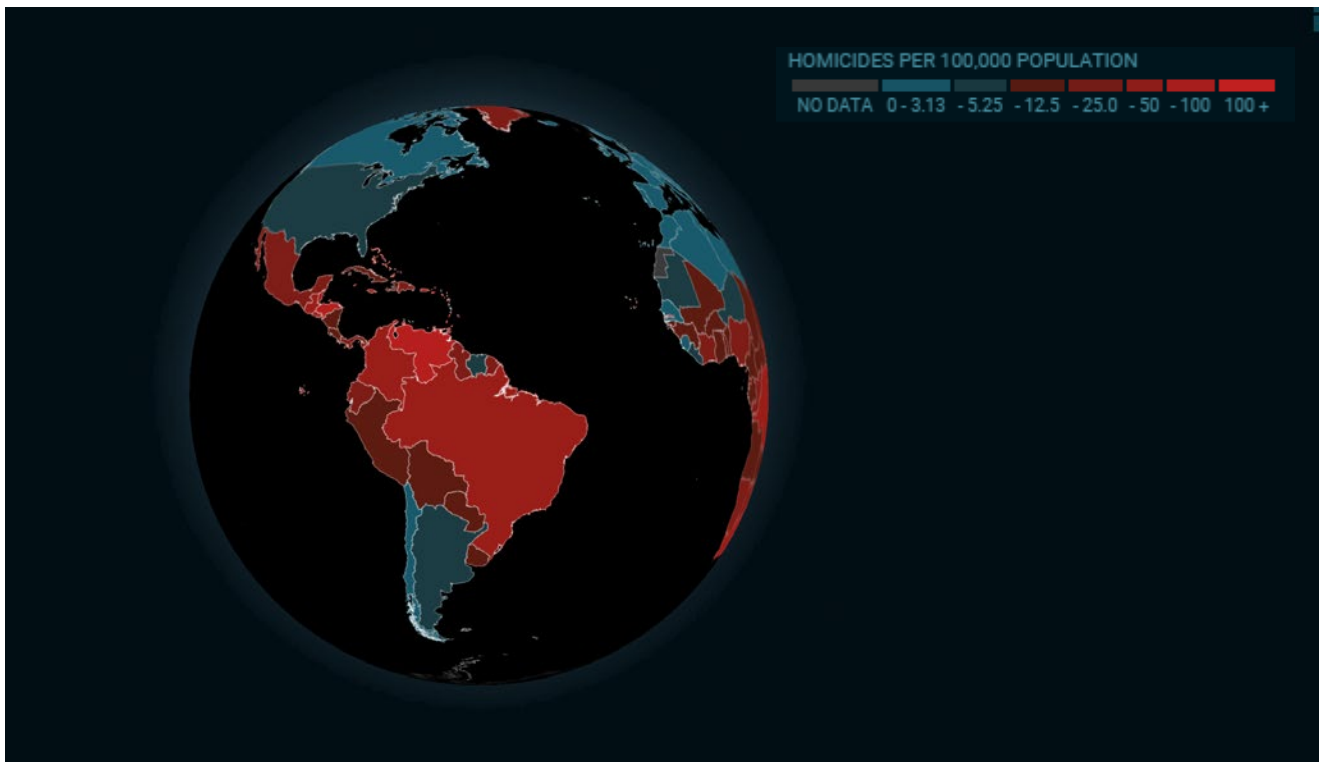
17 A promising initiative is the Virtual Network of Stakeholders for the Development of Indicators for Sustainable Development Goal 16, whose objective is complementing the efforts carried out by the TST and the UN Statistical Commission, among others.

18 See Box 5 for a few examples.

2. The Latin American context

Most countries in Latin America confront acute challenges in the areas of security, justice and governance. With just 8% of the world's population, the region accounts for 33% of global homicidal violence.¹⁹ What is more, with only 5.4% of the world's population, 25% of all worldwide murders occur in four countries in the region: Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela. More than 120 cities have homicide rates of over 30 per 100,000 inhabitants, a frequency higher than those found in some conflict zones (Target 16.1). And although victims' profiles vary, most are young males up to 29 years old. Brazil, for example, trails only Nigeria in terms of homicides of children and teenagers (up to 19 years of age) with 11,000 in this age group assassinated yearly (Target 16.2).²⁰

The staggering number of homicides in the region is closely associated with illicit activities, especially drug trafficking and unregulated arms flows. Small arms are the weapon of choice in this homicide epidemic; illicit trade and flow of these across the region's borders only serve to enhance this violent trend (Target 16.4).²¹ It should be of little surprise, then, that "Protection against crime and violence" is among Latin American citizens' top priorities.



