



A REPOSITORY OF THEMATIC MESSAGES ON PEOPLE-CENTERED JUSTICE

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Data and Evidence

People-centered justice data and evidence-based practices are crucial for designing justice services which deliver fair outcomes for all.

Action 1. Invest in the collection, publication, and use of high-quality people-centered justice data to ensure justice systems deliver fair outcomes for all people.

- **1.1 Use data to understand the size and shape of the global justice gap.** In just the past 5 years, surveys have been undertaken in Argentina, Australia, Burkina Faso, Canada, Colombia, Ethiopia, Mexico, Netherlands, Niger, South Africa, Tunisia, Uganda, United Kingdom, and the United States.
- **1.2 Use data to understand the most common justice problems people face** and our ability to design justice services that provide meaningful access to justice. Data demonstrates that some people have more justice problems than others and some groups find it harder to access justice. This can reinforce existing vulnerabilities, increase inequality, and is at odds with the 2030 Agenda's commitment to leave no one behind.
- **1.3 Collect disaggregated data to understand and resolve the distinct justice problems** of women and girls, refugees and migrants, children and youth, racial and ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ communities and others with multiple and intersecting vulnerabilities to leave no one behind.

Action 2. Commit to data collection that contributes to openness, transparency, integrity, fairness, independence, accessibility, and accountability of the justice sector.

- **2.1 Build partnerships across sectors** to better resource participatory, accessible, and inclusive data collection among diverse stakeholders within and beyond the justice sector.
- **2.2 Increase data collection on indicator SDG 16.3.3** to measure access to justice in a people-centered way.
- **2.3 Promote evidence-based practices** as an integral part of justice solutions and policies.
- **2.4 Adopt common data standards and data governance arrangements** that improve quality, accuracy, accessibility and comparative data use.
 - Emphasize the importance of regional approaches when defining data metrics to prevent biases and the indiscriminate transfer of realities from one region to another. Adapting metrics and methodologies to specific contexts promotes an equitable and representative evaluation of findings.

Financing

Investment in people-centered justice supports peaceful, just, and inclusive societies.



Action 1. Increase funding for people-centered justice objectives by prioritizing allocations to cost-effective, scaled front-line justice services that deliver for people.

- **1.1 Promote and scale-up the most cost-effective primary front-line justice services that deliver results.**
 - Prioritize front-line justice services that are scalable, cost-effective, data driven, results-focused, context-specific, participatory, and reach people where they are.
 - Focus on front-line justice services which prevent and resolve people's justice problems benefiting multiple development outcomes.
- **1.2 Re-imagine justice aid delivery** to provide justice services that reach people where they are.
 - Coordinate financing for primary front-line justice services.
 - Ensure pilot projects can scale to ensure sustainability.
- **1.3 Follow the Justice Action Coalition Justice Financing Framework** including financing principles, benchmarks, and ambitions for people-centered justice.
 - Maximize financing efforts while being realistic about total available resources, including the potential to raise income through practices such as court or user fees.
 - Establish costed, measurable, and time-bound people-centered justice objectives to provide the foundation for accountability.
 - Prioritize spending on people-centered justice objectives including scaling up the most cost-effective primary front-line justice services based on local needs.
 - Maximize effectiveness, efficiency and productivity to deliver people-centered justice through regulatory reform, expenditure reviews, and embedding research, development and innovation.
 - Plan for change and ensure accountability while continuing to manage and finance the process.

Action 2. Increase the share of justice financing in global aid to at least 2% and increase the focus of aid on lower-income countries.

- **2.1 Reverse cuts and increase the share of justice financing in global aid from 1% to at least 2% and increase focus on reducing the justice gap in lower-income countries.**
 - This will result in a significant increase in equal access to justice for all in lower income countries with limited resources to provide universal coverage of primary justice services.
 - In 2011 and 2012, the justice share of global aid was 2.9% but has declined steadily to 1.1%.
 - OECD countries spend 4.3% of their domestic budgets on justice.

Inclusion

People-centered justice meets and serves all people where they are—regardless of geography or identity.

Action 1. Place individuals in situations of vulnerability at the center of research, decision-making, policy design, and programming, empowering them economically and legally.

