

An Initiative for Action

Strategic Foresight Group is pleased to convene an action initiative on business, peace and sustainability. The first step is to convene an international conference on **Responsibility to the Future: Business, Peace, Sustainability** in Mumbai, India, on 26-28 June 2008. The conference aims to bring together some of the leading intellectuals and innovators in the world to understand emerging problems facing humanity, conceptualise response strategies, develop approaches to measure economic benefits of peace for companies, and construct mechanisms to engage business leaders in efforts to build sustainable peace. It is expected that the conference will launch practical collaborative problem-solving initiatives, identify agenda for policy research and dialogue and create a network of business leaders for sustainable global peace. It will also produce a report, an audio-visual film and a website to facilitate the involvement of people across business, civil society and policy communities. The conference is thus a result-oriented exercise. It is proposed to be a catalyst to launch a network for action – and is not merely an event.

Conference Chair

Steve Killelea, founder of
Integrated Research Ltd,
Australia and Global Peace Index

Co-chairs

- Maria Livanos Cattai,
Vice Chair of International
Crisis Group and former
Secretary General of
International Chamber of
Commerce
- John Maresca, Rector of
the United Nations
University of Peace

Organized by

Strategic Foresight Group

Co-hosted by

United Nations Global Compact



Context

At the beginning of the 21st century, humanity faces global challenges unparalleled in its history. These challenges include climate change, loss of biodiversity, lack of fresh water and demographic imbalance. These issues are now popularly grouped as ‘sustainability’. These issues call for collaborative global solutions.

Peace is the key to sustainability in the 21st century. The notion of peace and its value in the world economy is not well understood. Historically, peace has been seen as something won by war, or else as an altruistic ideal. Yet peace is the essential prerequisite to create the environment to achieve the levels of co-operation necessary to address the issues above.

Business and economics can be a key in helping to create the conditions that are necessary to build and maintain peace. Indeed, one of the biggest beneficiaries of peace is the business sector. Businesses generally wish to invest and reap the greatest rewards in areas of minimal violence, yet phrases such as ‘the economics of peace’ or ‘the economies of peace’ are rarely used, studied or researched. The economic benefits of peace are not well understood and to date there has been little research in this field. It is therefore necessary to develop approaches to measure the economic benefits of peace for global companies so that they can better understand where to invest and the likely returns from such decisions.

In the last three centuries business and technological progress has brought prosperity to half of the world. Yet another half lives in the periphery where prosperity has yet to reach. Moreover, economic growth of the past has often ignored social and environmental sustainability resulting in violence, health crisis, climate change and more. As new economies join growth processes, it is absolutely essential to ensure global social and environmental sustainability. The developed and developing worlds are interlocked by these issues and our economic interdependence. Economic sustainable prosperity is dependent on peace and the correct global business investments will underpin peace. We need collaborative global solutions on a scale unparalleled in history.

Emerging risks include:

- The difficulties in reaching global consensus on trade and addressing global financial imbalance, combined with the risk of some of the oil exporting countries switching from dollar to other currencies, can cause currency crisis, deep recession, trade wars, and perhaps a worldwide military confrontation.
- Competition for oil resources in the Middle East, Central Asia, South China Sea and parts of Africa is leading to strategic competition between China, Japan, India and the Western countries, with the risk of unforeseen dangers.
- Growing scarcity of water can cause breakdown of states and conflicts between states, not to mention the undermining of food security for significant sections of populations. On the other hand, integrated water development can build peace between countries that have been at war or cold war for decades.

Emerging opportunities include:

- Breakthroughs in biotechnology and clean technologies can address disease and reduce global warming. However, if misused, they can also make the earth’s atmosphere uninhabitable and also accentuate the North-South divide.
- The role played by business and economic actors in conflict zones to build confidence.
- New tools of mass communication at global level, new forms of education and media can help build communities for peace and sustainability.

Humanity in the twentieth century experienced the most deadly wars, partly resulting from the failure to manage the dynamics between business and political interests. For example:

- The stock market crash of 1929 led to the failure of financial institutions, trade wars, unemployment, which significantly contributed to the Second World War.
- Competition over extractive resources has created mayhem in Congo, Angola, Sudan, Liberia and other African countries.
- Energy insecurity has underpinned strategic competition in the Middle East, leading to two wars in the Middle East in the last two decades.
- Al Qaeda chose to attack the World Trade Centre – and not a religious epicentre – in the infamous terrorist offensive of 2001. Major subsequent attacks in Europe were on economic infrastructure, mainly transportation systems.

On the other hand, the 20th century also witnessed tremendous prosperity when a positive relationship between business, peace and sustainability was constructed. For instance:

- The decision by Germany and France to create the European Coal and Steel Community ended centuries old military rivalry between the two countries, leading to an era of prosperity and Europe's economic and political unity.
- The Marshall Plan at the end of the Second World War stimulated Japan and Germany's economies, which ushered in an age of tremendous economic cooperation and growth.
- The establishment of regional economic unions such as the ASEAN, SAARC and the Andean Pact has placed constraints on political rivalries between member states of such organisations.
- Open source research, manufacturing and services across continents have created new patterns of global collaboration and lobbies for peace and good relations between countries participating in such processes.

