

Global Dialogue of Justice Leaders 2021

Transforming justice for a vibrant social contract

6 December 2021



With trust in institutions decreasing and economic outlooks uncertain, societal tensions are on the rise. Wherever there are conflicts, justice actors have a role to play. If countries put people at the center and make government and justice systems more open and accessible, trust can be reestablished to pave the way for recovery. Transforming justice systems is urgently needed to renew the social contract and deepen democracy.

Despite concerted efforts, coronavirus infections and corresponding containment measures are not declining, but continue in waves. The ripple effects of this unrelenting and unpredictable pandemic, the failures and fortunes of government responses and the general uncertainty about the economy are undermining trust between people, communities and the state.

Around the world the [social contract is in peril](#). In his report [Our Common Agenda](#), the [UN Secretary-General](#) points to the growing disconnect between people and the institutions that serve them and refers to building trust and countering mistrust, between people and institutions, as a defining challenge.

An integral part of this is the break-down of justice systems that is affecting countries of all income levels. Justice systems as we currently know them are often seen as not delivering enough. As the [Justice for All](#) report highlights, 1.5 billion people are unable to resolve their justice problems today. This means that conflicts fester, injustices are endured instead of being addressed, and basic fairness in everyday life is out of reach for many.

To strengthen the bonds that hold our societies together and re-establish trust between people, communities and governments, we need to [transform justice systems](#), by putting people in the center and ensuring integration of all actors. This means improving responsiveness of justice systems, so people are given a key role in the design of justice and related services, their ways



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to solve problems are understood, and services are tied to the root causes of problems and experience.

This transformation needs to be grounded in empirical data on individual and structural injustices. We must increase our understanding of what the most common justice problems are, who faces them, what impact they have, how they are addressed and what works to resolve them. Open government approaches of transparency, participation and accountability embedded into justice policy, design and delivery can help bring about this needed transformation.

In the last several years we have seen a remarkable mobilisation around the need to provide equal access to justice for all, sparked by the adoption of SDG16. The movement for people-centered justice has brought together people from all over the world representing governments, international organizations, professional or technical groups, civil society and the private sector. Today it is time to take action and make it happen.



*The **Global Dialogue of Justice Leaders** will provide a platform for people-centered justice and integrated approaches to justice in support of the social contract, trust and democratic values. It will aim to support countries' efforts to implement SDG 16's goal to ensure equal access to justice for all.*

Global Dialogue 2021

The second edition of Global Dialogue of Justice Leaders brings together ministers of justice and other justice leaders to take part in shaping the future of global and domestic cooperation for justice. It is hosted by the Government of Latvia, in co-operation with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Open Government Partnership (OGP) and the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies.

This year we will build on the growing movement for people-centered justice that gained momentum with the adoption of the [OECD 2018 Riga Statement](#), the [Hague Declaration](#), the [Buenos Aires Declaration](#) and the [Joint Action Plan of the G7+](#), as well as the [Joint Letter to the UN Secretary-General](#).

The Global Dialogue will explore how justice systems can:

- Develop an integrated and interdisciplinary justice response to global crises.
- Increase trust and accountability by promoting the adoption of open government principles across the justice system.
- Strengthen the social contract and reinforce democratic values.

Key Questions

Develop integrated and interdisciplinary justice response to global crises

- How can practical examples and initiatives increase justice in the broadest sense, and be integrated in all aspects of daily life and across sectors?
- How can we consider and identify the strategies, management approaches and decision-making techniques required to transform justice systems and increase the capacity of legal institutions to deliver people-centred services?
- How can we share best practices and examples of cross-sectoral collaborations from governments, ministries, local municipalities and other formal and informal justice actors and identify key measures to operationalise change?
- What can justice leaders do to leverage technology to deliver people-centred justice services that are sensitive to structural inequalities? How can data be used by governments and leaders to better understand what works to resolve and prevent justice problems, train legal practitioners accordingly, and build the capacity of the justice workforce?
- How can modern technologies and data help to ensure access to justice, building on the work of the OECD workstream on technology and data led by Latvia?
- What can be done to further develop the practical measures and framework for how justice supports economic development, including the necessary safeguards in the context of business and human rights?

Promote open government principles in justice systems and delivery of services

- What is needed to improve openness and accessibility of justice institutions, services and information, and remove barriers to people's empowerment to address their justice problems?
- How can justice systems be more responsive to their users? What can be done to enable people to participate in the design of policies and processes that are aligned with their needs, beliefs and values and that employ openness and accountability to increase fairness of outcomes?
- What can Leaders do to underline the importance of anchoring the culture, practice and underlying policy orientation of justice systems in equality and inclusion, accessibility and availability?
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- Ahead of the OGP Global Summit 15-17 December 2021, how can OGP members, in dialogue with civil society, take concrete steps on the above through their national action plans?

Strengthen the social contract and reinforce democratic values

- How can Leaders examine the justice sector's role to help strengthen the social contract, socio-economic development and the rule of law, and resolve people's most serious problems and increase trust in institutions by treating everyone fairly and equally?
- How can justice actors help prevent tensions in society by working to understand people's grievances by listening more closely to communities?
- How can we ensure that justice actors do not weaken the social contract, when they fail to curb the abuses that increase public resentment of the authorities, or when they themselves perpetrate abuses, entrench inequalities, and fail to deliver the justice services people need?
- How can we ensure and equip justice actors that they have a key role to play in addressing structural injustices, both by acknowledging their role in reforming their own practices and by empowering people and communities to correct long-term inequities that marginalise large swathes of society?