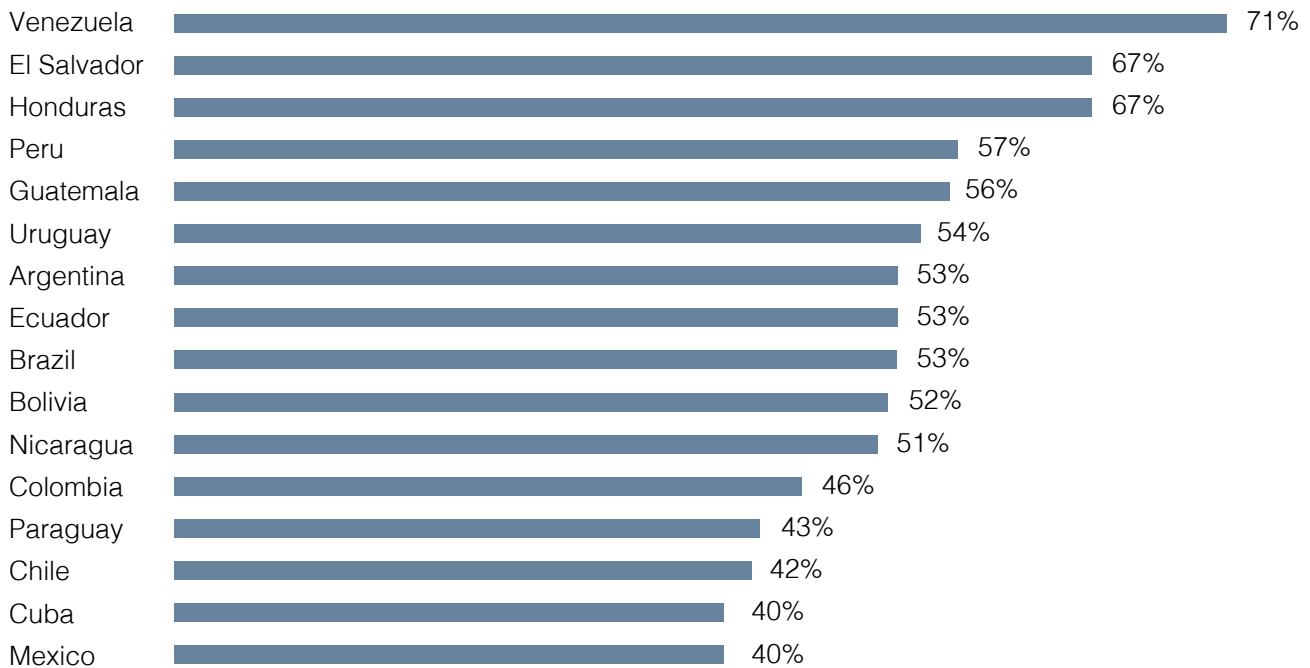
Source: Homicide Monitor (2015)

¹⁹ See the Igarapé Institute's Homicide Monitor (2015). Available at: <http://homicide.igarape.org.br/>. Accessed: June 8, 2015.

²⁰ See United Nations (2014). Available at: http://www.unicef.org/publications/index_74865.html. Accessed: July 16, 2015.

²¹ Survey available at: <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/A-Yearbook/2013/en/Small-Arms-Survey-2013-About-2-Cover-sheet-EN.pdf>. Accessed: July 16, 2015.

Figure 2. My World Survey in Latin America: percentage of people who considered “protection against crime and violence” a priority



Source: My World Survey²²

While not all states are impacted equally, concern for impunity and corruption are shared by governments and civil societies throughout the region (Targets 16.5, 16.6, 16.7). 43.6% of Latin American citizens placed an honest and responsive government as a key priority in the My World Survey.²³ Most countries rank poorly on Transparency International's 2014 Corruption Perception Index (CPI), with only three countries in the region placing in the top 50 country positions (Uruguay and Chile rank 21st on the CPI; Costa Rica is in 47th place).²⁴

The region is also experiencing high levels of incarceration, often in inhumane conditions.²⁵ In Brazil, for example, the prison population rose by

74% over the past 7 years, with many inmates not having received a fair – or in some cases, any – trial.²⁶ (16.3) The overall trend in the region follows the same path. The rate of untried persons in prison per 100,00 population in Uruguay (175.6), Peru (120.7), Paraguay (98.1), Brazil (98.2), El Salvador (94.8) and Mexico (84.7) are leading incarcerator countries of untried persons.²⁷

There is an urgent need to enhance capacity building in the judiciary. Take for example the rate of professional judges and magistrates per 100,00 people. Latin America scores very poorly. Peru for example presented a rate of 2.6, while followed closely with 4.2.²⁸ The best rate was presented by Costa Rica (26.4) and Paraguay (11).

22 Survey available at: <http://vote.myworld2015.org/>. Accessed: June 8, 2015.

23 See: <http://data.myworld2015.org/>. Accessed: July 14, 2015.

24 See: <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2014/results#myAnchor1>. Accessed: July 16, 2015.

25 IPS (2015). Available at <http://www.ipsnews.net/2015/02/no-hope-in-sight-for-latin-americas-prison-crisis/>. Accessed: July 8, 2015.

26 See: Notícias Terra (2015). Available at: <http://noticias.terra.com.br/brasil/populacao-carceraria-do-brasil-cresce-74-em-sete-anos,65bd725003f4e455111fad5db1acb633ib7IRC RD.html>. Accessed: June 8, 2015.

27 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (2013). Available at <https://data.unodc.org>. Accessed: August 7, 2015.

28 Ibid.

This sad reality is accompanied by the population's distrust in governments across the region which contributes to poor governance and an overall feeling of insecurity and hopelessness.²⁹ In fact, 53% of Latin Americans reported that it is unlikely that their governments will solve the countries' problems in the next 5 years, with Costa Rica (73%) leading the skeptics and Dominicans being the most optimistic (33%).³⁰

3. Convergence and divergence in LA on SDG 16

Latin American countries did not advance a consensus-based position on SDG 16. Until the beginning of the negotiation process in January 2015, there was not a common Latin American position regarding the agenda more generally. While some countries expressed active support of SDG 16, others adamantly resisted the agenda and its implicit assumptions; much compromise was required to achieve agreement on the final text. In spite of this achievement, there remain real and significant differences of opinion across the region, particularly in terms of national and regional priorities.

These differences in opinion are not solely geopolitical in nature, but represent diverging views on the negotiation process itself. Perhaps not surprisingly, the leading Latin American voices for and against SDG 16 were also those countries that held OWG seats, not least Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico and Brazil (see Box 2). Chile and Costa Rica also staked out strong – supportive – positions on SDG 16. Meanwhile, some countries, including Argentina and the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America (ALBA) – particularly Cuba, Bolivia and Venezuela – were intensely skeptical about SDG 16 and the post-2015 framework as a whole.

