



# UNITED NATIONS

## PRIVATE SECTOR FORUM 2016

19 September | UN Headquarters, New York

### Building Peace: Thematic Discussion Briefing Note

#### Discussion Objectives

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In a 40-minute luncheon discussion at the Private Sector Forum, UN, Business, Government and Civil Society participants seated at tables of ten will address challenges and opportunities set out in this briefing, share examples of their own organizations' commitments to action, and identify new opportunities to collaborate with other participants to scale impact.

#### Discussion Question

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How can Governments, the United Nations and the private sector work together to build peace and stability while ensuring that no one is left behind?

#### Introduction

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Violent conflict and instability disrupt markets and societies, and the scale of our current humanitarian crises is unparalleled. One in 113 people globally has fled their home because of conflict and persecution – a number that has quadrupled in the past decade.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the number of international migrants has grown more quickly than the world's population<sup>2</sup>. The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the UN Secretary-General's Agenda for Humanity make clear that we must address the root causes of these large movements of people, and it is widely acknowledged that humanitarian emergencies pose a serious threat to sustainable development, potentially reversing years and even decades of progress. When businesses work together with other stakeholders to support peace and address the underlying causes of instability, they can mitigate risks to their companies, prevent negative impacts, and also help ensure the long-term financial performance of the company. Creating peaceful and inclusive societies is not only a prerequisite for sustainable development, but also the most effective approach to address humanitarian crises.

#### Key Challenges

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In our deeply interconnected world, violent conflicts have global impacts and cannot be overlooked by any sector of society. For companies, violence anywhere can undermine stable business operations and disrupt global supply chains. The situation is urgent with 1.5 billion boys, girls, men and women currently living in protracted crisis or areas experiencing economic and social breakdown. Furthermore, rising inequalities, rampant corruption and increased competition for scarce natural resources cause tensions that can accelerate the fragmentation of societies, exacerbate current conflicts and create new ones. The most vulnerable – women, children and displaced people – are most severely affected. It is challenging to do business in these difficult environments, which also limit access to livelihoods, goods and services for migrants, refugees and others living in areas affected by conflict. As a result, the economic impact of violence now stands at 13.3 percent of world GDP<sup>3</sup> as peace has declined globally over the last decade.

#### Solutions

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The scale, complexity, duration and recurring nature of today's crises can only be solved through systemic approaches that call for determination, collaboration, investments and innovation. While Governments hold the primary responsibility for humanitarian planning and assistance, private sector efforts, in partnership with others, are crucial as crises grow in number and magnitude. Businesses have the knowledge and experience that affords them the opportunity to provide innovative solutions to address many underlying drivers of conflicts and instability, such as social inequality, scarce resources, religious freedom and beyond. Below are examples of ways business can support achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) while reinforcing economic, social and political stability.

- Ensure that your company operates responsibly and integrates conflict-sensitive business practices to minimize or eliminate contributions to conflict. Develop sufficient grievance mechanisms to address violations if they occur.
- Promote measures to combat xenophobia, discrimination and marginalization in the workplace and communities.
- Adjust policies to enable and encourage equal employment opportunities, including procedures for refugee and migrant integration into the work force.
- Invest in education initiatives and life-long learning. Because the average length of time for being a refugee is 21 years, a child's entire education can be affected, threatening future human capital.
- Increase inclusive sourcing from businesses owned by women, migrants and other minorities.

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<sup>1</sup> UNHCR Global Trends Forced Displacement in 2015

<sup>2</sup> Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2015 Revision

<sup>3</sup> 2016 Global Peace Index



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- Implement traceability programmes to ensure your company's sourcing and/or production of goods and services respects a "do not harm" approach. Strengthen practices and systems that eliminate trafficking, labour exploitation and unethical recruitment in supply chains.
- Help strengthen the rule of law through the products and services companies supply commercially, such as those that support digital empowerment and increase access to information.
- Engage in collective action initiatives to invest in building, strengthening and sustaining public anti-corruption infrastructure, capacity building and skills development.
- Develop innovative products and services to deliver vital services during emergencies.

### UN-Business Partnerships and Initiatives

The **UN Business Action Hub** offers a central online entry point for companies looking to partner with the UN. Visit [business.un.org](http://business.un.org) or the new UN Global Compact [Partnership Passport](#) to learn how to connect and partner. Companies are also encouraged to take action through the following UN-business initiatives:

**Join the UN Global Compact Business for Peace initiative** – a business leadership platform that aims to expand and deepen private sector action in support of peace in the workplace, marketplace and local communities. [www.unglobalcompact.org/take-action/action/peace](http://www.unglobalcompact.org/take-action/action/peace)

**Use the Business for the Rule of Law Framework** – a UN Global Compact tool that guides companies in adopting their own approach to supporting rule of law efforts at the global and local level, serving as a complement to Government action. [www.unglobalcompact.org/take-action/action/business-rule-of-law](http://www.unglobalcompact.org/take-action/action/business-rule-of-law)

**Participate in the Breakthrough Innovation Challenge** – a UN Global Compact initiative that brings together young entrepreneurs from leading multinational companies to design future sustainable business models powered by disruptive technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain and Internet of Things. [www.unglobalcompact.org/take-action/action/breakthrough-innovation-challenge](http://www.unglobalcompact.org/take-action/action/breakthrough-innovation-challenge)

**Implement the Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) Initiative Guidelines** – guidance that outlines concrete and practical advice on how to prepare for and respond to crises in ways that protect migrants, as well as how to help migrants and communities recover from crises. [micicinitiative.iom.int](http://micicinitiative.iom.int)

**Support Education Cannot Wait** – the first global fund to prioritize education in humanitarian action. *Education Cannot Wait* will leverage additional finance and catalyze new approaches to funding and innovation to deliver education in emergencies and protracted crises. [www.educationcannotwait.org](http://www.educationcannotwait.org)

**Support Nobody Left Outside** – a programme that helps shelter the two million people fleeing conflict. [www.unhcr.org/nobody-left-outside.html](http://www.unhcr.org/nobody-left-outside.html)

**Engage with Connecting Refugees to the Web** – a publication that outlines how helping connect refugees to the web can improve their well-being and transform humanitarian action. [www.unhcr.org/en-us/publications/operations/5770d43c4/connecting-refugees.html](http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/publications/operations/5770d43c4/connecting-refugees.html)

#### Linking the SDGs and the Humanitarian Agenda

While all of the SDGs are interconnected and help advance the humanitarian agenda, the following SDGs are particularly critical to building peace:

