

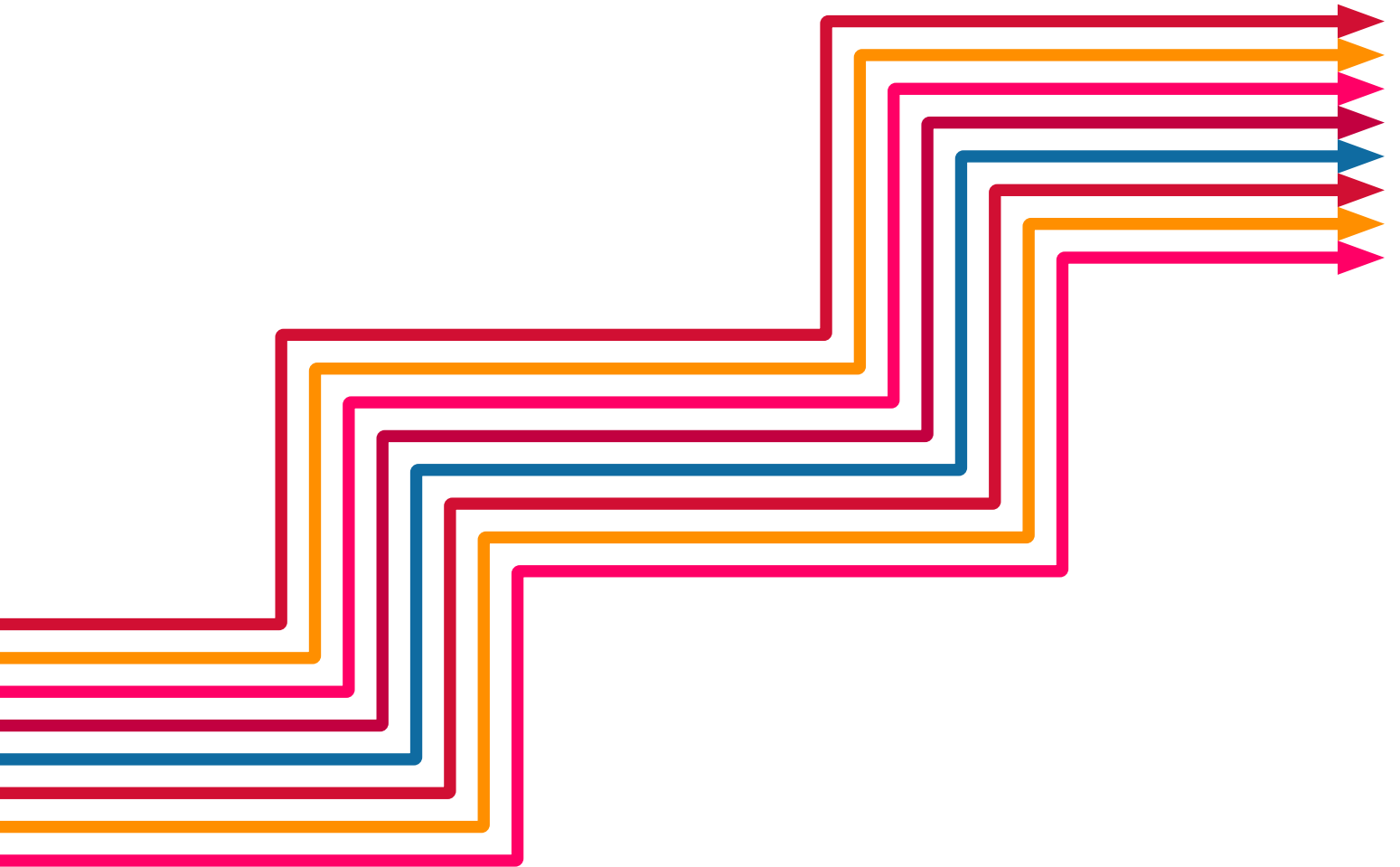
PATHFINDERS

FOR PEACEFUL, JUST AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES

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Making Access to Justice for All a Reality

