



A Call to Action for Advancing Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

The RELX SDG Inspiration Day 2022



The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals were adopted by 193 states at the UN Summit in New York in September 2015, with the promise to make the world a fairer, better, and safer place by 2030.

As a global provider of information-based analytics and decision tools, RELX is committed to doing its part to advance the SDGs. We provide universal sustainable access to information and periodically conduct SDG Inspiration Days that bring together business, government, NGOs, academia, and civil society to inspire scalable collaborative action on the SDGs.

Marking the completion of five years, RELX Corporate Responsibility recently hosted the SDG Inspiration Day virtually on 9th May, 2022. The theme of the event was 'Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions - The role of business in advancing SDG 16'.

SDG 16 aims to

		Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development
		Provide access to justice for all
		Build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels

In a world rife with human rights violations, wars, violence, persecution, and conflict, the promotion of peace is of utmost importance. The event discussed the role that businesses can play to further this objective.

Opening Ceremony

The SDG Inspiration Day was hosted by Dr. Shola Mos-Shogbamimu, who is an author, lawyer, and the founder of the Women in Leadership Publication initiative. She is also a political and women's rights activist. She welcomed the audience enthusiastically and introduced the event, giving an overview of SDG 16 and its importance.

Dr. Márcia Balisciano, Global Head of Corporate Responsibility, RELX, took us further into the theme of the day. She expressed concern over the growing threat to the blueprint for SDGs adopted in 2015.

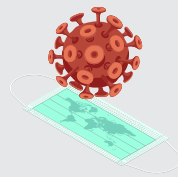
Threats to the SDGs



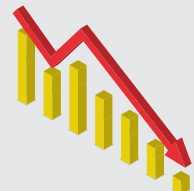
The war in Ukraine



The climate crisis



The global pandemic



Weak economics

Dr. Balisciano expressed the need for immediate action: *“Without peace, justice, and strong institutions of SDG 16 – a fundamental framework for all nations – we cannot achieve the rest. So today is about inspiration. But it is not a celebration. It’s a call to action.”* She called upon businesses to promote peace and justice by ending abuse and exploitation,

promoting rule of law, reducing corruption, and ensuring inclusive decision making.

Following this, Ban Ki-Moon, the 8th Secretary-General of the United Nations, stressed the need to follow the SDG agenda.



“We are at a turning point and we must choose peace. People around the world have the right to live in dignity and free from war, conflict, and violence.”

— Ban Ki-Moon,
8th Secretary-General of the United Nations

Former President of Austria, Dr. Heinz Fischer, addressed the audience and emphasised the need for well-functioning governments and institutions for a holistic development of the world.



“Peace plays a central role if we want to successfully implement the 2030 agenda with its 17 SDGs.”

— Dr. Heinz Fischer,
Former President of Austria


Defence and SDG 16


The opening ceremony was followed by a panel discussion focusing on Defence and SDG 16. Experts on peace and security gave their views on how defence and SDG 16 share a symbiotic relationship and what are the current challenges to it. The event was moderated by Justin Webb, who was a foreign correspondent for the BBC.

Monika Froehler, CEO, Ban Ki-Moon Centre for Global Citizens; Dr. Imogen Parsons, Senior Research Fellow, Terrorism and Conflict, The Royal United Services Institute; and Sir Mark Moody-Stuart, Chairman, Global Compact Foundation, were the panelists.

Major conflicts of 2022 that have impacted 2 billion people:

 Ukraine

 Ethiopia

 Yemen

 Afghanistan

 Haiti

Israel-Palestine

US relations with China and Iran

Islamist militancy in Africa



While making her point, Monika Froehler said the immense defence budget of \$2 trillion falls short for the full implementation of the SDGs, which would cost around \$6-7 trillion. She put forth two areas we need to build on – reforming multilateralism and re-establishing trust.

Sir Mark Moody-Stuart then highlighted the role of businesses in preventing armed conflict by making processes transparent and reducing corruption.

Next, Dr. Imogen Parsons underscored the importance of a post-conflict response from charities, partners, and civil society to facilitate a holistic and integrated approach to conflict resolution.

SDG 16 and the Rule of Law

The panel on defence was followed by a discussion on the rule of law. Experts discussed their passion for the rule of law as well as projects they are currently working on that aim to advance SDG 16. Isabella Bunn, Senior Advisor, Oxford Analytica Foundation, emphasised how the

UN Global Compact is strengthening the rule of law through its transformational governance framework, which highlights how businesses can collaborate with governments, civil societies, and institutions of justice, ensuring participation and accountability.

SDG Customer Awards

Each year RELX recognises four customers, from across the business divisions, who have made a significant and demonstrable contribution to one or more of the SDGs. They are awarded the SDG Customer Awards. This year, the awards

were presented to Costa Del Mar, an American manufacturer of polarized sunglasses; the International Legal Foundation (ILF); the University of Tasmania in Australia; and Visa for their various contributions to the SDGs.