- **1.1 Justice for Women**

- **1.1.1 Justice systems—including the formal and informal sectors—must enable and create opportunities for women and girls** to participate fully in their societies.
- **1.1.2 Effective justice systems are central to women’s ability to become equal partners in decision-making** in equitable, inclusive, and just institutions.
- **1.1.3 Increase the number of women in the justice sector**, especially in leadership positions.
- **1.1.4 Invest in strategic data and analysis** of women’s justice needs and service experiences.
 - Data on government spending to prevent and respond to violence against women is scarce. More robust data on this issue can serve as a tool for justice programming at the national, regional and global levels.
- **1.1.5 Provide people-centered justice services for survivors** of gender-based violence, focusing on prevention and economic empowerment.
 - Women survivors face major justice gaps, across a range of areas (non-reporting to police, delayed responses, lack of legal assistance) and are unable to access allocated resources.
- **1.1.6 Prioritize partnerships** with local women’s and feminist organizations to address women’s needs at the local level.
- **1.1.7 Increase public spending on women’s justice needs** through innovative learning and awareness campaigns.
 - Women face justice gaps across countries while spending on violence against women remains low.¹

- **1.2 Justice for Children**

- **1.2.1 Understand children’s justice needs**, from a child-centered view using child-centered methodologies, new perspectives and broader partnerships – including with children themselves.
- **1.2.2 Make a sustained, long-term investment in children**, leveraging insights from interventions in childhood that benefit wider people-centered justice aspirations.
 - Promote collaborative funding platforms that increase SDG16-related risk-capital and entrepreneurial spirit from funders to build and scale game changing innovations to achieve access to justice for children.

- **1.3 Youth Engagement**
 - **1.3.1 Leverage the meaningful inclusion and participation of youth** and young adults in the development and implementation of justice policies and programs.
 - Youth and young adults are often underrepresented in government and decision-making spaces.
 - Leveraging the efforts and ideas of 16% of the global population (1.2 billion youth) is crucial to achieving the SDGs by 2030.
 - Investing in young people is essential to harnessing their potential and addressing the unique challenges they face.
 - Effective inclusion and meaningful participation of youth and young people is key to ensuring a people-centered approach.
- **1.4 Justice for People with Disabilities**
 - **1.4.1 Collect data and evidence on the distinct justice problems faced by people with disabilities and their experiences accessing justice.**
 - Justice problems for people with disabilities are often related to health issues, unemployment, social exclusion, homelessness, and interactions with the criminal justice system.²

Action 2. Prevent and address discrimination and marginalization in justice systems.

- **2.1 Justice for Women**
 - **2.1.1 Eliminate gender discriminatory laws and practices,** introduce non-discriminatory and gender transformative processes, and adopt laws that strengthen the socio-economic empowerment of women and girls.
- **2.2 Justice for Children**
 - **2.2.1 Promote age disaggregation in data collection efforts,** and pursue new qualitative and quantitative data collection efforts that are safe, quality, coherent and accurate.
 - **2.2.2 Implement game-changing innovations that shift systems** to become more child centered, and build this evidence-base.
- **2.3 Youth Engagement**
 - **2.4.1 Leverage data to understand the unique justice experiences of youth and young people,** and the intersectionality of age with other demographic indicators, that can shape a person's ability to experience justice.
 - Age-disaggregated data is rarely (if ever) available.
 - Not all youth and young people experience justice the same.
 - Data should also capture the diverse experiences of youth and young adults across different geographic areas.
- **2.4 Justice for People with Disabilities**
 - **2.4.1 Ensure legal information is made accessible, court procedures are flexible, and stigma is addressed** as these are key barriers in accessing justice for people with disabilities.³
 - People with disabilities face heightened levels of discrimination.

Intersecting Issues

Justice is a critical enabler and a bedrock for achieving all the SDGs. We cannot reduce poverty and inequalities, ensure peace, or address fallouts from climate change without equal access to justice for all.

Action 1. Cut the number of unresolved justice problems in half by prioritizing access to justice as central to achieving humanitarian, development, and peace outcomes.