Appraising Progress on the Promise of SDG16



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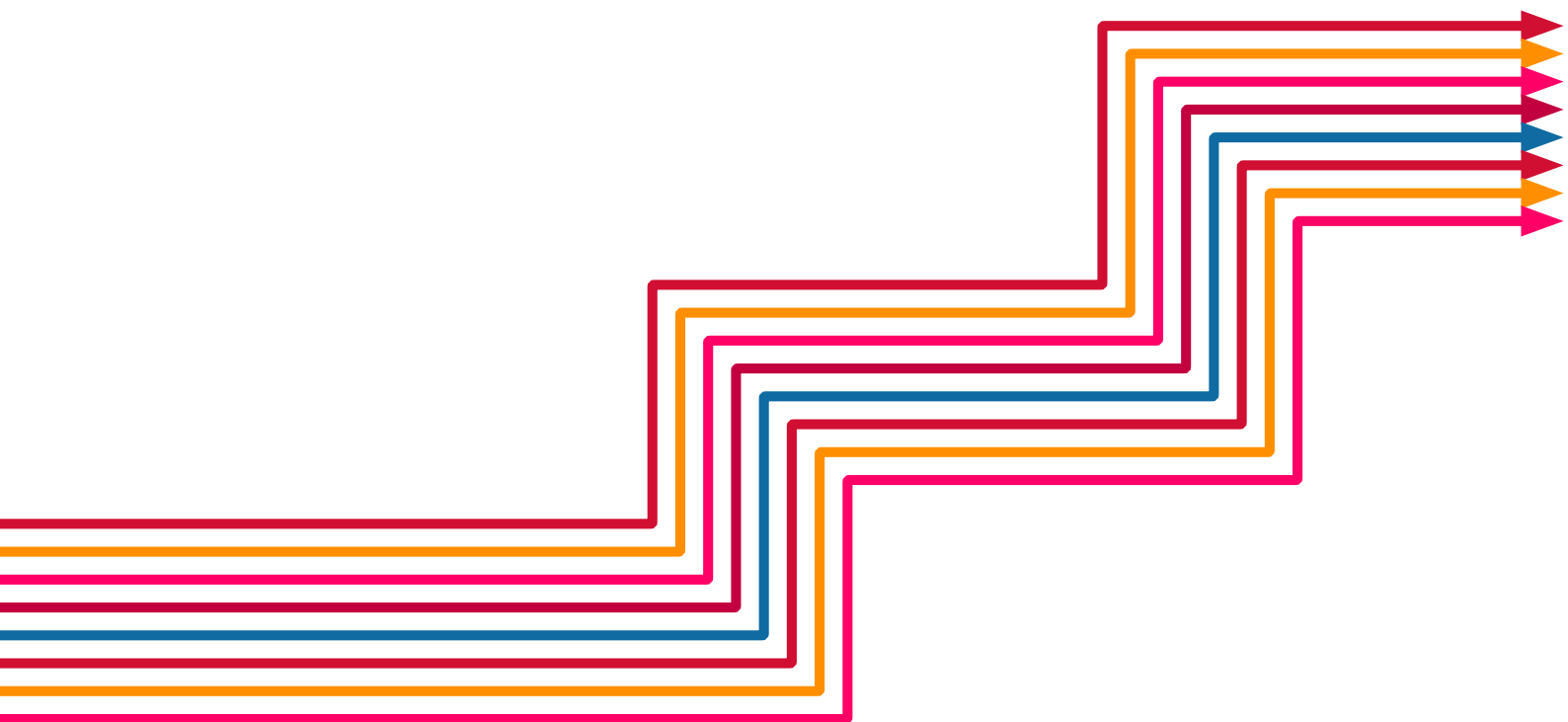
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Introduction

World leaders took a bold decision in 2015 when they adopted a global goal of providing access to justice for all by 2030 (SDG16), which threw a spotlight on the need to address inequalities and injustices in justice systems around the world. Inspired by this goal, the movement for people-centered justice works to shift justice systems from primarily benefitting the wealthy and powerful to prioritizing the needs and interests of ordinary people: from justice for the few to justice for all.

This paper describes the efforts of the movement for people-centered justice over the past years and sets out what progress was made, first in setting the agenda and defining the approach, with the work of the Task Force on Justice at its heart, and subsequently in expanding political support and building networks of diverse stakeholders, culminating in the founding of the Justice Action Coalition. From energizing grassroots activists to global political and advocacy efforts, the movement has created new opportunities for engagement and collaboration between diverse stakeholders. As a result, governments and international organizations are increasingly recognizing the importance of promoting people-centered justice.

The paper concludes that to sustain progress in the coming years, the Justice Action Coalition must go beyond political mobilization and strengthen its ability to inspire and support implementation at the national and local level, while becoming the anchor point for a global knowledge architecture for people-centered justice.



Global Context

Worldwide, more than **five billion people have unmet justice needs**. They either live in extreme conditions of injustice with no legal protection, are faced with a justice problem they cannot resolve, or are excluded from the social, economic and political opportunities the law should provide. Many people experience multiple justice problems simultaneously.

In recent years, three major global trends have combined to bring justice out of the shadows in discussions over how to build peaceful, prosperous and sustainable societies.

First, in 2006, the **Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor** brought together leading global thinkers who observed that traditional justice mechanisms centered on lawyers and courthouses were inadequate for addressing today's justice needs. The commission's **report** emphasized the importance of access to justice for promoting economic development and reducing poverty, arguing that, "legal empowerment of the four billion excluded [from the rule of law] is the key to unlocking vital energies needed to end poverty."

Second, whereas the Millennium Development Goals had focused primarily on economic and human development objectives, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that succeeded them in 2015 incorporated a broader focus on the drivers of development and the triggers of instability and insecurity. In particular, **SDG16** stressed the need for effective, accountable institutions that would promote peaceful, just and inclusive societies. Justice for all is at the heart of the goals' promise.

Third, the increasing number and intensity of uprisings in all world regions highlighted the urgency of addressing injustice. The Arab Spring, Black Lives Matter, Climate Strikes, and other protests and movements around the world could not be explained by economics alone. People's sense that they were being treated unfairly by state and other institutions and could not access justice to improve their lot was emerging as a **threat to social contracts** and a driver of instability.

Despite a growing realization that a lack of justice is a brake on economic and social progress, however, the justice field largely remained in stasis. There was little vision of how to respond to new challenges and opportunities, strategies to reform justice sectors were scarce, and **financing remained inadequate**: between 2012 and 2016 international funding for the justice sector declined by 40 percent.

Inspired by the adoption of SDG16, the governments of Brazil, Sierra Leone, and Switzerland formed the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies in 2016. A multi-stakeholder coalition spearheaded by UN member states, they developed a **roadmap** and identified three grand challenges as a focus for ambition and learning: to provide access to justice for all, to reduce all forms of violence, and to develop a new agenda for social, economic, and political inclusion.

To respond to the growing demand for justice, the first of the grand challenges that Pathfinder countries took on was to convene a Task Force to explore delivery and financing strategies for providing access to justice for all.

Setting the Agenda and Defining People-centered Justice | 2018-2019

Inspired by the adoption by The Elders of access to justice as a priority program, the Task Force on Justice marked the first major attempt since the Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor in 2006 to develop new ideas for delivering justice to people around the world.¹ It started work in February 2018 and was co-chaired by ministers from Argentina, the Netherlands, Sierra Leone and The Elders. Its members comprised justice leaders and partner organizations from all world regions.²

Key Insights from the Task Force on Justice

Following the Task Force's first meeting in Buenos Aires in February 2018, **Minister of Justice German Garavano** urged policymakers to place a greater emphasis on justice:

"Justice is the missing link in every effort we make to defeat poverty and to deliver the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. Why? Injustice fuels political instability, insecurity and conflict. It locks people out of education and health services, condemns them to live in unsafe housing, and prevents them from getting jobs or starting businesses."

The Task Force developed a new perspective on justice systems and sought to increase the ambition of policymakers around the world to create more just societies. It emphasized the need to:

- **Place justice at the heart of sustainable development** – improved access to justice is needed to realize all 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals; without it, prosperity, peace, inclusion, and fairness will remain out of reach.
- **Put people at the center of justice systems** – understanding people's needs and working with multiple sectors to implement strategies that are proven to meet those needs are critical if justice for all is to become a reality.
- **Move from justice for the few to justice for all** – closing the justice gap requires a sustained effort to help billions more people to prevent and resolve justice problems and seize the opportunities justice provides to participate fully in their societies and economies.



People-centered justice, which takes resolving people's justice problems as its basis for reform, was the Task Force's major innovation. People do not just need access to the formal justice system; they need to resolve their justice problems using whatever means are most effective, whether these means involve formal or informal justice providers or providers working in other sectors. As Sierra Leone **Minister of Justice Dr. Priscilla Schwartz** noted at the Buenos Aires meeting:

"Justice is often seen narrowly. We have an image of courtrooms where men in wigs argue about the letter of the law...Formal legal institutions are important, but they are too slow and too expensive to slake the thirst for justice felt by my country's young and growing population."

People-centered justice draws on evidence of the most common justice problems people face and of what works to resolve those problems. It seeks to understand how people experience justice processes and to improve the "justice journeys" they undertake. It is delivered by a justice system that is open to partnerships with stakeholders from sectors that may not traditionally have been considered part of the justice ecosystem. And it works not just to tackle justice problems but to prevent them from arising in the first place.

Better justice journeys require the empowerment of people and communities, and the provision of people-centered justice services. The Task Force emphasized that a wide range of actors are needed to ensure justice and fairness in people's lives. In the words of Hina Jilani, Task Force co-chair and one of The Elders:

"People cannot always navigate complex legal problems and systems by themselves, and they can't always afford lawyers to help them navigate these systems. Civil society actors such as paralegals, help fill that gap. They advise citizens where they can access support and help them to find timely, practical solutions to their problems that don't require them to fall into debt or into poverty traps."

Working Together to Put People at the Center of Justice

The Task Force provided a platform for a powerful coalition of justice partners, which came together to gather and produce evidence, share learning, develop shared strategies, advocate for change, and support national efforts to deliver people-centered justice.³ This work provided the underpinning for the Justice for All report and at the same time created an infrastructure for co-operation that has ensured the continuing expansion of the movement.

In 2018-2019, six work streams collaborated to develop the intellectual argument for people-centered justice:

- The **Justice Gap** working group, led by the World Justice Project, conceptualized and estimated the global justice gap and supported the development of a new justice indicator for SDG16.3 that was adopted by the UN Statistics Commission.
- Work on the **Case for Investment** in justice for all was led by OECD, ODI, and the Canadian Forum on Civil Justice. A **white paper** produced by OECD and World Justice Project outlined the costs to economies of legal problems and the benefits of interventions to improve access to justice. A working paper by ODI calculated the cost of achieving SDG16.3, which calls for equal access to justice for all. The Canadian Forum on Civil Justice produced a **review of the literature** on the social return on investment in justice.
- The **High-Level Group on Justice for Women**, convened by the Executive-Director of UN Women, the Director-General of IDLO, and the Senior Vice President and Group General Counsel of the World Bank Group, produced a high-level report and call to action on eliminating legal discrimination against women and empowering women as rights holders. The report was launched at the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2019.
- **The Innovation Group**, led by HiiL and hosted by the Canadian Ministry of Justice, launched its report on how innovation can help close the justice gap at the Innovating Justice Forum in The Hague in February 2019.
- The **Transitional Justice Working Group**, led by ICTJ, highlighted the need for countries emerging from conflict or mass atrocities to place meaningful participation of victims at the heart of transitional justice processes, while balancing the short-term need for political stability with the aim of maximizing long-term change. The group published its report, *On Solid Ground: Building Sustainable Peace and Development after Massive Human Rights Violations*, in May 2019.

- The **Working Group on Justice for Children**, led by CELCIS at the University of Strathclyde, published a challenge paper and launched its Call to Action in September 2019. The group called for an expansion of justice services that are tailored to children’s unique needs and for greater commitment by policy-makers and service providers to securing the human rights of children.

The Principles of People-centered Justice

In February 2019, the Access to Justice Conference and Justice Partners Forum, together with Hiil’s Innovating Justice Forum and the final meeting of the Task Force on Justice, were held in The Hague during what was the largest global gathering on access to justice for at least a decade.

In a signal of the growing political and institutional support for justice for all, the gathering included a Ministerial Meeting on Access to Justice which brought together justice ministers to discuss shared strategies. The meeting’s primary outcome was the **Hague Declaration on Access to Justice for All**, endorsed by almost 200 justice champions, including 22 countries. The declaration first laid out the principles of people-centered justice:



Put people at the center of justice systems, and understand what they need and want when they seek justice, which obstacles they face, and what kind of justice they receive.



Solve justice problems with fair, open, inclusive, relevant, and timely justice solutions that respect human rights, using data and evidence to learn and innovate.



Improve justice journeys, empowering people to tackle the root causes of injustice and providing services so they can achieve fair outcomes.



Use justice for prevention and to promote reconciliation, by focusing on the de-escalation of conflicts and disputes and building trustworthy justice systems.



Empower people to access services and opportunities, enabling them to participate fully in society and the economy.

Minister Sigrid Kaag, who hosted the ministerial meeting, highlighted the role of justice in preventing the violence and conflict that are so harmful to countries’ development prospects:

“Grievances related to exclusion, including from justice or security, are direct drivers of conflict... That’s why it’s so crucial that peace, justice and inclusion are part of the SDG agenda... Access to justice is a right and a precondition for legitimate stability and development... We need countries, civil society and the private sector to commit to making access to justice for all a reality.”

The Justice for All Report

The findings of the work streams as well as deliberations of the Task Force fed into the final report, **Justice for All**, which was launched at the United Nations High-level Political Forum in July 2019. The report was a landmark in the global debate on justice. Drawing on a wide range of evidence and the insights of justice leaders worldwide, it made the case for greater investment in justice, showed how to improve people's experience of justice processes, identified levers for change, and set an agenda for action at national and global levels.

The report was covered by **Reuters, The Guardian, The Independent, Gulf Today, Dawn**, and **El Tiempo**, among other major media outlets. A call to action from the Task Force co-chairs was published in **Newsweek**. The report was launched at the first SDG Summit in 2019, the Open Government Partnership Summit, the World Justice Forum, the annual gathering of the National Legal Aid and Defender Association in the US, the Global Centre for Pluralism in Canada, and the Access to Justice Week in Argentina. It formed a key part of multiple other international and national justice meetings in 2019-20.

Expanding Political Support and Building Networks | 2020-2023

With the work of the Task Force on Justice completed and the first four-year cycle of the SDGs passed, the next phase was focused on expanding political support and building networks. **The Justice for All report** outlines an agenda for international action in its concluding section. It calls for a group of countries to lead the movement for justice for all, including via biennial meetings of justice leaders, the development of a shared research agenda, communication of data and evidence to policymakers, and international and regional alliances to share experiences and develop strategies. It also recommends the establishment of a funders' collaborative and the adoption of the new SDG16.3 indicator to measure access to civil justice.

To support the implementation of this agenda, the Pathfinders' Justice team designed and established the Pathfinders for Justice program, a four-year initiative funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the CS Mott Foundation. It aims to connect national justice leaders to international partners, networks, and funding opportunities and to identify opportunities to translate the Task Force's recommendations into action in advance of the second global review of the 2030 Agenda at the SDG Summit in 2023.

Setting out a Shared Strategy for the Movement

With the Justice for All report, the Task Force on Justice set an agenda for national and international action. Based on consultations with the countries leading the Task Force and with a wide range of justice partners, priorities were identified and a strategy was agreed to take this work forward during the next four-year cycle of the SDGs at the national, regional, and global level. This shared strategy was launched at the Innovating Justice Forum in The Hague in February 2020.

The Shared Strategy for Justice for All 2020-2023 aims to guide action to accelerate implementation of the SDG targets for justice for all. It provides a shared vision and direction that is inspired by the

justice-related goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda and the Justice for All report. It sets out three priorities for 2020-2023:

- 1** The main priority is to support **accelerated action at national level**, through greater political support for people-centered justice, strengthened capacity to implement evidence-based strategies and plans, and increased commitments for which governments and other partners can be held accountable.
- 2** National action needs **coherent and comprehensive support from international and regional actors**, and from multi-stakeholder partnerships and networks. Increased financing and better data and evidence will improve implementation and increase the likelihood that measurable results are achieved by 2023.
- 3** An effective and empowered global, regional, national and local **movement for justice** for all will amplify demand for change, create space for partners from all sectors to work for justice for all, and counter adverse political trends.

