



Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic
to the United Nations



Successes and Challenges: How Adaptable Partnerships Drive Solutions, Build Trust, and Advance SDGs 5 and 16

**Wednesday, 5 February 2025 | 10:00 - 11:30 am | Baha'i International Community (866 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017)
ECOSOC Partnership Forum**

SDG5 on Gender Equality, under in-depth review at this year's HLPF, and SDG16 on Peace, Justice and Inclusive Institutions are widely acknowledged as enablers of the larger 2030 Agenda. Similarly, partnerships are paramount to advancing the SDGs, as no government nor stakeholder can realize sustainable change alone. As such, and with five years remaining until 2030, this side-event focused on lessons learned in building effective multistakeholder partnerships to advance SDG5 and SDG16 at national and local levels, and their impact across sectors, development priorities, and other SDGs. With a focus on evidence-based policies and networked multilateralism, speakers provided examples and lessons learned from local, regional, national and international levels of partnerships that have practically advanced SDG 5, 16 and their interlinkages across development and political spectrums and the processes behind them.

Overarching messages:

- Both SDGs 5 and 16 have practical interlinkages across the SDGs and are therefore critical to accelerating implementation of the 2030 Agenda, due to their enabling role.
- Ensuring national and international policies are gender- and youth-sensitive requires strong coordination and partnerships between government (especially ministries), civil society, the UN, academia and the private sector.
- Effective partnerships utilize the sharing of good practices, evidence-based research, and coordinated actions, while still honoring the specific identities of partners. Networks are particularly adept at this, through knowledge sharing, joint messaging and coordinated work that can have lasting, long-term impact.
- Effective communication, in particular to skeptics of gender equality, is key to addressing gender stereotypes, garnering public support and documenting progress and “wins”. Partnerships can support effective communications by amplifying messaging, disseminating findings, research and evidence, and tailoring messages, through trusted messengers, to the target audience in relatable and understandable language.
- The active participation of women and youth is necessary to create policies, initiatives and partnerships that advance sustainable development with a gender and youth

sensitive lens. Civil society and grassroots organizations play an important role in this regard due to their proximity to marginalized and hard to reach populations.

- Sustainable partnerships, including inter-agency, can be challenging and require sustained effort to last long-term. Information-sharing and coordination between organizations with different priorities can be especially difficult, but focusing on common interests and goals can mitigate some of these challenges. Both bottoms-up and top-down approaches are important, with flexible, sustainable funding.
- Progress that is resilient to political shifts requires broad coalitions that include grass-roots organizations and the general public that continue to put pressure on decision-makers to implement gender equality and peace, justice and inclusion and prevent rollbacks.

Speaker policy and partnerships takeaways:

Ambassador Jakub Kulhánek, Permanent Representative of Czechia to the United Nations

- Domestically, Czechia is prioritizing gender equality through the updated [Czech Gender Equality Strategy 2021-2030](#) which was developed in a participatory, multi-language process, both a law and Charter on domestic violence, as well as a prevention strategy headed by the Gender Equality Department of the Office of the Czech Government. All ministries are also required to undertake gender impact assessments for new laws.
- Partnerships with the OECD and civil society through the [Government Council on Gender Equality](#) have been meaningful but complex. The OECD partnership mainstreamed gender-sensitive and inclusive recovery throughout policies and two government ministries, while the Council has institutionalized partnerships across government ministries and departments as well as with civil society.
- Czechia, with St Vincent and the Grenadines, will co-facilitate the HLPF Ministerial Declaration in 2025 and aims to have a concise and easily understandable text that is evidence-based, which takes into account the SDG Progress Report.

Natálie Jančíková, VNR Coordinator, Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic

- To ensure that Czechia's third VNR is participatory and grounded in partnerships, the VNR team based at the Ministry of the Environment is working across government ministries (including the Ministry of Regional Development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Czech Statistical Office and the Gender Equality Office), and through roundtables with civil society, academia and the private sector across topics such as media/misinformation and global development, with a focus on youth engagement.
- Sustained partnerships have been institutionalized with the [Government Council for Sustainable Development](#). The permanent council serves an advisory function and builds long-term consensus around sustainable development priorities, nationally, regionally (with the EU) and internationally. Members include women's organizations and NGOs including the Czech Women's Lobby.
- Partnerships and participatory action have been vital to policies and legislation including the sustainable development strategy of [Czech Republic 2030](#) and the Gender Equality

Strategy 2021-2030. These were achieved through public surveys and roundtables with non-state actors, among others.