At the beginning of the 21st century humanity is now faced with a new set of challenges. How we react to these challenges will determine whether they escalate into a spiral of violence. Resource and environmental shortages will ensue along with loss of human life and global economic wealth, or alternately we can proactively build global solutions needed to enhance human prosperity and wealth.

Objectives

The objective of the proposed conference is to provide a forum for intellectuals and practitioners (1) to explore costs and benefits of emerging linkages between business, peace and sustainability (2) to deliberate response strategies and craft agenda for policy research and dialogue (3) to create a network of business leaders that can construct and advocate solutions for sustainable peace (4) to launch practical collaborative problem-solving initiatives. Business leaders have a vested interest in the long term framework of sustainable peace for economic opportunities to grow. Therefore, if they develop the economic models to show how their business markets develop in peace then they can emerge as an important force that can significantly contribute to strengthening the foundations of a sustainable world economy.

Provisional Programme

June 26, 2008: Evening

17.00-18.00 Welcome Drinks

18.00-19.00 Inaugural Ceremony

19.00- 20.30 Opening Plenary

Strategic conversation with a distinguished international leader and a distinguished Indian leader to be conducted by a co-chair

20.30-22.30 Dinner

June 27, 2008

10.00- 11.00 Plenary session on Economic Benefits of Peace for Business

In this session Conference Chair and co-chairs will reflect on the theme paper of the conference providing analytical framework and models on (1) how peace benefits economy (2) how companies can measure their own benefits in terms of growth in markets and profits from peace (3) relative benefits to business at different stages of peace (4) how peace, sustainability and economic growth are linked

11.00-11.15 Coffee Break

11.15-13.15 Boardroom Sessions

1. International Trade, Financial Markets and Peace

(Proposed Knowledge Partner:)

This session will review how international trade and financial markets have an impact on peace – including fair trade and the mechanisms needed to stop financial meltdowns.

2. Water and Food Security, New Technologies and Collaborative Solutions

(Proposed Knowledge Partner:)

This session will examine the political implications of fresh water shortages and food security, especially in emerging economies. It will examine how to promote social and environmental sustainability through international collaboration and local action.

3. Energy Security and Clean Technology

(Proposed Knowledge Partner:)

This session will examine the crisis of reducing energy supplies in medium and long term and see whether this issue will lead to tensions between countries. It will also map future technologies that reduce wastage, enhance efficiency, contain carbon emissions, while maximizing profits of companies.

13.15-14.30 Lunch Break

14.30-16.30 Boardroom Sessions

1. ICT Technologies for Peaceful and Sustainable Growth Opportunities

(Proposed Knowledge Partner:)

How can information and communication technologies enable emerging economies help their people come out of poverty, crisis of health and polluting industry, conflict? How to overcome the risk of new technological divide between the developed and developing countries and how can global peace assist in the process?

2. Lessons from Business Initiatives, Innovative Education and Media Initiatives in Conflict Zones

(Proposed Knowledge Partner:)

This session will examine the lessons learnt from the business, education and media initiatives in regions that have experienced conflict. Has peace been a factor? Have businesses flourished during times of ceasefires and floundered during conflict? What role can education and media play?

3. Responsible and Ethical Investments

(Proposed Knowledge Partner:)

This session will discuss how the concept of ethical and socially responsible investments can be strengthened to promote social sustainability, peace and the principles of the United Nations Global Compact

16.30-17.30 Networking Break and Screening of Relevant Films in Background

17.30-19.30 Closing Plenary in 2 Parts on collaborative solutions and future strategies

The first part of this session will gather feedback from the break out sessions and explore cross sector linkages. The second part will include strategic conversation with a small group of eminent personalities about future strategies including new forms of global political and economic partnerships.

20.00-22.00 Dinner (only for invited guests)

June 28, 2008

10.00-12.00 Strategy Roundtable on Initiatives for Action (closed door to special invitees only)

This roundtable for special invitees only, would discuss the following:

- (1) A network of business leaders to promote responsible future
- (2) Other ideas for collaborative initiatives and
- (3) Issues for future policy research
- (4) Expansion of theme paper into a research report.

14.00-20.00 Sightseeing for international guests

Theme Paper

Strategic Foresight Group will prepare a theme paper, with advice from Conference Chair, which will be circulated at the event. The paper will explore linkages between business, peace and sustainability identifying approaches to measure economic benefits to companies from enhanced peace. It is expected that the paper will be enriched by discussion at the conference and developed into a research report.

Participants

The organisers will invite thought leaders known for their commitment to peace and sustainability and business leaders who are curious about these issues and wish to explore a constructive engagement. It will be a blend of:

- Innovative business leaders from different parts of the world;
- Directors of peace research institutes;
- Authors and film-makers on the subject;
- Leading economists, technology experts and climate experts;
- Statesmen/women.