Box 2. Latin American seats in the Open Working Group

1. Colombia/Guatemala
2. Mexico/Peru
3. Brazil/Nicaragua
4. Argentina/Bolivia (Plurinational State of)/Ecuador

Notwithstanding concerns registered during OWG sessions throughout the SDG 16 bargaining process, participants arrived at a consensus by compromising on key language and targets. Specifically, some LA and other developing countries lobbied to include “access to justice” in the goal title, a construction which was preferable to “rule of law” for some among them. An international dimension to governance and rule of law were included (Target 16.8). This flexibility of language included specific terms, such as corruption and access to justice, as a means of differentiating between the domestic and international dimensions – an important difference for some countries.

At the same time, while there were certainly cleavages among LA countries, an even greater divide lay between the so-called North and South. This helped spur collective action among the developing countries. Once negotiations reached the General Assembly, LA countries presented a united front for the adoption of the OWG outcome document as the basis for a renewed commitment on the SDGs. In so doing, LA countries aligned their individual country positions with the joint Community of Latin American and Caribbean states (CELAC).

Box 3. CELAC's Special Declaration on the post-2015 development agenda

On Jan. 29, 2015, the Latin American and Caribbean countries of CELAC met in São José, Costa Rica and reiterated the central importance of an integrated, transformative and universal post-2015 development agenda. Besides recognizing the Open Working Group outcome document as the basis for intergovernmental negotiations, it also underscored the major Rio +20 conclusion, that poverty is the main global challenge and an indispensable condition to sustainable development. Regional leadership and state sovereignty were a core focus, though no specific mention of SDG 16 or its related topics were included in the statement resulting from this meeting. The declaration placed an emphasis on South-South cooperation, encouraging sharing of technology and capacity building within the region to generate statistics and data in order to monitor national and regional progress.

Source: CELAC (2015)

²⁹ See Informe Latinobarometro (2013). Available at <http://www.latinobarometro.org/latNewsShowMore.jsp?evYEAR=2014&evMONTH=-1>. Accessed: June 8, 2015.

³⁰ Latinobarometro (2013), p. 67.

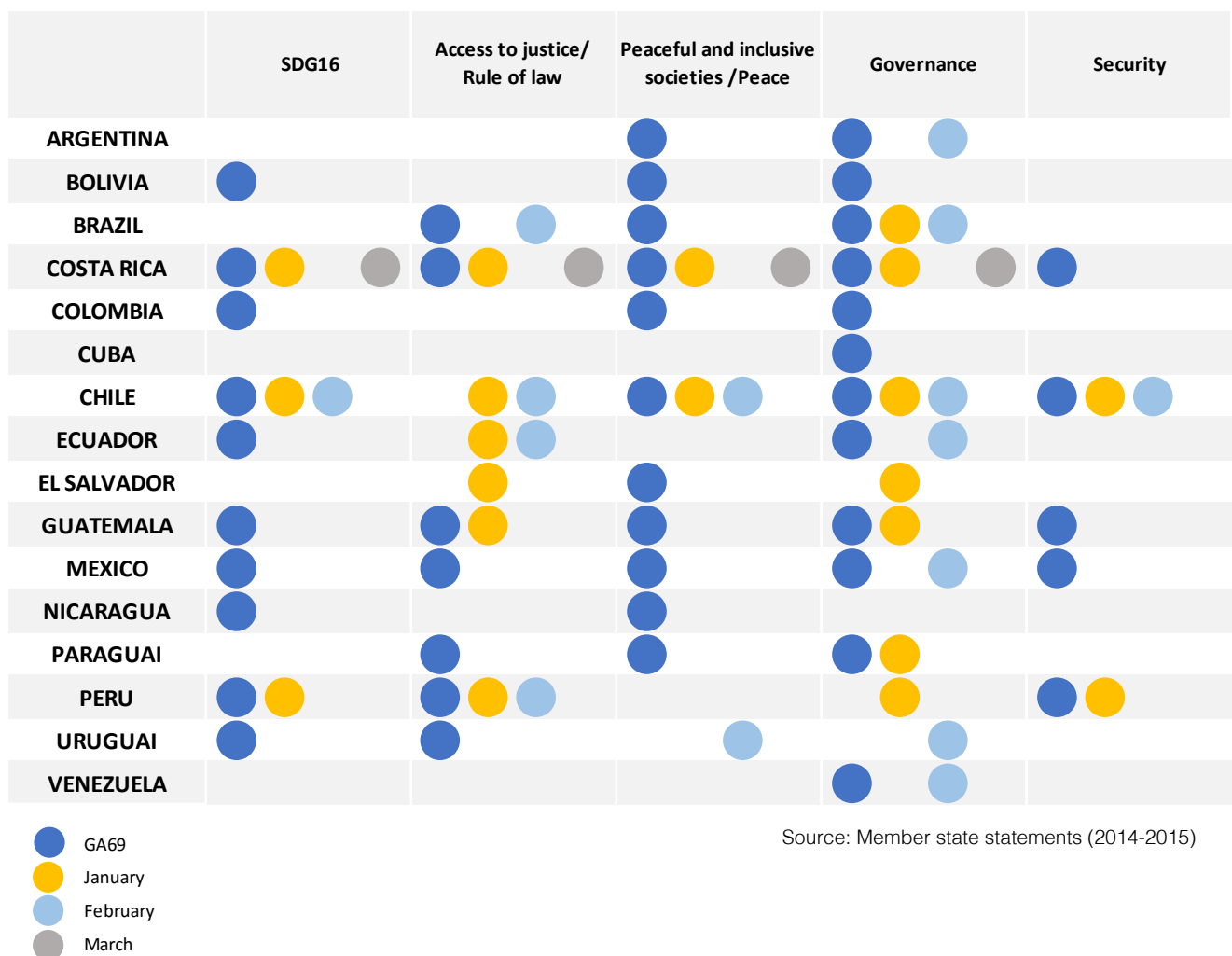
Understanding the points of convergence and divergence related to SDG 16 in the region is an important starting point. In order to address the many challenges facing the region, it is critical that these countries remain fully engaged with the agenda. A discourse analysis of country statements relating to SDG 16 offers insights into the degree of support (or lack thereof) a government attaches to specific issue areas. It reveals the ways in which countries prioritize themes and which countries are championing specific causes. Discourse analysis can also signal spoilers (and reveal those opposed to various issue areas) and can be a powerful tool to support the implementation and monitoring processes.

The present analysis is based on a review of 82 statements and includes the opening of the 69th General Assembly in September 2014 and the period

of intergovernmental negotiations, from January to May, 2015.³¹ The analysis focuses exclusively on statements made in relation to the post-2015 development agenda and, in particular, debates on goals, targets and indicators. It identifies variations in how Latin American countries engaged with distinct subthemes featured within SDG 16.

Country statements at the opening of the 69th General Assembly suggest a commitment to peace and security, rule of law, access to justice and good governance. However, these same priorities rarely emerged in statements throughout the remainder of the post-2015 process – a fact which may indicate a conscious choice by some countries to prioritize other areas of the development agenda, namely poverty and inequality.

Table 1. Country statements: reference to SDG 16 and related themes³²



Source: Member state statements (2014-2015)

31 Specifically, country statements were collected from the 69th General Assembly Opening Session (24-30 September 2014), Stocktaking Session (19-21 January 2015), Declaration Session (17-20 February 2015), Sustainable Development Goals and Targets (23-27 March 2015), Means of Implementation and Global Partnership for Development (21-24 April 2015) and the Follow-up and Review (18-22 May 2015).

32 Negotiation sessions in April and May were not included due to the lack of written statements and references to SDG 16 and its themes. The only country to mention SDG16-related issues was Panama during the April session.

The qualitative analysis of Latin American countries' speeches indicates convergence on several fronts. For one, LA countries formed a united front supporting the Rio +20 consensus and the OWG Outcome Document as the basis for the intergovernmental negotiations taking place throughout 2015. Poverty eradication is the number one priority for all of them. Social inclusion and improving inequality within and among countries are also key priorities and considered to be underlying causes of conflict and insecurity. Substantial support towards improved governance at the international level underlines the need for a more inclusive and participatory governance framework, where developing states have a major say and receive the necessary assistance for capacity building. Most importantly, all countries are adamant that the sustainable development goals are to be universal, while the path towards achieving them is the responsibility of national governments in accordance with regional and national development plans.

Following the recent approval of the Addis Ababa Action Plan on development financing, attention will now turn to the implementation process over the next 15 years. While the state has the primary responsibility of striving for targets laid out in the SDGs, civil society, international organizations and the private sectors must also play supporting roles. At the same time, there may be political debates over the precise content of the global indicators, which have not yet been finalized. Agreeing on metrics for benchmarking progress, in other words, is not simply a technical exercise. What is more, indicators at the national level will also be included, and capacity-

building efforts – especially those dedicated to more under-developed states – are a major concern.

As for the monitoring and evaluation processes themselves, countries in the region stress that while global indicators are indicative of world progress towards achieving the sustainable development goals, specific countries and regions have their own contexts and priorities. Because of this, national statistics offices and regional organizations (reporting on a voluntary basis) will develop key national and regional indicators that will complement the more limited number of global indicators. Since indicators are the result of a careful technical process and are integral to assessing progress, they must be selected with caution. Validating the wrong indicators may not only mask vulnerabilities (e.g. non-disaggregated data) but also risk jeopardizing the success of the monitoring process as a whole.

Since the intergovernmental negotiations at the General Assembly started in January 2015, countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have presented themselves as a cohesive regional group, issuing joint statements as the CELAC, and aligning themselves with the Group of 77 plus China. On the substance of Goal 16, all countries support the goal in its current form. There are nonetheless some subtle contextual differences among countries, especially around the rule of law definition and metrics for violence reduction and combatting organized crime, among others.



A favela on the outskirts of Salvador de Bahia. Latin America's marginalized, underserved and low income areas concentrate high proportions of crime rates.

Photo: World Bank

Specific country positions vis-à-vis SDG 16 can be broadly categorized into three camps: enthusiasts, skeptics and reticent supporters. Among the enthusiasts are Mexico, Chile, Guatemala, Costa Rica and, to a lesser extent, Peru. Skeptics include Bolivia, Cuba, Venezuela, and Argentina to some extent. Reticent supporters include the majority of countries in the region, including Brazil, Colombia and Ecuador, among others. Some countries, such as El Salvador, Honduras, Panama and Uruguay have not been very outspoken about SDG 16 and its themes, especially during the intergovernmental negotiations (January-June 2015), yet they seem to have similar positioning as that of the reticent supporters grouping.

Mexico, Guatemala, Chile, Costa Rica and (to a lesser extent) Peru were vocal defenders of SDG 16, prioritizing the goal and its associated themes. Chile, Costa Rica and Peru stand apart, however, as these countries do not have violence or corruption rates nearly as high as the rest of the grouping or, indeed, the remaining countries in the region. In fact, Chile has the lowest homicide rate in the region 2.8 per 100,000 for each while Peru (6.53) and Costa Rica (8.76) also have rates below 10 per 100,000 people. Different from the remaining countries in the region, this group was also insistent on the support of rule of law. In fact, Chile, Costa Rica, Mexico and Uruguay, for that matter, are part of the Group of Friends of Rule of Law.