Adapting to COVID - Justice in a Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic, which struck in early 2020, provided validation of the Task Force's emphasis on the importance of justice.

The pandemic quickly proved to be not only a public health emergency but a crisis that had justice at its core. Injustices in areas such as domestic violence, child abuse, access to services, and housing became more widespread. A lack of documentation and access to public services left marginalized groups particularly vulnerable to the virus and its economic impacts. Abuses by justice actors including government procurement departments and the police threatened to destroy social contracts. Justice services were suspended in order to help contain the virus, with many frontline justice providers falling sick.

The **Justice in a Pandemic briefing** pooled the insights and experiences of a group of more than 30 experts and practitioners from around the world. They shaped the narrative and thinking around Justice in a Pandemic and laid out how justice sectors can adapt to and help alleviate the effects of the pandemic.



The first briefing – **Justice for All and the Public Health Emergency** – addressed the immediate public health impacts of the virus, highlighting the need to protect the justice workforce, protect people from violence, reduce demand on justice systems, and enforce emergency measures fairly.



The second – **Justice for All and the Economic Crisis** – urged justice leaders to use formal and informal justice services to assuage the economic impacts of the pandemic and to help individuals, businesses and national economies to get back on their feet in its wake.



The third – **Justice for All and the Social Contract in Peril** – discussed the critical importance of justice during a time of great stress in the relationship between states and citizens. Responsive and inclusive justice services, it argued, can strengthen trust in institutions and help societies work more cohesively and effectively. On the other hand, abuses by justice actors, seen in many countries during the pandemic, can lead to a loss of trust that renders governments' job impossible.

Spurring International Action

The pandemic also impacted the work of the movement for people-centered justice and forced justice partners to adjust their plans and their collaborative efforts. When the pandemic made in-person convening impossible, the movement made the most of virtual gatherings, such as the Legal Empowerment Summit in **West Africa**, a Justice for All webinar series in **Asia-Pacific**, and a regional mobilization in Latin America. The latter resulted in the development of the **Ibero-American Justice Alliance**, an alliance for people-centered justice established by Latin American countries, Spain, and Portugal.

At the global level OECD, OGP, and Pathfinders organized the Global Week for Justice, hosted by **Justice Canada in 2020** and by the **Ministry of Justice of Latvia in 2021**. As part of those events, the Global Dialogues of Justice Leaders were attended by ministers from 24 and 20 countries respectively, who shared evidence of what works to increase people-centered justice and developed shared strategies for the pandemic and beyond.

To demonstrate that change is possible—even in justice systems that are often resistant to reform—an interview series produced by the Pathfinders features **Justice Champions of Change**. The series interviews justice innovators from around the world who make extraordinary efforts to expand people-centered justice provision. The Justice for All blog series includes blogs and guest blogs about justice issues, highlighting people's most common justice challenges, their justice journeys, and calling for action to close the global justice gap.

To strengthen international financing for national action on justice, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Mott foundations, ODI, and Pathfinders have initiated a series of **roundtable discussions** with donors that support people-centered justice programming. The discussions seek to examine interventions that work and are scalable in order to realize SDG16.3.

Promoting National Action

The Pathfinders for Justice program worked bilaterally with justice leaders in Ukraine, Indonesia, Colombia, Canada, Portugal, Liberia, and Sierra Leone to encourage them to develop strategies for people-centered justice. Jointly with the Open Government Partnership, the inclusion of **commitments on open justice and access to justice in National Action Plans** was promoted.

Commitments have been made in each of the key areas discussed in the **Justice for All** report and OGP's reporting mechanisms hold governments and other stakeholders to account for commitments made. For example:

- To help **resolve the justice problems that matter most to people**, the government of **Indonesia** has committed to providing legal aid to vulnerable groups, ensuring access to legal aid information, and expanding the capacity of legal aid services. **Argentina** has committed to conducting legal needs surveys and publishing the results in open formats.
- To **prevent justice problems**, **Romania** has committed to launching an online and social media campaign to promote the rights of citizens belonging to national minorities. **Nigeria** has committed to implementing a Permanent Dialogue Mechanism, which recognizes that citizens play a critical role in advocating and helping to make public institutions more transparent, accountable, and innovative.
- To use **justice to create opportunities** for people, **Azerbaijan** has committed to developing an electronic documents portal so that people can obtain and submit documents required to obtain public services. **Colombia** has committed to implementing digital and technological tools for the Constitutional Court to strengthen access to information, transparency in management, and citizen participation.

The Justice Action Coalition

The **Justice Action Coalition** is in many ways the successor to the Task Force on Justice and its founding is one of the major achievements of the Pathfinders for Justice program. The Coalition works to close the justice gap and achieve measurable progress in justice outcomes for people and communities in advance of the second SDG Summit in 2023.

In April 2021, justice ministers from 16 countries came together to establish the Coalition. It was founded on an agreement to develop new cross-border partnerships and collaboration with a view to closing the justice gap worldwide. The coalition also works to mobilize political and financial support for equal access to justice for all and to influence the strategies of multilateral organizations.

