

# Chapter 2

## The Opportunity: A National Plan for Justice: Using the SDGs to Increase Access to Justice in your Country

### CHALLENGING THE STATUS QUO: USING THE SDGS FOR NATIONAL REFORMS

Creating or improving policies to promote equal access to justice for all is no easy task. While many countries have principles of access to justice in their constitutions, most governments have been slow to put these policies in place. This failure may be due to limited capacity, insufficient financial resources or lack of political will. The SDGs provide an unrivalled opportunity to challenge long standing practice.

National governments have promised to deliver the SDGs commitments and they will be held accountable for meeting these commitments on the international stage. Further, as part of this promise, national governments have agreed to work with a range of actors to establish new plans and frameworks to achieve the SDGs. This presents civil society and justice sector professionals with an opportunity to work in partnership with national governments to develop laws, policies, and programs that incorporate legal empowerment elements.

Although you can use the SDGs to push for one or two specific justice reforms, this toolkit recommends that you capitalise on this once-in-a-generation opportunity by aiming high and calling for a new national justice plan.

### Box 5: Case Study: child mortality and the MDGs

The MDGs proved that international development agendas can be influential in building political support and directing attention and financing towards resolving global issues. Take MDG 4 for example. MDG 4 was created to address child mortality. Between 1990 and 2015, governments raised approximately \$131.9 million to support public, private and civil society efforts to combat child mortality, with the majority of these funds gathered after the MDGs were adopted. Governments worked to increase public awareness of child mortality, push for widespread policy reforms to address it and develop new strategies for its eradication. Ultimately, this collaboration led to a 50% decline in the global under-five mortality rate in just 25 years.