Colombia and Mexico experience high levels of homicide, one of the outcomes of failed policies of the war on drugs. Mexico, whose levels of violence associated with drug cartels has spiked in recent years, demonstrated early support of SDG 16 and, for the most part, has not sought to modify the content of the goal. Colombia, rapidly emerging from protracted civil conflict, voiced concerns about references to illicit trade of arms and drugs, especially during OWG negotiations. Colombia's argument was that inclusion of this type of language would only serve to "name and shame" certain countries. Guatemala was very supportive of SDG 16. The country is confronted with the serious challenges imposed by extremely high levels of violence, and is understandably enthusiastic about including a goal on peace, security, governance and justice in the post-2015 framework.

Brazil positioned itself cautiously with regard to SDG 16 from the outset. The country's representatives – along with Nicaragua, with whom Brazil shared a seat on the OWG – argued for a narrow interpretation of the Rio +20 consensus and debated whether a goal on peace, security, governance and justice should be included in the post-2015 development

framework. Brazil's key concerns were (1) that including a goal focusing on these issues has the potential to securitize development planning and aid, diverting assistance away from social and economic priorities; 2) as a consequence of including such a goal, non-democratic or non-representative entities (e.g. the UN Security Council) could negatively impact the goal's implementation; 3) some of the themes in SDG 16, notably peace, were not universal and therefore only applicable to a handful of countries; and 4) there are clear differences between countries facing conflict and those affected by crime. Failing to differentiate between these categorizations could lead to unwanted instances of international interference in domestic affairs, according to the Brazilian argument.

During the OWG negotiation process, ALBA countries (particularly Cuba and Venezuela) voiced concerns over SDG 16. They contended that using the Rio +20 consensus as the basis for the SDG negotiations did not consider security as a fourth pillar of development and, as such, should not conform a separate objective in the post-2015 framework. ALBA countries further argued that a focus on "political" issues related to security, justice and governance could undermine the legitimacy of the process, running the risk of interfering in the domestic affairs of sovereign states. This is a typical position adopted by ALBA countries and hardly unique to the post-2015 framework. Unified by a political ideology and focused on ending poverty and decreasing intra-regional asymmetries, these countries tend to contest multilateral fora that are not based on the equal participation of all countries.

Argentina has adopted a similar stance, criticizing the post-2015 framework more generally. It argues that a common Latin American position to Goal 16 has yet to emerge. It urges a more comprehensive, rights-based approach to SDG 16 that includes issues such as human rights and impunity.

Figure 3. Latin American country positions on SDG 16



The darker the blue the higher the degree of support for SDG16 goals and targets

Disassembling SDG 16 into four basic themes can shed light on country positions and points of convergence. Indeed, support for an international dimension to rule of law and governance in the post-2015 development framework is the main area in which all countries share some common ground. For example, on issues related to safety and violence prevention, there is a shared concern over the possible conflation of national and international jurisdictions relating to security.

Rule of law was a point of contention for LA countries from the beginning of the negotiation process. Brazil, for example, favors "access to justice" over "rule of law" since the former accounts for a wider range of issues, including universal birth registration and issues of equity and fairness. Brazil's representatives failed to bring up some of the more sensitive domestic issues, such as Brazil's bloated prison population and the associated costs of incarceration. For these countries, rule of law should take on an international focus, as a way to support and maintain a more just international order. Finally, the construct of rule of law was regularly described as an Anglophone idea with specialized norms and practices that may not apply in alternative settings.

Table 2. Latin America support of SDG 16 and related targets

	SDG16	Access to justice/Rule of law	Peaceful and inclusive societies /Peace	Governance	Security
Argentina					
Bolivia					
Brazil					
Costa Rica					
Colombia					
Chile					
Cuba					
Ecuador					
El Salvador					
Guatemala					
Mexico					
Nicaragua					
Paraguay					
Peru					
Uruguay					
Venezuela					

Note: This table shows the level of support of selected countries in the region for core SDG 16 issues. It features countries' support of Goal 16 content as a whole and its constituent four issue areas: 1. Peaceful and inclusive societies; 2. Access to justice; 3. Security and 4. Accountable and effective institutions (governance). Darker shading indicates higher support; lighter shading indicates less support.

4. Lessons to be shared: from Latin America to the world

Although many challenges persist in the region, Latin America is also a hub of innovation and experimentation. The region demonstrated important achievements vis-à-vis the MDGs, and developed good practices, particularly with regard to monitoring and evaluating its progress. Across Latin America, there are exciting examples of national and subnational governments developing metrics and surveillance systems to track change. There are also incipient efforts to share experiences - through south-south cooperation - on new approaches to public safety, measures to reduce homicide, mechanisms to expand access to justice services and much more. These and other experiences could be invaluable for the region - and the world - as it looks to ways to scale-up the SDGs in the coming years.



Children having a bowl of soup. Ecuador.
Photo: Jamie Martin / World Bank




MDGs: gaps and lessons learned

Latin America has taken important steps toward achieving the MDGs: beyond its success in reaching some of its key goals, the region has developed tools and systems to monitor progress. What is more, the region has benefited from the alignment of MDG goals and targets with national development plans. This serves the dual purpose of increased efficiency and effectiveness in fulfilling the goals themselves, while adapting to national contexts and priorities.

An analysis of Latin America’s progress vis-à-vis the MDGs demonstrates that the region’s most successful efforts have come in the areas of extreme poverty reduction, undernutrition, undernourishment, child mortality and access to drinking water.³³ Progress in other areas, such as completion of primary schooling, maternal mortality, gender equality and access to sanitation, has been insufficient.

