



CHAPTER 1: **A GLOBALLY SHARED** **AGENDA**

Good governance and control of corruption are positively correlated with effective development results.¹ This is recognized in the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) and strategic priorities of International Financial Institutions (IFIs).ⁱ The [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development \(Agenda 2030\)](#), adopted in 2015 by all 193 United Nations (UN) member nations, includes [Sustainable Development Goal 16 \(SDG16\)](#) and its corresponding targets for: substantially reducing corruption; developing effective, accountable and transparent institutions; ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making and ensuring public access to information, among others.² These commitments represent a global shift in thinking away from an exclusive focus on development outcomes to factors that are integrally related, as is governance and anti-corruption. They put us in a new era of a globally shared agenda for enhancing governance and controlling corruption.

Despite global commitments, the good governance goals of SDG16 and the IFIs may remain largely aspirational unless actions are accelerated and expanded. This view is supported by cross-country governance indicators and other studies that demonstrate the state of corruption has not changed substantially in the past two decades, despite progress in some countries.³ Available data so far indicates that progress towards SDG16 is lagging or “uneven” at best.⁴ Four years into implementation, we are at a critical

BOX I: GOOD GOVERNANCE: A KEY TO PROSPERITY

Agenda 2030 “recognizes the need to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies that provide equal access to justice and that are based on respect for human rights (including the right to development), on effective rule of law and good governance... and on transparent, effective and accountable institutions...” – **Agenda 2030, United Nations, August 2015**

“Without paying greater attention to stronger governance, the World Bank Group’s goals of ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity, as well as the transformational vision of the United Nations’ broader Sustainable Development Goals, will be out of reach.” – **President of the World Bank in introduction to the World Development Report 2017: Governance and The Law**

“Analysis of effects of weak governance and corruption on growth shows that high corruption is associated with significantly lower growth, investment, foreign direct investment, and tax revenues. It also finds that they are associated with higher inequality and lower inclusive growth.” – **IMF-Enhanced Framework on Governance, April 2018**

ⁱ IFIs examined in this study include the [World Bank](#), [International Monetary Fund \(IMF\)](#), [Asian Development Bank \(ADB\)](#), [African Development Bank \(AfDB\)](#) and [European Bank for Reconstruction and Development \(EBRD\)](#).

moment in determining whether SDG16 will fulfill its potential or remain aspirational rhetoric.

Increased civic engagementⁱⁱ is important to accelerate progress towards SDG16 and improve effectiveness of IFI good governance and anti-corruption efforts. Even when governments institute measures to improve governance, these often do not work as intended, be it because of implementation capacity constraints, weak incentives or design loopholes. These so-called “supply side” measures need to be complemented by a demand for accountability from below. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) represent, support and embolden the “demand side” of democratic governance—engendering greater citizen uptake, better feedback and independent oversight.

In this context, the purpose of our research is to examine roles that civil society plays in improving governance outcomes under SDG16 and IFI policies, review the evidence on what works and what does not, and present recommendations to establish and expand successful programs.

Actions at the national level and public budgets will be the primary determinant of progress in achieving SDG targets including SDG16. At the same time, IFI policies and funding play an important role in helping low and middle-income countries with their policies and programs. We believe that IFIs can play important catalytic roles in expanding CSO-led initiatives in improving governance and providing demonstration effects. We have therefore targeted them in our analysis and recommendations.

ⁱⁱ The World Bank defines civic engagement as “the participation of private actors in the public sphere, conducted through direct and indirect interactions of civil society organizations and citizens-at-large with government, multilateral institutions and business establishments to influence decision making or pursue common goals.” The term is synonymous with both civil society engagement and citizen engagement.