

## **Athens Democracy Forum**

October 9-11, 2019

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

The New York Times

# The Athens Democracy Forum Sustainable Development Goals Interactive Workshops



Sustainable Development Goal 16
Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions

### **Moderator:**

• Alicia Wittmeyer, Editor, Opinion Section, The New York Times

## **Panelists:**

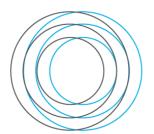
- Nanna-Louise Wildfang Linde, Area Lead, Corporate, External and Legal Affairs, Central and Eastern Europe, Microsoft
- Alvin Carpio, Chief Executive, The Fourth Group

#### Introduction

In September 2015, representatives from 193 countries gathered at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit to adopt the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as guiding principles for developing policies in UN member states to address 17 significant global issues. These SDGs demand a global commitment from governments, businesses, and civil society in pursuit of sustainable development by 2030 ("Agenda 2030"). The pursuit of Sustainable Development Goal 16: Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions is essential for the protection of vulnerable individuals such as children and minorities and to strengthen public trust in government.

## Methodology & Summary

On October 11, 2019, the Athens Democracy Forum hosted the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals Interactive Workshops with the objective of facilitating productive discussions on four of the SDGs and identifying actionable solutions to achieve those goals. Thirty-one people participated in the Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions roundtable sponsored by Microsoft. Business leaders, journalists, members of interest groups, and Global Liberal Arts Alliance students conducted deep-dive discussions into this global goal. The sessions began with an overview of the Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions SDG and a brief presentation regarding Microsoft's involvement in cybersecurity and electoral integrity. An open discussion at the roundtables followed, with each table highlighting one



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of the areas of interest of SDG 16. Attendees of the workshop were tasked with identifying actionable items for sustainable change with respect to Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions.

#### **Action Items**

Challenge: Businesses still maintain illegal practices that directly and indirectly foster organized crime groups and criminal activity that threatens peace and justice.

#### Solutions:

- 1. Change curricula in business schools to better educate future business leaders in both the ethical and profitable benefits of corporate responsibility.
- 2. Consumers must be intentional and proactive in avoiding unethical corporations and rewarding responsible corporations, perhaps guided by a database that rates major businesses and corporations according to social responsibility.
- 3. Strengthen governmental oversight and implement stricter penalties to counteract the relationships of individuals and businesses with those in organized crime and the illegal economy.

Challenge: Democratic societies fail to regulate the circulation of weapons in society and do not implement effective policies to reduce or prohibit weapons.

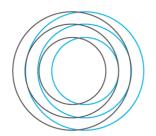
### Solutions:

- 1. States implement gun buyback programs to incentivize citizens to remove weapons from society. These buyback programs should be preceded by the implementation of policies that severely restrict the ownership of guns by citizens.
- 2. States provide subsidies to businesses if these businesses commit to removing guns and ammunition from their product line.

Challenge: Some governments do not serve to foster an environment that is conducive to the creation and operation of civil society organizations.

#### Solutions:

- Organizations of global and regional governance (such as the U.N., the African Union, or the Association of Southeast Asian States) should encourage and support national governments in creating an environment that allows Civil Society Organizations to operate freely. At the same time, NGOs should be checked by private and public competent bodies, in order to evaluate their actions.
- 2. Use the expertise and experience of large international NGOs to support local grassroots Civil Society Organizations and citizen juries that can directly contribute to solving local issues.



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Challenge: Significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime.

## Solutions:

- 1. Pass strong accounting and disclosure laws applied equally across countries. Seek international cooperation to control the movement of illicit funds and to create a system to keep track of money, funds and properties being moved by known organized crime groups.
- 2. Businesses work in close consultation with governments, international institutions and civil society to strengthen and facilitate legal frameworks on the matter, closing capacity gaps of the public sector by providing technical information, data analysis, and organizational solutions.
- 3. Educate children to understand the impact of illegal arms flow on the national economy, to raise a generation of citizens who will reject illegal activity for the sake of national prosperity.

## Report prepared by students as follows:

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