Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

In August 2019, the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG) decided not to include a proposal for an additional indicator under Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16.3 focused on access to civil justice as part of the [Open Consultation on Proposals Received for the 2020 Comprehensive Review](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfYZTkmJxRXFT4mrWjSXKKrX-j9HtEkJQvorKMPu7aTkjfkvQ/viewform) (Open Consultation). This decision was made despite the IAEG’s 2017 [endorsement](https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/meetings/iaeg-sdgs-meeting-05/2017-2-IAEG-SDGs-E.pdf) of “access to civil justice” as a priority theme for an additional global indicator. We are acutely disappointed with the IAEG decision, as it misses the opportunity to recognize the role access to civil justice plays in delivering sustainable development.

Target 16.3 calls on countries to “Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all.” However, the two global indicators for target 16.3 that were adopted by the UN General Assembly in July 2017 as part of the SDG Global Indicator Framework both focus exclusively on criminal justice. These indicators, while important, fail to capture the many ways that access to civil justice interacts with sustainable development. Civil justice problems touch on the very basics of life (i.e. health care, food and shelter) and are the most frequent legal problems experienced by most of the population, and especially by the poor and groups most at risk of being left behind. Equal access to civil justice is essential for people to fairly and peacefully resolve their legal problems, and, beyond giving meaning to the possession of rights, for the promotion of general well-being, government accountability and sustainable development. Without the inclusion of a measurement on access to civil justice, there remains an important conceptual gap in the current SDG indicator framework.

In June 2019, co-custodian agencies, UNDP and OECD, jointly submitted a proposal on a civil access to justice indicator to the IAEG, and was developed with technical support from the World Justice Project and the Open Society Justice Initiative. The additional indicator for target 16.3 focuses on measuring whether people who have civil justice problems can obtain legal advice, assistance, or representation, and ultimately resolve their problems. This indicator is people-centered, measures barriers to accessing justice that disproportionately affect the poor and captures justice issues that occur inside and outside of formal institutions. From a methodological standpoint, it is feasible to implement, using only four questions that have been tested using a comparable methodology in over 100 countries. More information about the rationale, methodology and data availability for the proposal can be found [here](https://worldjusticeproject.org/our-work/publications/working-papers/access-civil-justice-indicator-proposal-sdg-target-1633).

We kindly urge you to participate in the Open Consultation to express concern at the lack of inclusion of an access to civil justice indicator in the Open Consultation, to underscore established methodology for its measurability and the importance of including one. The Open Consultation will run through **8 September 2019** and can be accessed at <http://bit.ly/2020Review_Consult>.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Best regards,

Zaza Namoradze

Director, Berlin Office

Open Society Justice Initiative