



IL4SDGs - Workshop 3:

International Law and Accountable, Transparent Institutions

Friday, 19 January 2018, University of Groningen

Keynote speaker: Prof. Nico Schrijver

The Department of International Law of the University of Groningen cordially invites you to participate in our third [International Law for the Sustainable Development Goals Workshop](#). More information on the workshop can be found below, along with information on submissions.

Call for Papers

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 aims to '*Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels*'. Within SDG 16, Target 16.6 on the development of effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels is considered key to creating an enabling environment for the achievement of all SDGs.

However, Target 16.6 faces several implementation challenges. In particular, the target does not specify *which* institutions fall within its scope – are private as well as public institutions included, for example? Target 16.6 also provides no definition of the principles of transparency and accountability. It seems that international law could help to define of the principles in Target 16.6 to some extent, as various international law instruments relate to or include requirements of transparency and accountability. For example, the Aarhus Convention is based on three pillars that can be roughly equated to transparency, participation and accountability. Similarly, the Convention against Corruption contains many provisions dealing with transparency and several with accountability.

A further challenge of Target 16.6 is that the conceptual nature of its standards makes its success (or failure) very difficult to measure. Some efforts have been made to aid the measurement and implementation of the Goal, such as the World Justice Project and the Corruption Perceptions Index. Nonetheless, there is still a considerable way to go. This raises the question whether international law does or could help to determine the concrete standards against which accountability and transparency of institutions can be measured, and in providing frameworks and mechanisms within which institutions could be held responsible. Additionally, could the forums provided by international human rights framework provide guidance to national and local institutions to ensure greater transparency and accountability?

These issues lead to the overarching question of this Workshop: **What is the role of international law in clarifying Target 16.6 and in laying down standards of transparency and accountability of institutions at all levels?**

1 NO
POVERTY



2 ZERO
HUNGER



3 GOOD HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING



4 QUALITY
EDUCATION



5 GENDER
EQUALITY



6 CLEAN WATER
AND SANITATION



7 AFFORDABLE AND
CLEAN ENERGY



8 DECENT WORK AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH





OUR FOCUS:

SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

- Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all
- Develop effective, **accountable and transparent institutions at all levels**
- Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels
- Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements

The main (non-exhaustive) goals and questions that will guide our inquiry in this workshop are the following:

- ✓ *Identifying which institutions are included in Target 16.6.* Should private as well as public institutions adhere to the principles of transparency and accountability? If so, how do the relevant private actors fit into the current framework of international law, and is this sufficient?
- ✓ *Exploring whether/how international law can contribute to improving the transparency and accountability of institutions.* What is the role, if any, of international law in clarifying Target 16.6? Are there any standards in international law that help to identify concrete standards of transparency and accountability for institutions?
- ✓ *Identifying legal regimes and institutional arrangements already in place to improve transparency and accountability, their gaps, challenges and shortcomings.* How can the United Nations infrastructure contribute to the achievement of SDG 16? Are there any accountability mechanisms under international law that would be relevant for Target 16.6?

SUBMISSION OF ABSTRACTS:

We invite abstract proposals from interested scholars from *all disciplines*. Proposals should not exceed **500 words** in length. Please send your proposals as an attachment to Lottie Lane (c.l.lane@rug.nl). The deadline for abstracts is **1 December 2017**. All proposals will undergo peer review and notifications of acceptance will be sent out by **8 December 2017**.

Extended abstracts of up to 2,000 words are expected to be delivered by **12 January 2018** for circulation among participants. We intend to pursue the publication of a **special issue** as a result of this Workshop in the [Brill Open Law Journal](#).

ANY QUESTIONS?

Please address any questions regarding this CfP to **Lottie Lane** <c.l.lane@rug.nl> Please note that this CfP is part of a larger 2017-2018 Workshop Series on International Law and the SDGs, organized by our Department of International Law. For information, including other topics, please see [website here](#).