Operating in Times of Conflict

Soon after, a panel discussion of NGO leaders was held on the challenges and impact of operating in times of conflict. This panel was moderated by Teresa Jennings, the Head of Rule of Law Development for LexisNexis Rule of Law Foundation. The panel included Mark Waddington,

CEO, Hope and Homes for Children; Kimberly Parker, Programme Manager, World Health Organization; Alison Tweed, CEO, Book Aid International; Geraldine Anup-Willcocks, Emergency Specialist, UNICEF UK; and Ylann Schemm, Director, Elsevier Foundation.

Objectives while operating in a conflict-bound country:

Identifying the most vulnerable

Identifying the marginalised

Determining how to gain access to them through security planning

Providing these individuals necessary help through an inclusive approach

This includes



Providing vaccinations



Access to clean
toilets



Access to clean
water



Working with local partners who understand the culture to provide emergency aid



The next session explored some of the projects that LexisNexis Legal & Professional have been heavily involved in, including the eyeWitness to Atrocities App and the Rule of Law Monitor. Both form fitting examples of how a business can, and should, leverage their expertise for the advancement of the SDGs.

Keynote Address

Next was the much-awaited keynote address by legendary musician and front man of the Boomtown Rats, Sir Bob Geldof. He was a key player in the 1970s punk rock movement as well as a business leader and political activist. Sir Bob spoke passionately about the overambitious goals that are the SDGs while also lamenting about the growing cynicism of the world's governments that

do not care enough. He cited reasons such as culture, war, philosophy, and religion, which make it impossible to comprehensively achieve the goals. But he also added, *"Of course, that should never stop you trying. After all, being human means that we must always reach for things beyond our grasp, even though humans by nature are impelled towards conflict."*

Women and SDG 16

Sir Bob Geldof's impassioned speech was followed by a panel discussion on Women and SDG 16, which highlighted the experiences of women in times of conflict and the role they play in delivering SDG 16. The discussion was moderated by former UN Ambassador Amanda Ellis. Her inspiring panel included Zoya Lytvyn, Ukrainian entrepreneur and founder of the NGO Osvitoria; Martin Chungong, 8th Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU); and Tea Trumbic, WE Empower Lead Partner and Program Manager for the Women, Business and the Law Project, World Bank.

The speakers talked about how gender equality was not just a woman's issue — it is a societal issue, which means that everyone should be engaged in equal measure. They particularly covered aspects of men and women working together in the spirit of partnership, to make a difference in terms of gender equality, and the outcomes of institutional processes.

During the discussion, Zoya Lytvyn pointed to education as a way to bring about that structural change and bring up a new generation of empowered and inspired children.



“Worldwide on average, women just have three quarters of the legal rights of men. Only 12 countries in the world receive a score of 100 out of 100. This means that the remaining 178 economies have legal gaps to close between men and women. And this impacts opportunities for 2.4 billion women.”

— Tea Trumbic,
WE Empower Lead Partner and Program Manager for
the Women, Business and the Law Project, World Bank

Responsible Business for Peace

The SDGs state that “there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development”. Business thrives in stable and peaceful environments and therefore must play a role in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

In the next session, Philippa Scarlett, Head of Government Affairs, RELX, spoke to Mike Walsh, CEO of LexisNexis Legal & Professional, about how the private sector, and his business in particular, can support the advancement of SDG 16. He addressed LexisNexis as one of the largest global databases of legal information and analytics

“about 150 times the size of Wikipedia”. The database provides information tools to help lawyers become more efficient and extends the umbrella protection of the rule of law to make justice more accessible.

He also talked about the eyeWitness to Atrocities App, which is helping people access humanitarian aid during the Ukraine-Russia war. He discussed his legal framework, which provides guidelines to businesses on how to be more transparent and ethical, make legal remedy more accessible, enable equality for all under the law, and have a strong and independent judiciary.

Closing Ceremony

The event concluded with a closing ceremony, where the themes of the day were reiterated. The speakers also highlighted the importance for action on SDG 16 as fundamental to achieving the 2030 agenda. Dr. Márcia Balisciano, Michael Sheldrick, Irina Bokova, and Michelle Breslauer brought the event to a close.



“SDG 16 is about each one of us making magic happen in our individual ways, but also making it an institutional collective effort.”

— Dr. Shola Mos-Shogbamimu,
Author, lawyer, and founder of the Women in Leadership
Publication initiative



RELX
SDG Resource Centre



1-3 Strand
London
WC2N 5JR
UK

Tel: +44 20 7166 5500

Email: info@sdgresources.relx.com

 [linkedin.com/company/relx-group/](https://www.linkedin.com/company/relx-group/)

 twitter.com/RELXCR

 [youtube.com/channel/UCJlleulSj6i-MM9XqZjuGoA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJlleulSj6i-MM9XqZjuGoA)