It is expected that there will be about 40 special invitees (business and thought leaders) including panellists in the boardroom sessions invited in collaboration with Knowledge Partners of each session and other keynote speakers and co-chairs. The organisers will make a special effort to invite leaders of the UN Global Compact, UNDP, the World Bank, WTO, UNCTAD, Asian Development Bank and similar multilateral agencies.

Outcome

- A network of business leaders to promote collaborative actions and practical initiatives for responsibility to future on peace and sustainability.
- A conference report on some of the deep insights gathered from presentations at the conference aimed at business community worldwide and a separate research report on approaches to measure economic benefits of peace.
- An audio-visual film based on background research, parts of speeches, insights from proceedings and interviews at the conference.
- A website where discussions at the conference along with podcasts, photographs and reports on sessions will be available, along with networking space for interested members of business, civil society groups and individuals.
- Projects on policy research to find workable solutions to the future problems of peace and sustainability.

Strategic Foresight Group

Strategic Foresight Group is a think tank based in India with global reach. It develops analytical tools on the future of countries, regions and sectors to enable decision makers to make choices in uncertain times. It is particularly known for its 'cost of conflict' methodology, which measures comprehensive costs of conflict as a way of building public awareness for peace. It advises governments and private sector clients in three continents on global and security scenarios. It structures and facilitates dialogues between stakeholders in significant conflicts. It has played a vital role in finding common ground between the Western and Islamic countries in collaboration with the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats in the European Parliament and the League of Arab States. Several Heads of Government, First Ladies, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, leaders of Parliamentary groups, and leading scholars have participated in its meetings and consultations. The research findings and policy proposals of Strategic Foresight Group have been discussed in significant forums such as the UK House of Commons, Indian Parliament, World Economic Forum meetings in Davos, Asia and the Middle East, Oxford University, Geneva Security Forum, Bibliotheca Alexandrina, the Brookings Institution, BBC World Television, CNN, among others. It has also been covered by leading newspapers around the world, particularly including The Financial Times, International Herald Tribune, New York Times, major newspapers in the Middle East, and almost all major newspapers in India and the neighbouring countries in South Asia.

Steve Killelea

Steve Killelea is a leading Australia IT entrepreneur and philanthropist. He is the chairman and founder of Integrated Research, an international technology company listed on the Australia Stock Exchange that has customers in over 50 countries. The company has won Australian Exporter of the year along with many other awards.

Steve was a board member of AIIA for 8 years. AIIA is Australia's peak industry group for Information Technology Industry, where he established the Export and SME groups and Local Action Industry Groups. He has also sat on a number of private company boards as well as a number of influential government advisory boards including IIBAB, NICTA and the CSIRO. Steve also founded a Venture Capital company known as Smarter Capital in 2001, which specializes in investments into the software industry. It currently has a portfolio of active investments.

In addition to his business activities Steve is active in the broader community, particularly in the area of philanthropy, and has founded his own charity, TCF, which specializes in funding projects in the Developing World. The aim of TCF is to substantially change the lives of as many people as possible with special emphasis on targeting the poorest of the poor. TCF is one of the larger private charities in Australia and one of the largest private overseas aid organizations in Australia.

He is also the founder of Global Peace Index, a new tool for measuring peacefulness of countries and identifying the drivers of peace. Developed in conjunction with the Economist Intelligence Unit, the launch of the Global Peace Index has sparked a debate in the media from all parts of the world. The Global Peace Index is now considered a benchmark for measuring the peacefulness of nations.

The UN Global Compact

Launched in 2000, the UN Global Compact brings business together with UN agencies, labour, civil society and governments to advance ten universal principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. Through the power of collective action, the Global Compact seeks to mainstream these ten principles in business activities around the world and to catalyse actions

in support of broader UN goals. With over 3,700 participating companies and hundreds of other stakeholders from more than 120 countries, it is the world's largest voluntary corporate citizenship initiative.

Human Rights

- Principle 1: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and
- Principle 2: make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

Labour Standards

- Principle 3: Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
- Principle 4: the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;
- Principle 5: the effective abolition of child labour; and
- Principle 6: the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

Environment

- Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;
- Principle 8: undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and
- Principle 9: encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies

Anti-Corruption

- Principle 10: Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

Strategic Foresight Group endorses the Ten Principles of Global Compact and encourages companies to commit to them. Please visit www.unglobalcompact.org to find out how to participate in the Global Compact.

Co-hosts, Strategic Partners, Supporters

Strategic Foresight Group invites like-minded organisations to be associated as co-hosts if they are interested in organising and convening responsibilities and able to provide knowledge input, strategic partners if they are interested in providing substantial financial input, and supporters if they are can support the initiative in any useful way.

Contact

For further details on speaking, co-hosting and partnership opportunities, please contact Ms Ilmas Futehally, Executive Director, Strategic Foresight Group
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