Table 3. Progress summary towards achieving the MDGs

	Goal 1			Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4	Goal 5	Goal 7	
	Extreme poverty	Undernutrition	Undernourishment	Completion of primary schooling	Women in parliaments	Child mortality	Maternal mortality	Access to drinking water	Access to sanitation
Latin America	MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE	HIGH	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH	HIGH	LOW

	Target met or very close to being met
	Target will be met if prevailing trend continues
	Target will not be met if prevailing trend persists

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and Caribbean (ECLAC), CEPALSTAT database.

Note:

Medium-low and low human development countries: Haiti, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Plurinational State of Bolivia.

Medium human development countries: Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador and Paraguay.

Medium-high human development countries: Bolivian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Ecuador and Panama.

High human development countries: Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Mexico and Uruguay.

33 CEPAL (2013,p.12)

Notwithstanding challenges in some areas, there are various lessons regarding the ways Latin American countries and cities monitored MDG progress. These include effective inter-agency coordination and alignment of MDG benchmarks with national development plans together with the production, disaggregation and dissemination of national and subnational data of relevant data (See Table 4). These efforts yielded improvements in the quality of statistical data capacities, and incentivized more efficient use of evidence-based research by policymakers when planning public policies directed towards fulfilling the MDGs.

What is more, subnational monitoring and reporting on MDG indicators became common practice. Aggregated national data and averages can conceal geographical differences and, most importantly, mask inequalities between and within subpopulations. The development of subnational data collection allows for the development of programs and policies better tailored to a country's core needs and a more efficient allocation and distribution of limited resources. Likewise, many countries also developed online, or open, information systems ensuring greater access to the public and assisting in the monitoring of outcomes and impacts.

The coordination of different ministries, departments and agencies was central to monitoring MDG progress and will remain so for the post-2015 monitoring and evaluation process. Coordination tools include development of inter-sector platforms, committees, roundtables and task forces joining-up different ministries and departments. Besides improving the relevance, coverage and quality of statistics, these kinds of mechanisms promoted a whole-of-government approach to development. They also ensured greater transparency and accountability in monitoring progress. The dividends of these collaborations extend well beyond the MDGs.

Table 4. Best Practices in monitoring and evaluating the MDGs

	Interagency Coordination	Metadata availability	Subnational Level	Online Info Systems	Alignment National Plans
Argentina					
Bolivia					
Brazil					
Colombia					
Costa Rica					
Cuba					
Dominican Republic					
Ecuador					
El Salvador					
Guatemala					
Honduras					
Mexico					
Panama					
Paraguay					
Peru					
Venezuela					

Source: ECLAC, 2013.

*Those marked in yellow have produced at least one or more subnational report on the MDGs.

There are, of course, certain limitations regarding these countries capacity to produce robust information routinely and some of these are likely to persist in the post-2015 process. Identifying and addressing these should be a key priority. There are still certain information gaps in areas regarded as priorities, especially in terms of the environment and

gender statistics. An increased focus on producing disaggregated data by gender, race, age, and other metrics will be necessary for the post-2015 development framework. Increased interagency coordination, capacity building and resources will help to fill these information gaps.

Box 4. MDG's lessons learned from Colombia's National Development Plan 2014-2018

The five-year delay to integrate the MDGs into Colombia's National Development Plan will not be replicated in the SDG process. There is a fortunate parallel between the National Development Plan (2014-2018) and the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, not least a single pillar for peace and security, justice and governance as cross-sectoral strategies to achieve development. An inter-agency commission and a subnational approach (using an intra-regional development index) helped to highlight the inequalities and geographical differences masked by national averages.

Specifically on SDG 16 and related targets, Colombia's National Development Plan prioritized:

- Citizen security: prevention-centered public policies, improved information systems on offenses, recognition of the critical importance of rural areas.
- Public security: maintenance of armed action against illegal armed groups, infrastructure protection, cyber security.
- Justice: the strengthening of the justice system, the development of alternative conflict resolution methods and information sharing as a means to emphasize the centrality of justice in Colombia's post-conflict setting.
- Democracy: strengthening citizen participation, anti-corruption policies, promotion of transparency and access to information.
- Defense: maintenance of sovereignty and national borders.

Source: Colombian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2015); Citizen Security Dialogue Report (2015)³⁴

Metrics on violence, security, access to justice and governance

Beyond these, countries in the region have developed their own metrics on how to measure and track progress on violence reduction. These indicators will central to accurately measuring and evaluating countries' progress on SDG 16. Brazil, Colombia and Mexico – the three Latin American countries participating expert group on the SDGs (IAEG-SDGs) – can play a key role in this regard. The group, formed by national statistics offices, was tasked by the UN statistical Commission to develop an indicator framework for the global monitoring of goals and targets throughout the period of 2015-2030.

Effective violence monitoring systems do not simply monitor the number or frequency of homicides and where they occur, but they may also seek to supplement these metrics to develop and track indicators by using a public health approach³⁵ or by incorporating rule of law, justice and security (ROLJS) indicators.³⁶ This sort of multi-tiered monitoring framework is indicative of a broader shift from a strictly law enforcement-based approach to a more comprehensive set of measuring and monitoring instruments.

³⁴ Information in the box was based on the Colombian Ministry of Foreign Affairs presentation in the intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 agenda, in March 2015; information was also drawn from the Department of National Development's presentation at the Citizen Security Dialogues, a regional event co-hosted by the Igarapé Institute and Fundación Ideas para la Paz, in Bogotá 16-17 April, 2015. (See: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/13299presentationcolombia.pdf>).

³⁵ See: World Health Organization (2010). Available at: http://www.genevadeclaration.org/fileadmin/docs/Indicators/Public_Health_Approach_to_Armed_Violence_Indicators.pdf. Accessed: May 22, 2015.