- **1.1 Work with formal and informal justice actors to empower people to understand and use the law,** know their rights, access services, and become more effective at resolving conflicts and disputes.
 - **1.1.1 Support diverse justice providers** to deliver effective, accessible and responsive services accountably and coherently.
- **1.2 Generate spaces for dialogue with key justice actors,** integrating voices from diverse sectors and justice users.
- **1.3 Support holistic, multidisciplinary and integrated programming** that addresses the symptoms, as well as systemic and structural causes of injustice.
- **1.4 Include access to justice in climate mitigation and adaptation strategies** to uphold the right to work, housing, land and property rights, support livelihoods, promote fairness and equality to leave no one behind.
- **1.5 Invest in access to justice in conflict-affected and fragile contexts** to protect civilians and ensure people's everyday needs are met, victims of abuses can access justice, communities remain resilient, systems are held accountable, confidence in institutions is restored, and grievances are redressed peacefully.
- **1.6 Integrate transitional justice approaches into development policies and agendas, and support victims' groups and civil society actors** to ensure accountability, address harms and transform structures of exclusion and inequality toward inclusion and equity. Transitional justice, in taking a people-centered approach, ensures stronger links between social cohesion, peace and sustainable development.
 - **1.6.1 Transitional justice is an important element of people-centered justice and a pre-requisite for sustainable peace, and development.**
 - Legacies of serious human rights violations create challenges for societies to prevent the recurrence or onset of conflict, and improve people's well-being.
 - Addressing the causes and consequences of human rights violations helps close the justice gap, especially in countries affected by systemic violence, repression, and marginalization.
 - **1.6.2 Transitional justice should be more strategically integrated into sustainable peace and development policies and agendas.**
 - Transitional justice increases agency, social trust, and inclusion, and addresses drivers of violence making it central to the SDG framework.
 - Link policy and practice by including social services within reparative justice frameworks and incorporating victims' needs into development plans and reporting processes.
 - Strengthen collective action and shared political agendas among victims' groups, networks, civil society actors, and movements to transform structures of exclusion and inequality.
 - Incorporate transitional justice into responses to violence at the local, national, regional, and global levels and through both formal and informal institutions.

- Adopt a long-term, inter-generational perspective on the monitoring, operationalization, and impact of transitional justice to maintain support and engagement.
- **1.7 Increase recognition of customary and informal justice (CIJ) systems.** Most people resolve their justice problems and claim their rights outside of formal state-based courts, and resort overwhelmingly to CIJ systems.
 - **1.7.1** While CIJ is not without its risks, particularly to the rights of women and girls, **these systems are diverse and evolving**, thus a more granular, discerning approach to risk is required.
 - **1.7.2 A spectrum of engagement options is possible, ranging from building a deeper understanding of the empirical reality of CIJ, to empowering justice seekers, to working with community-based groups** adjacent to CIJ systems, to fostering coherence and collaboration within justice ecosystems, to direct engagement with CIJ themselves.
 - **1.7.3 Adopt a justice ecosystems approach** to understand the diversity of justice providers and shape reform plans.
 - **1.7.4** Deliver a step-change in justice support through **expanded CIJ engagement to achieve justice for all by 2030.**
 - **1.7.5 Empower justice seekers**, especially marginalized groups, to participate in and benefit from CIJ systems.
 - **1.7.6 Advance women and girls’ participation** and leadership and ensure the protection of their rights in CIJ systems.
 - **1.7.7 Support development partners to engage with CIJ** to deliver people-centered justice.
 - **1.7.8 Increase investment in CIJ systems.**

Action 2. Contribute to multistakeholder partnerships that support countries and people to design, implement, and scale-up people-centered justice reforms and services.

- **2.1 Prioritize collaborative and coordinated approaches** to instituting people-centered justice.
- **2.2 Share best practices and lessons learned** on effective justice strategies with peers
- **2.3 Participate in regional and international fora** with diverse stakeholders on the state of access to justice and closing the global justice gap to ensure equal access to justice for all.
- **2.4 Provide resources and support** for multistakeholder partnerships that support collective action and national implementation of people-centered justice strategies.

Endnotes

1. UN Women, UNDP, IDLO, World Bank, and Pathfinders, “Financing Women’s Justice Needs: Global Perspectives on Violence Against Women, and a Case Study on Uganda,” *Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies*, March 13, 2024, www.sdg16.plus/resources/financing-womens-justice-needs-global-perspectives-on-violence-against-women-and-a-case-study-on-uganda.
2. Fact Sheet, “Justice for All Means Leaving No One Behind,” *Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies*, March 21, 2024, www.sdg16.plus/resources/justice-for-all-means-leaving-no-one-behind.
3. Ibid.

sdg16.plus/justice-action-coalition

