



Meeting Brief

In order to leave no one behind—a core commitment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development—there is an urgent need to engage the private sector to create economic opportunities in countries under stress, including in conflict-affected and post-conflict settings. However, businesses often perceive such contexts as too risky for investment. To address this gap, the 2030 Agenda includes a call to revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development, including through multi-stakeholder partnerships to mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology, and financial resources. The General Assembly and Security Council’s dual resolutions on sustaining peace make a similar call for including all stakeholders in the peacebuilding process.

In support of these commitments, One Earth Future (OEF), the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea, the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office, the United Nations Office for Partnerships, and Global Compact convened a workshop on December 4, 2018, to catalyze engagement with the private sector on the 2030 Agenda. The workshop was interactive, bringing together UN member states, UN agencies, civil society organizations, and companies to discuss partnership opportunities in five areas: fisheries, blended finance, measuring peace, mobile technology, and migration. The following are key takeaways from this workshop:

1. **The private sector should recognize that it has a role in building and sustaining peace.** When business is done responsibly, it creates employment opportunities and empowers individuals and local communities. In conflict-affected and fragile countries, many productive sectors have been destroyed, and the private sector can be a powerful engine to reinvigorate the local economy.
2. **New partnerships between governments, the UN, the private sector, and civil society organizations should not focus on one-off programs.** In order to make a “business case for peace,” there is a need for a systems-thinking approach that addresses not only short-term needs but the entire value chain. For the UN and transnational companies, this also means adopting an approach that integrates both global and local thinking, especially by employing local expertise and reflecting local priorities. This is a long-term endeavor that requires commitment from all sides.
3. **To attract investment, there is a need for more knowledge sharing, data, and research to develop the “business case for peace.”** Data helps identify the needs of countries and where there could be win-win opportunities for investment. The private sector can be too risk-averse due to concerns about reputational impact and the operational risks of missteps. The resulting hesitation to commit can undermine opportunities on the ground. Data and knowledge sharing can also reduce the risk perceived by companies and highlight that the benefits outweigh the risks.

4. **Government buy-in is indispensable to businesses investing in new projects with win-win outcomes.** Without the support of the government, private sector initiatives will be limited, and government leadership will be key to providing the adequate framework for businesses to jointly work on the 2030 Agenda and sustaining peace. Furthermore, governments are increasingly exploring innovative financing models to encourage the private sector to invest in sustaining peace and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.
5. **The role of the UN is essential as a body that provides norms and standards.** The UN can also build trust and credibility between different actors using its convening power and facilitate the process of forming partnerships. However, the UN cannot do this alone. It needs the support of civil society, international financial institutions, and local stakeholders.