The Justice Action Coalition wrote a Joint Letter to the UN Secretary-General entitled **Reimagining social contracts: A call to put people at the center of justice**. The letter was endorsed by the Conferencia de Ministros de Justicia de los Países Iberoamericanos (**COMJIB**) and the **Justice Leaders**.

Countries participating in the coalition are Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, France, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Liberia, Libya, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Niger, Portugal, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Sweden and Switzerland. Norway and Zambia are participating as observers.⁴ Each coalition member is encouraged to implement measurable initiatives to promote SDG16 and people-centered justice in partnership with other coalition members.

At the international level, the Justice Action Coalition uses international events and processes in the lead-up to the 2023 SDG Summit to influence strategies and policies on the rule of law; mobilize and campaign for political and financial support for people-centered justice; coordinate and exchange knowledge of what works to resolve and prevent justice problems; and mobilize other like-minded countries to join the Justice Action Coalition.

The coalition also wants to serve as a platform for peer-to-peer learning and exchange. Justice Action Coalition members will focus on the implementation of people-centered justice initiatives, policies, and programing. Members will share domestic experiences and exchange lessons learned.

Key justice partners are leading research to develop evidence of what works in closing the justice gap, enhance understanding of the benefits of justice and its impacts on people's lives and wellbeing, and promote better collection and use of justice data. These joint deliverables of the Justice Action Coalition will be presented at the 2023 SDG Summit and will include a 2023 Justice Data Report as well as reports on SDG16.3.3, on regional progress in Ibero-America; gamechangers for people-centered justice; customary and informal justice; transitional justice; financing justice for women; and justice for children. The Young Justice Leaders will come together to call attention to their insights and concerns with regard to people-centered justice and a set of shared messages will be agreed between partners.

The **World Justice Forum** 2022 was a major catalytic moment for the Justice Action Coalition. It took place in The Hague, organized by the World Justice Project, with Civicus, HiiL, IDLO, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Pathfinders. The Ministerial Meeting of the Justice Action Coalition adopted its 2023 Justice Appeal and it saw the launch of the **Ibero-American Alliance for Access to Justice**, the inaugural cohort of **Young Justice Leaders**, and included a strategy brainstorm of the **Justice for Refugees** initiative, a dinner with judges of the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice, an intergenerational dialogue of the **Justice for Children Working Group**, and a working session focused on the role of Ombuds institutions in delivering equal access to justice for all. A session by the Pathfinders' Inequality team focused on the key drivers of inequality and exclusion around the globe.

The Justice Appeal 2023

The Ministerial Meeting of the Justice Action Coalition that was held as part of the World Justice Forum in The Hague on 30 May 2022, was hosted by H.E. Minister Liesje Schreinemacher of the Netherlands, alongside The Elders, the g7+, and the Pathfinders. Ministers from 14 countries discussed their commitment to people-centered justice and agreed to making 2023 a turning point in their **Justice Appeal 2023**.

This appeal calls on countries to come to the 2023 SDG Summit with data and evidence on the efforts they are making to close the justice gap. It calls on community-level justice providers, civil society actors, and grass-roots justice defenders to both initiate and supplement government efforts to collect and share data on justice problems, innovate strategies that address those problems and empower people in their societies, and encourage their countries to submit reports that explore progress towards achieving SDG16. The appeal calls on young people to advocate for their expectations and dreams of justice now and in the future. It calls on all actors in the multilateral sector—international bodies, foundations, philanthropists, data collection and research institutions and the private sector—to support national and local actors in the pursuit of justice for all. Finally, it lays out specific asks of the global justice community to prioritize achieving justice for all.

Taken together, the appeal outlines the actions necessary to make progress on SDG16 in 2023 and beyond. The Justice Action Coalition has committed to present this appeal in relevant fora around the world, further operationalize the work of the coalition, and prepare a formal announcement at the Second SDG Summit in September 2023 of a permanent structure to enable the Coalition to shift from words to action as it enters the second half of the 2030 Agenda.

Impacts of the Movement for People-centered Justice

Looking back at the period 2018-2022, the movement for people-centered justice has had major impacts nationally, regionally, and globally:



It has helped **shift the global conversation around justice**, and has demonstrated that people-centered justice is critical to building sustainable, resilient societies. Evidence of this is the inclusion of people-centered justice as an important component of the UN Secretary-General's **Our Common Agenda** published in 2021. In this report the Secretary-General promises to develop a new vision for the Rule of Law, grounded in SDG16 and its promise of access to justice for all. At the 2019 High-Level Political Forum and the SDG Summit, justice was also at the core of deliberations, with the Secretary-General calling for urgent action to meet the needs of the five billion people who are deprived of justice.



It has shaped and galvanized support for **an agenda for national and international action for justice for all**. Ministries of Justice and other justice providers at the national level increasingly see their work as part of the global agenda for sustainable development. Their growing leadership is demonstrated by their endorsement of the principles for people-centered justice—by over 55 countries—through The Hague Declaration on Equal Access to Justice for All, the Buenos Aires Declaration on Equal Access to Justice for All, and the g7+ Joint Action Plan on Equal Access to Justice for All. In 2021, **a statement to the UN Security Council** was delivered by the Netherlands on behalf of all Pathfinder countries. In October 2022, a statement to the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly was delivered on behalf of the Justice Action Coalition.



People-centered justice is an increasingly important component of the objectives and strategies of the **world's largest implementers of justice programs**. **UNDP's Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development** has people-centered justice and security services as one of its two main intended outcomes. In December 2021 the OECD launched its **People-Centred Justice Framework and Principles**, which place people at the heart of its efforts to promote international cooperation on justice. **IDLO's Strategic Plan 2021-2024** has as its overarching aim the promotion of, "people-centered justice and the rule of law to build more peaceful, inclusive and resilient societies." And USAID has presented a **new strategy for rule of law** that articulates a paradigm shift to people-centered justice in its work supporting the rule of law abroad.



A large and growing group of justice partners from across the world has come together in the **movement for people-centered justice**. What was once a fragmented field, with organizations often competing for funding and influence, is becoming a more united global coalition embraced by multiple governmental, multilateral, and non-governmental stakeholders. Evidence is the collaboration in the context of the Justice Action Coalition, most notably the commitment from a range of partners to contribute to the development of a set of **joint deliverables** for the Coalition to inform discussion at the 2023 SDG Summit.



Focus on people-centered justice and its renewed emphasis on legal empowerment has **helped increase funding for justice**. The Global Legal Empowerment Network, Namati, The Elders, and the Fund for Global Human Rights assembled a **COVID-19 Grassroots Justice Fund**, which raised and distributed more than \$1 million in grants to over 60 grassroots groups from more than 30 countries which work on issues ranging from gender-based violence to prisoners' rights. The Mott Foundation and Hewlett Foundation launched a **Legal Empowerment Fund** in September 2021, investing an initial \$20 million over ten years to initiate the campaign to raise a further \$80 million over the period and Namati has added \$5 million from MacKenzie Scott.

Looking Forward

Although the Task Force on Justice made significant progress in advancing both the debate around and implementation of people-centered justice, much work remains for the Justice Action Coalition to ensure that many more countries and organizations commit to making the pivot to people-centered justice and are enabled to do so with resources, expertise and international support.

As it moves into the next phase, from 2024-2027, the priority for the Justice Action Coalition is to **achieve measurable increases in people-centered justice** by supporting accelerated action at national and subnational levels. Progress in this area will require a more robust knowledge base, greater political support for people-centered justice, increased financing from governments and other partners, and strengthened capacity to use funds effectively and implement evidence-based strategies. The Task Force on Justice and its partners have made great strides in strengthening the evidence base on the justice gap and on the effectiveness of measures to close it, but the global knowledge architecture around justice remains weaker than in areas such as health and education.

Maintaining and strengthening **political support for justice reforms** will require justice leaders to continue to communicate the message to all stakeholders—including those intent on closing the political space within which justice professionals work—that justice is an important driver of prosperity, security, and strengthened social contracts. Identifying justice champions who can lead transformation and giving them the support and tools they need to deliver change will be critical if global momentum is to be sustained at national and subnational levels.

Reversing the decline in **international financing for justice** will require justice leaders to make a stronger case for investment. Improved data on the justice gap and its impacts will assist in this endeavor but advocates also need to find new ways to catch policymakers' and development banks' attention and persuade them that justice is an important driver of or drag on development, while showing them that people-centered interventions can cost-effectively assist them in achieving multiple SDG targets.

Strengthening the capacity of those implementing people-centered justice will depend on using data to identify the most effective interventions, providing effective tools to justice champions and creating spaces for learning and exchange. It will be bolstered by deeper integration of global and regional support for justice transformation. Assistance from international and regional actors and networks in areas such as data collection, monitoring and evaluation, financing strategies, and

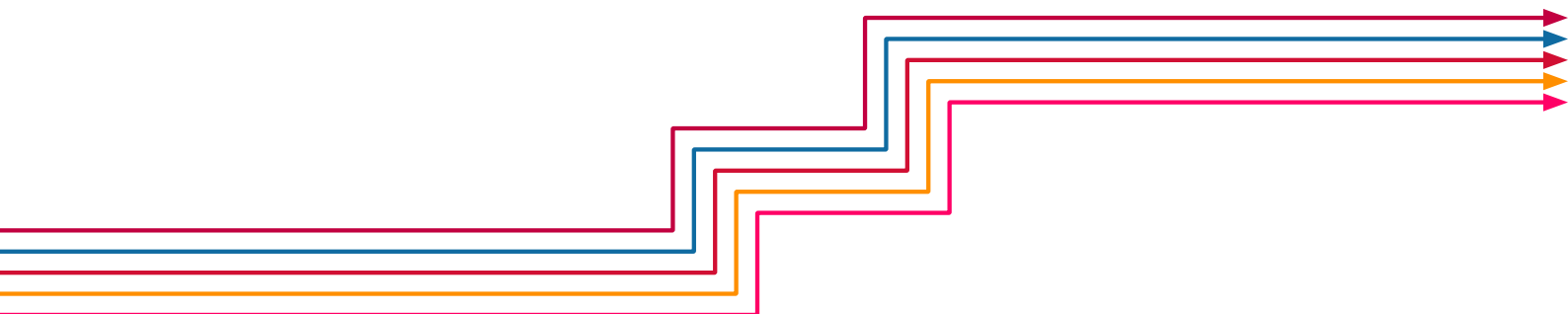
innovation can enhance national action. The pandemic has shown us, moreover, that multiple sectors have an impact on people's experiences and perceptions of justice, and bringing on board stakeholders from beyond the traditional justice sector and enlisting them into a broad movement for justice will be critical to delivering holistic, comprehensive, and people-centered justice services.