³⁶ See: Geneva Declaration (2015). Available at: http://www.genevadeclaration.org/fileadmin/docs/Indicators/Rule_of_Law_Indicators.pdf. Accessed: May 22, 2015.

Box 5. Measuring peace, justice, governance and security before SDG 16

Some countries and international and regional organizations have measured SDG 16-related issues for many years. A non-extensive list includes:

- Strategic Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSa) Group on Governance, Peace and Security
- Rwanda Governance Scorecard
- Millennium Development Goal 9: Albania and Mongolia on inclusive politics, Afghanistan on security, and Laos on reducing the impact of unexploded ordinance.
- Peru's household surveys on democracy, corruption and public service efficiency
- Social Cohesion Survey (Mexico), Violence Prevention Survey (Mexico), Index of Trust in the Brazilian Justice System (IJCBrasil) and National Democracy Index (Indonesia)

Many countries in the region have well-established systems that measure SDG 16 priorities and make data publicly available. Peru's National Statistics Office (INEI), have been measuring governance in the country for the past 12 years. While Mexico's National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) has a comprehensive and disaggregated database on governance, victimization and access to justice indicators in the country that includes micro data and combines perception based and fact-based indicators. The Index of Trust in the Brazilian Justice System (IJCBrasil),³⁷ developed by the Fundação Getulio Vargas (FGV), has gathered and published data on a quarterly basis since 2009 and gauges institutional effectiveness by creating a measure of public trust while also assessing citizens' engagement with the justice system. A pioneering experience in Mexico is the Social Cohesion and Violence Prevention Survey, carried out in 47 communities with the objective of informing violence prevention policies by determining what affects youth, family context and trust among neighbors.

Other efforts in LA countries to create early warning systems, crime observatories and injury surveillance systems have proven successful. The Research Center on Health and Violence (Centro de Investigaciones de Salud y Violencia) at the University of Valle in Colombia (CISALVA),³⁸ has developed integrated systems for tracking homicide deaths, including a system of standardized indicators for citizen security which was adopted by the municipalities of the cities of Bogotá and Cali and contributed to significant reductions in homicide rates.³⁹

These are just a few examples of how a number of LA countries recognized the critical importance of including both objective (e.g., number of homicides) and subjective (e.g., survey data) indicators. This array of experiences combines different types of indicators that capture actual changes on key issues, including government performance, a population's trust in institutions, policy outcomes, as well as objective fact-based metrics. Taken together, these can be of benefit to inform IAEG-SDG and help other countries to set metrics on governance, access to justice and security, while monitoring progress at the national level.

SDG 16 in particular has the potential to be a game-changer in terms of directly addressing, and potentially reversing, insecurity in Latin America and the Caribbean. But for this promise to become reality, a measured and evidence-based approach to selecting and integrating the appropriate types of systems must be a priority for post-2015 program implementation.

37 See: Fundação Getúlio Vargas (2014). Available at: <http://direitosp.fgv.br/en/publicacoes/icj-brasil>. Accessed: May 22, 2015.

38 See: http://grupocisalva.univalle.edu.co/InstitutoCisalva/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=11&Itemid=33. Accessed: May 22, 2015.

39 Although not a Latin American project, another recent initiative worth noting here is the World Justice Project's WJP Open Government Index. WJP has collected data from 102 countries in an attempt to measure government openness through public perception and attitudes toward government. The index gathers and organizes data using information such as publicized laws, public access to information, degree of citizen participation and the availability of complaint mechanisms. The index enables one to parse the data by region, country, gender or socio-economic status. The WJP has done something similar with its Rule of Law Index. These or variants could be ideal for grouping objective indicators with subjective measures in post-2015 agenda implementation, especially given the fact that these indices align with two of SDG 16's key areas: access to justice (i.e., rule of law) and good governance (i.e., transparency/openness).

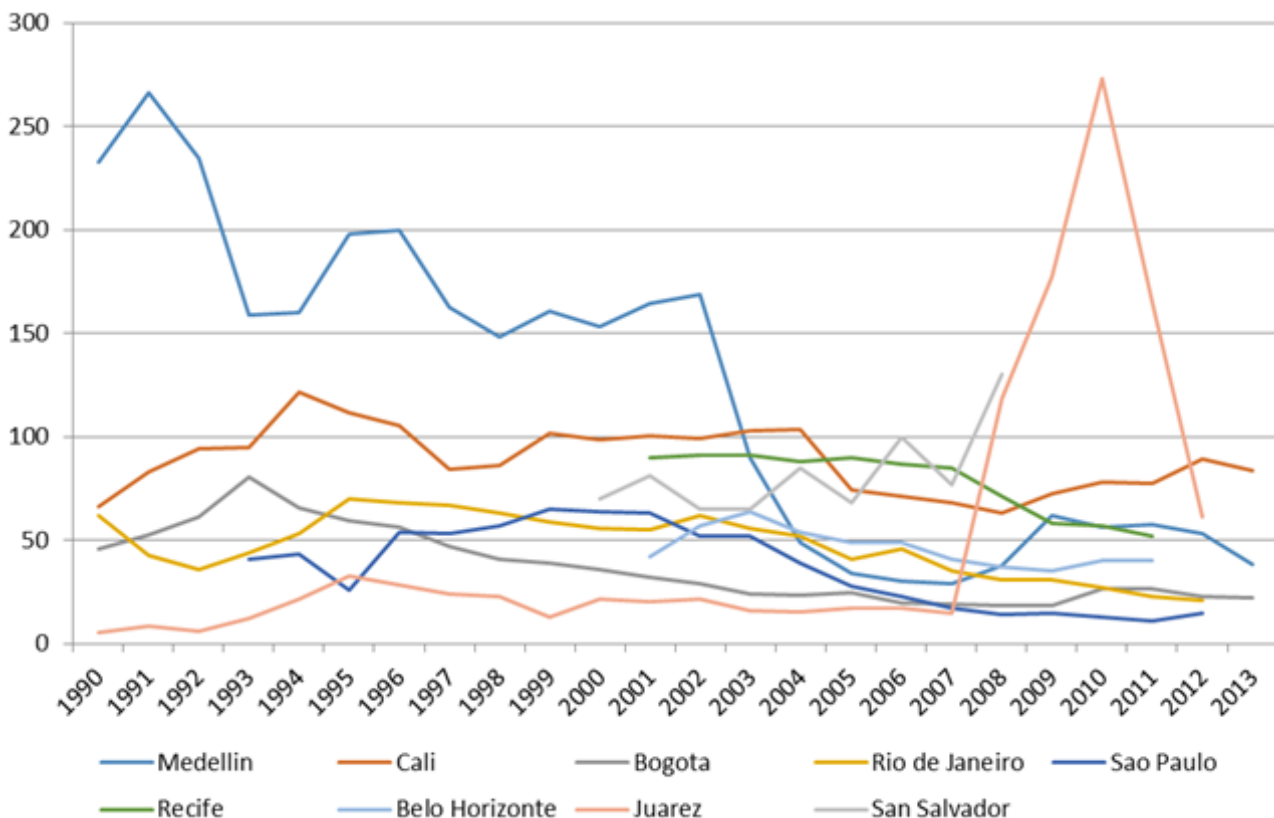
Ready for implementation?