- One of the main challenges has been coordinating diverse stakeholders with different priorities. In legislative processes, balancing the perspectives of government bodies, NGOs, and the private sector is complex. For instance, while developing the Law on Domestic Violence, legal and procedural barriers required extensive consultations, advocacy efforts, and negotiations between policymakers and civil society. The NeNa coalition ("No to Violence Against Women", a coalition of CSOs working in gender-based violence) played a crucial role in addressing concerns and securing broad-based support from both policymakers and the public. Resistance to gender equality policies from certain sectors of society has been addressed through evidence-based advocacy and awareness campaigns.
- The Charter Against Domestic Violence, developed in collaboration with Vodafone Foundation, IKEA, and Rosa-Centre for Women, demonstrates that partnerships between the state, businesses, and civil society can drive meaningful social change.
- To prevent rollbacks and continue long-term progress regardless of political cycles, engagement with civil society and the general public has been important to gain public support and to align sustainable development priorities with those of everyday people.

Obianuju Nwobi, Senior Security Sector Reform Officer, OROLSI

- Increasing women's participation and representation in the justice and security sectors has been a priority of OROLSI and its partners. In the DRC, OROLSI has partnered with the Congolese government to successfully recruit 2,500 women to the national armed forces.
- At the policy level, OROLSI's partnerships have enabled groundbreaking, evidence-based studies and guidance that helps to track progress in implementing SDGs 5 and 16. The report "[Towards Equal Opportunity for Women in the Defence Sector](#)", developed with the Geneva Institute for Security Sector Governance (DCAF), is the first ever study to provide global data on women's representation in armed forces.
- Gender equality discussions should be adapted to diverse societal contexts. Increasing women's representation in Africa's security and justice sectors requires addressing women's specific concerns and challenges when considering careers in security forces. Civil society and community-based organizations play a crucial role in helping to dismantle gender stereotypes and conduct outreach in culturally sensitive and accessible ways.
- Key challenges to partnerships include a lack of information-sharing and coordination among organizations, duplication, differing mandates and priorities, competition for limited resources, and lack of flexible funding options for women- and youth-led groups.
- Vital measures to strengthen gender-responsive justice and security services include the development of robust data collection and assessment tools to measure impact and guide policies, enhancing women's participation in decision making, and eliminating discriminatory laws and practices, including unequal employment conditions.

Natalie Briggs, Program Officer, Halving Global Violence, Pathfinders/ GENSAC Coordinator

- [GENSAC](#) supports gender-responsive small arms control by fostering cross-regional partnerships across a variety of sectors that advance SDG 5 and SDG 16. GENSAC does this by promoting a gender lens in small arms control, increasing women's participation in decision-making and activities on disarmament, and strengthening dialogue between civil society and governments to develop sustainable solutions to armed violence.
- Rooted in trust and common ground, GENSAC shares good practices, research and resources while maintaining each individual organization's own work and identity. These collaborations have resulted in policy changes at national levels, increased inclusion of women in decision-making processes, and enhanced community-led small arms control initiatives.
- Successful partnerships require building trust, promoting inclusivity, and ensuring flexibility to adapt to evolving circumstances. Bottom-up approaches that engage local implementers, alongside high-level advocacy, are crucial for sustained impact.

Magda Coss, GENSAC Member, Mexico

- Civil society has a responsibility not only to hold governments accountable but also to share expertise and insights. Through workshops and joint planning sessions, GENSAC facilitated discussions that highlighted the importance of understanding how gun violence disproportionately affects women and marginalized groups in a different way than men.
- This partnership not only enhanced the government's capacity but also resulted in policy recommendations that prioritize gender considerations in arms control measures. It demonstrated that when civil society collaborates with government entities, it can create more inclusive policies that reflect the needs of all community members.
- While working with the government is important, political shifts make it necessary to engage in a sustainable way by creating a broad coalition of diverse stakeholders, utilize data and evidence on the gendered impacts of small arms control policies, continuous engagement, mobilizing public support and documenting progress to serve as a future advocacy tool during transitions.
- Aligning diverse agendas for a unified front when dealing with multiple partners can be challenging. Networks can help mitigate these challenges by harnessing collective power and building bridges across sectors and stakeholders and between communities.

Dana Podmolikova, Programme Management Specialist, Youth, UNAOC (on behalf of UNAOC and the UN Youth Office)

- In 2024, UNAOC partnered with UN Youth Office on drafting a thematic paper "Contributing to the Realization of the Sustainable Development Goals through Youth, Peace and Security Agenda" which examined the nexus of the two frameworks and the role of young people in driving real progress towards a more peaceful and sustainable future. The paper showcases concrete examples of how the YPS agenda can accelerate

progress on SDG 4, 5, 10 and 16; and highlights good programmatic and advocacy practices that help to advance the agendas.

- Partnerships are necessary both at the institutional level, and the individual level, as women and youth should not just be seen as beneficiaries of partnerships but leaders that bring their own knowledge and expertise.
- In 2023, UN-Women in collaboration with UNAOC, UNFPA and UNICEF piloted a "Young Women Peacebuilders" initiative, which brought together 20 young women from conflict and crisis-affected countries for a week-long capacity building training. The initiative built a strong network of young women that continues to thrive. Peer-learning and knowledge exchange was instrumental in building cross-cultural solidarity and empathy, and strengthening their intercultural competencies.