



Chapter 2

CHAMPIONING SUSTAINABILITY

Championing sustainability

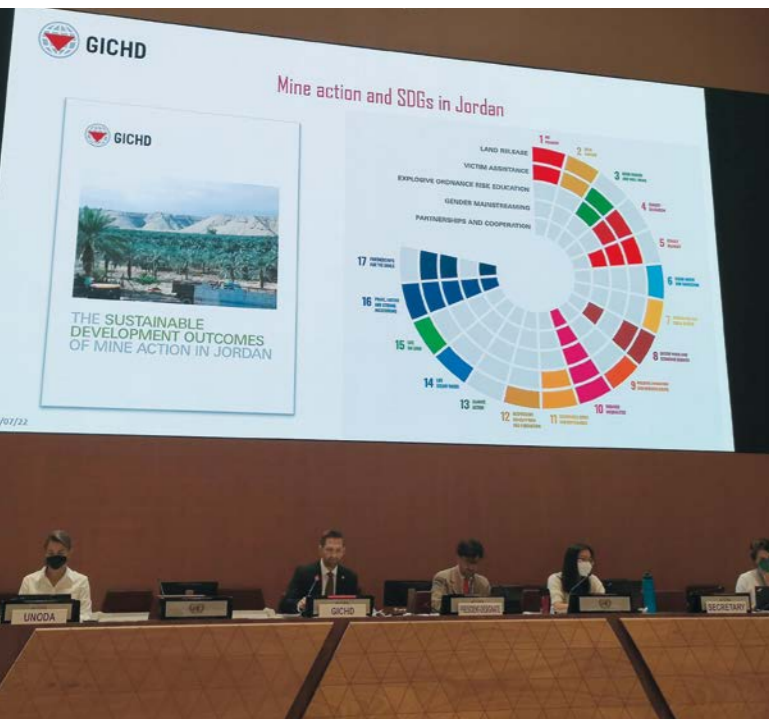
FOCUSING ON THE LINK BETWEEN MINE ACTION AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

“Addressing the threat represented by explosive remnants of war can have a catalytic and accelerating role in the achievement of the Sustainable Development

Goals targets,” stated the President-designate of the Sixteenth Annual Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, Ignacio Sánchez de Lerín García-Ovies, of Spain, in his introductory remarks at the Meeting of Experts on Explosive Remnants of War.

During the meeting, organized by the Geneva branch of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and held on 22 July, the synergy between mine action and the Sustainable Development Goals was a common thread discussed by all participants. As the expert from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining underlined in his presentation, mine action can help States reach the Sustainable Development Goals and realize the 2030 Agenda, and consequently, the Goals can help measure the impact of the clearance of explosive remnants of war in affected States. For example, clearing agricultural land enables communities to grow crops, thereby improving food security and nutrition, which is part of Goal 2 on zero hunger.

At the Meeting of Experts on Explosive Remnants of War, held at the Palais des Nations



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GENEVA SDG COMMUNITY ANNUAL MEETING: HOW DO WE EFFECTIVELY MOBILIZE NETWORKS FOR THE GOALS?

UN Geneva’s SDG Lab convened the first in-person gathering of the Geneva SDG Community this year since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Community’s annual meeting focused on how to accelerate progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. It was held at UN Geneva on 15 September, just before Global Goals Week – an annual week of action, awareness and accountability for the Goals.

Through guided exercises and by applying the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Practical Impact Alliance model, members of the Community mapped the different roles that they play in enabling Sustainable Development Goals implementation in three focus areas: leveraging sustainable finance, enhancing the use of quality data on the Goals, and harnessing digital

technology for impact. Participants noted the value in identifying “missing” actors in the Community to strengthen collaboration on the Goals.

To inspire the discussions, the SDG Lab invited Nadim Choucair, a founding partner of the Berlin-based 2030 Cabinet, to share his research on what makes collaboration in mission-driven ecosystems – like Geneva’s – work. In addition to Mr. Choucair, representatives of other organizations were invited to present their work on accelerating the Sustainable Development Goals, including the CyberPeace Institute, the Global Governance Centre at the Geneva Graduate Institute, the International Chamber of Commerce, Microsoft and the Fondation genevoise pour l’innovation technologique.