Goals and Anticipated Outcomes



The Global Dialogue of Justice Leaders will identify practical steps to transform how we do justice, through a focus on data and evidence, innovation, finance, and partnerships. The dialogue will be strategic and action oriented.

Under the leadership of the Government of Latvia, the meeting will aim to identify priority actions and follow-up in facilitating people-centred transformation of the justice sector and the adoption of open government principles across it, also in line with the commitment to the UN Common Agenda. Latvia will also share its aspirations for international standards on people-centred justice, building on the forthcoming OECD Framework and Good Practice Principles on people-centred justice.

Priority actions will be taken forward through regional groupings, peer learning between justice leaders, and through direct support to ministers who request it. Countries can join efforts to:

- Explore practical ways to render justice systems more people-centred and responsive to the needs of different group of people (women, victims of violence, minorities, children, etc.) and business (SMEs), as well as to address justice challenges to make our democracies fit for today's and tomorrow's – economic, social, environmental and institutional realities, also as part of technical and regional meetings of the 2022 OECD Round Table on Access to Justice.
- Open justice systems through co-created commitments in their OGP Action Plans on empowering people to resolve justice problems, making systems more transparent, accessible and accountable, and using justice systems to promote open government.
- Strengthen their resolve to transform the justice sector's role in pandemic response, economic recovery, and societal reset.
- Join forces for the implementation of the UN Our Common Agenda and its ambition to renew the social contract between governments and their people and within societies.
- Partners and donors can support ongoing work at the regional, national and local level, with a specific focus on those furthest behind and the countries at most risk of social unrest and violence.

Global Week for Justice

The Global Dialogue of Justice Leaders is a part of the Global Week for Justice, held from 1-8 December 2021.

Building on last year's successful first edition this year's event will bring the global community working for justice, together for a series of virtual roundtables, dialogues and brainstorming sessions to advance SDG 16's call to ensure equal access to justice for all during this last Decade of Action to Deliver the Sustainable Development Global Goals.

The Global Week for Justice will comprise a series of events organised by different justice partners, targeting different audiences.

More information is available at: <https://www.justice.sdg16.plus/globalweek2021>

Partners

The **Ministry of Justice of Latvia** is at the forefront of initiatives on people-centred justice transformation. On 6 July 2018, Ministers, high-level participants from OECD member and partner countries and members of the Task Force on Justice of the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, met in Riga, Latvia at the High-level Panel “Investing in Access to Justice for all!” as part of the OECD Roundtable on Equal Access to Justice. This year, by supporting the High-Level leader’s dialogue on justice and the Global Justice Week, the country reaffirms its commitment to the international community, to support other countries in their efforts to achieve SDG16 and lead the call for an OECD standard to make access to justice for all possible.

In 2019, the **Pathfinders’** Task Force on Justice, in its [Justice for All](#) report, set out an agenda for action to deliver on the promise of equal access to justice for all by 2030. Currently, nearly 60 countries have endorsed the *principles of people-centered justice* in a series of declarations on Access to Justice. To strengthen political and financial support for people-centered justice a group of countries are joining forces in the [Justice Action Coalition](#); a multi-stakeholder, high-ambition coalition of countries and organizations, championing equal access to justice for all and transforming how we do justice.

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The **OECD** has developed the [OECD Flagship Report on Access to Justice for Inclusive Growth: Putting People at the Centre](#), along with the *criteria on people-centered legal and justice services*, in the context of socio-economic recovery. Building on this and the OECD 2018 Riga statement on *Investing in Access to Justice for all*, the OECD will present its **Framework for people-centered justice and the Good Practice Principles on People-centered Justice**.

Through the OECD Roundtable on Access to Justice there is a platform for countries to discuss the role of justice systems in enabling inclusive and effective recovery, in the context of growing legal and justice needs and increasing fiscal constraints.

The **Open Government Partnership** brings together a coalition of members, civil society organisations and other stakeholders committed to a more open, accessible and accountable justice system. Justice is a popular and fast-growing policy area for reform among OGP members, supported by the [OGP Coalition on Justice](#). Sixty-eight of 78 countries have included a justice commitment that will significantly make government more open to people.

Format

The meeting will be held online on Monday, 6 December from 8.30AM – 10.30 AM ET / 14.30 – 16.30 CET / 15.30 – 17.30 Riga.

The meeting will be available in English and French with other languages to be determined.

Background Documents

Access to Justice for Inclusive Growth: Putting People at the Centre

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

Impact of COVID-19 on Access to Justice

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

A Guide to Open Government and the Coronavirus: Justice

Open Government Partnership (OGP)

Justice Policy Series, Part I: Access to Justice

Open Government Partnership (OGP) (also in: [Spanish](#) and [French](#))

Justice Policy Series, Part II: Open Justice

Open Government Partnership (OGP) (also in: [Spanish](#))

Justice for All report

Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies (also in: [Spanish](#) and [French](#))

Justice for All and the Public Health Emergency

Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies (also in: [Spanish](#), [French](#), [Arabic](#) and [Ukrainian](#))

Justice for All and the Economic Crisis

Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies (also in: [Spanish](#), [French](#) and [Ukrainian](#))

Justice for All and the Social Contract in Peril

Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies (also in: [Spanish](#), [French](#) and [Ukrainian](#))

OECD Framework for people-centered justice and the Good Practice Principles on People-centered Justice: to be launched during the Global Week for Justice