Despite being the most violent region in the world, Latin America is also a hub of best practices for addressing insecurity.

This regional know-how will be crucial in addressing Target 16.1 in particular, and the broader objectives of SDG 16 more generally. Latin America has experienced an expansion of intra-regional cooperation in citizen security initiatives during a period in which aid from the global North decreased considerably.⁴⁰ As it became increasingly evident in recent years that militarized approaches to illegal criminal activities (often associated with drug trafficking) in the region, it was clear that a new approach – and indeed, a new development paradigm – was required.

Across the region, many cities experienced steady drops in homicide rates. In Brazil, São Paulo has experienced the highest reductions: from 2002 to 2012, the homicide rate fell 76%.⁴¹ Rio de Janeiro and Recife also saw significant declines in homicide rates – 60% and 53%, respectively, during the same period. In Colombia, over the period of 2000-2013, the rate fell by 75%, while in Juarez, Mexico, government efforts led to similar reductions – from 165 homicides per 100,000 people in 2011 to 61 in 2012, a 63% drop.

Figure 4. Homicide rates in key Latin American cities⁴²



Source: Igarapé Institute (2015)

40 Muggah and Szabó (2014).

41 See the Igarapé Institute's Homicide Monitor. Available at: <http://homicide.igarape.org.br/>. Accessed: June 8, 2015.

42 Graph produced by Katherine Aguirre.

Homicide rates are important, though insufficient, indicators in accessing the violence environment. However, these rates signal that certain Latin American cities were quite successful in decreasing lethal violence. A few examples are the Police Pacifying Units (UPPs) in Rio de Janeiro, the Cuadrantes Plan in Bogotá and Pacto pela Vida in Recife, among many others⁴³. These policies and programs are often carried out at municipal and state levels and similar initiatives can be found in many different countries across the region. They include measures targeting hot spots, strategies focusing on at risk-groups, education and employment interventions and social development policies that address the principal drivers of crime and violence. These experiences make some LA countries extremely well positioned to begin work toward meeting SDG 16 targets from day one.

Furthermore, many of these innovations throughout Latin America offer a tested model for other countries and cities in the region (and elsewhere in the world) confronting similar public security challenges. What they all have in common is the marriage of development and security agendas, through focused interventions using the sustained presence of the state in underserved and marginalized areas.

Concluding reflections

The inclusion of an SDG advocating peaceful and inclusive societies is a major achievement. It paves the way to addressing – and potentially reversing – insecurity in many areas around the world. It may also contribute to comprehensive national development strategies that account cross-cutting issues such as violence and injustice. Notwithstanding differences in priorities and interests, there is today a minimum consensus on key regional priorities and the path to implementation. While eradicating poverty and inequality are of central importance, there is also an encouraging focus on promoting more peaceful and inclusive societies.

Countries in the region placed different degrees of emphasis on SDG 16 and its related targets during the formulation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. How to conceptualize peace and rule of law is a point of contention for countries in the region, albeit for different reasons. As there is only one "armed conflict" in Latin America, the emphasis on peace is not at the top of the agenda. Rule of law, on the other hand, heavily criticized by some countries who were considered it was an Anglophone concept and potentially interventist. Instead, a number of countries privileged "access to justice", with its focus on the social and economic conditions giving rise to injustice.

As negotiations come to an end, countries are now turning to the question of implementation and monitoring the SDGs, including SDG 16. A variety of different systems will be required for effectively tracking SDG 16 and associated targets and indicators. Governments would do well to review existing existing monitoring systems and best practices across the fields of criminal justice, public health and conflict studies. While Latin America faces many challenges it is also a hub of innovation when it comes to measuring crime, violence and victimization. Countries, states and cities have established observatories and surveillance systems that have potential global relevance. The 2030 Agenda provides an opportunity for current best practices to evolve, improve and, most importantly be shared.

⁴³ See: the Igarapé Institute (2014). Available at: <http://igarape.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/artigo-8-p2.pdf> and <http://igarape.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/artigo-8-p5.pdf>. Accessed: May 22, 2015.

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