Finally, to help ensure the long-term sustainability of the justice for all movement, there is a need to tap into the energy and skills of the **younger generation of activists**, which have come together as the **Young Justice Leaders**. Working in both the formal and informal justice sector as well as in areas not traditionally perceived as being justice-related, these young leaders require recognition and support. Whether they are advocating for human rights and promoting legal empowerment in repressive environments, or developing innovations that can enhance justice journeys and expand justice provision, practical, moral, and financial support through the Justice Action Coalition can help young justice professionals to take the movement forward in the coming years.

The members of the Justice Action Coalition have pledged to announce—at the 2023 SDG Summit—the more permanent structure that will facilitate their joint work and promote effective justice action. Similar to global partnerships dedicated to climate action or vaccine distribution, such as the IPCC and GAVI, the Justice Action Coalition will need to focus on:

- 1** Political ambition and financial support: Building support for people-centered justice and connecting to other areas of the 2030 Agenda, while diverting resources from ineffective rule of law approaches to programs that are data-driven, evidence-based, and put people at the center of justice.
- 2** Implementation: Assisting national justice leaders and change-makers to access relevant resources, expertise, and international support that will enable them to make progress toward the goal of providing access to justice for all.
- 3** Data, evidence, and learning: Creating and maintaining the global knowledge architecture to advance the understanding of what works to provide access to justice for all, by collecting people-centered justice data and evidence, and endorsing standards and methodologies.

By 2024, we will have passed the mid-point of the 15-year timeline for achieving the SDGs. After the initial phases of defining the approach and building the networks for implementation, it is critical that the Justice Action Coalition accelerates action between 2024 and 2027 and that stakeholders work together to step up their efforts to deliver on the promise of justice for all and the vision of 'a just, equitable, tolerant, open, and socially inclusive world'.



Endnotes

¹ A more elaborate description of the work of the Task Force on Justice in 2018-2019 was written in 2020. It was published as: de Langen, Maaïke and Gerlach, Karina, Forging the International Movement for Achieving Justice for All (July 15, 2020). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3870816>

² The Task Force on Justice was co-chaired by **Germán Garavano**, Minister of Justice and Human Rights of Argentina; **Sigrid Kaag**, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Netherlands; and **Dr. Priscilla Schwartz**, Attorney-General and Minister of Justice of Sierra Leone, together with **Hina Jilani**, an advocate of the Supreme Court of Pakistan and an Elder. Members were **Alejandro Alvarez**, Director, Rule of Law Unit, Executive Office of the Secretary-General, United Nations; **Donny Ardyanto**, Program Advisor of Legal Empowerment and Access to Justice, TIFA Foundation, Indonesia; **James Goldston**, Executive Director, Open Society Justice Initiative; **Pablo de Greiff**, Senior Fellow and Adjunct Professor of Law, New York University, and former Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; **Sara Hossain**, Lawyer, Supreme Court of Bangladesh; **Kalthoum Kennou**, Judge at the Court of Cassation of Tunisia; **Vivek Maru**, Chief Executive Officer, Namati; **Allyson Maynard-Gibson** QC, Barrister, former Attorney-General and Minister for Legal Affairs of The Bahamas; **Athaliah Molokomme**, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Botswana to the UN Office in Geneva, former Attorney-General, Botswana; **Owen Pell**, Partner, White & Case LLP; and **Marta Santos Pais**, Former Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children. Sherpas for the co-chairs were **María Fernanda Rodríguez**, Vice Minister of Justice, Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, Argentina; **Jelte Van Wieren**, Director of the Stabilisation and Humanitarian Aid Department, The Netherlands; **Shahid Korjie**, Acting Justice Sector Coordinator, Ministry of Justice, Sierra Leone. New York University's Center on International Cooperation (CIC) co-founded, hosts and is a member of the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, and the Pathfinders team at CIC served as the secretariat of the Task Force on Justice, led by **David Steven** and **Maaïke de Langen**, with advice and support from **Karina Gerlach** and **Alisa Jimenez**.

³ The work of the Task Force would not have been possible without the contributions of the core Justice partners: **Bingham Centre on the Rule of Law**, **Cordaid**, **The Elders**, **HiiL**, **ICTJ**, **IDLO**, **IDRC**, **ILAC**, the **Justice for All Campaign**, **Knowledge Platform Security and Rule of Law**, **Microjustice4All**, **Charles Stewart Mott Foundation**, **Namati**, **ODI**, **OECD**, **OGP**, **OSJI**, **University of South Carolina Rule of Law Collaborative**, **UNDP**, **UNODC**, **UN Women**, **White & Case LLP**, **World Bank**, **World Justice Project**, as well as many other people and organizations.

⁴ Kosovo and the United States formally joined the Justice Action Coalition in March 2023 during the Summit for Democracy. The Summit for Democracy was also in conjunction with the launch of the United States' first - ever Rule of Law Policy, available at <https://www.usaid.gov/democracy/rule-law-policy>