This event – and the practical exercises it involved – made it clear that in-person meetings are important occasions for helping stakeholders make sense of the roles they play in the shared ambition of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The 2022 annual meeting of the Geneva SDG Community provided individuals operating in the complex ecosystem of Geneva with the opportunity to connect and to learn from each other’s experiences in advancing the Goals.

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What is the SDG Community?

The Geneva SDG Community is a network of individuals working on sustainable development within the rich ecosystem of international organizations and other actors based in Geneva. It brings together more than 350 individuals from 215 organizations, with the aim of leveraging their wide-ranging expertise and skills to strengthen collaboration for the Goals.

Ultimately, the Community makes the unique potential of Geneva more accessible for implementation of the Goals. This is translated into practice through a transformative ecosystem approach that:

- Brings together and aligns the diverse Community
- Mobilizes knowledge and knowledge-brokering
- Fosters innovation for policy and practice

SDG LAB OUTLINES INNOVATIVE WAYS TO FOSTER COLLABORATION FOR THE GLOBAL GOALS AT SHOWCASE 2030

When you work on a topic as broad as the Sustainable Development Goals, how do you meaningfully engage a network of more than 350 sustainable development actors?

In June, Trine Schmidt, the manager of the Geneva SDG Community at UN Geneva's SDG Lab, shared insights on community and network engagement, at a talk held during Showcase 2030. Organized by the Enterprise for Society Center – a joint venture of the University of Lausanne and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne, among others – Showcase 2030 is an annual gathering that seeks to harness the power of science and technology for the advancement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In her talk, entitled “It takes a village: innovative ways of fostering collaboration for the Sustainable Development Goals”, Ms. Schmidt highlighted not only how the Goals offer a framework to address complex issues, but also the importance of taking an “ecosystem” approach to solving them. She underlined the core ingredients required to build a vibrant and engaged community of actors: trust, informality, relevance, ownership and flexibility.

The manager of the Geneva SDG Community at the SDG Lab, Trine Schmidt, shares her insights on community engagement, at a talk held during Showcase 2030.



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“Networks are dynamic and constantly changing, and to maintain engagement it’s important to be able to adapt to themes and challenges that arise from the community. A key feature of the Geneva SDG Community is that we convene around diverse topics through the lens of SDG enablers: SDG data, digital transformation, and sustainable finance.”

TRINE SCHMIDT
Geneva SDG Community manager

PRESENTING THE SDG LAB TO PERMANENT MISSIONS

Given that 182 permanent missions are accredited to UN Geneva, engaging with Member States on their progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals is an important activity for our SDG Lab. That being the case, in July, the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands invited the SDG Lab to present its work to fellow missions. In response, the SDG Lab organized a briefing, complementing its other outreach activities held throughout the year. The event, hosted by the Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Paul Bekkers, was attended by representatives of 35 Member States. It enabled the SDG Lab team to speak in greater detail about its activities – including its work on promoting sustainable finance and on topics such as data and digitization, as well as its ecosystem approach to collaborating for the Goals.



The SDG Lab team speaks about its work to representatives of Member States in Geneva.

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Participants at the workshop entitled “Digital transformation for the Sustainable Development Goals: an ecosystems approach”

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DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: AN ECOSYSTEMS APPROACH

When used properly, digital tools and technologies can act as a catalyst for advancing implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and help deliver results at the global, regional and local levels. Building on this belief and on two previous Geneva SDG Community meetings on digitization, UN Geneva’s SDG Lab convened a workshop on 1 December entitled “Digital transformation for the Sustainable Development Goals: an ecosystems approach”, facilitated by Nadim Choucair, founder of 2030 Cabinet.

Bringing together stakeholders from the UN, academia, the private sector and civil society, as well as government representatives, the workshop posed two questions: How can the expertise of the Geneva SDG Community be leveraged to ensure appropriate use of digital technologies to deliver impact at the local level? And what roles do various actors from the Community play in that mission?

After an introduction to the concept of “digital-ready” local ecosystems, the participants were guided through an exercise to get a clearer picture of the different roles they play in the Geneva ecosystem to advance digital transformation. This helped them to better map their expertise, as well as to identify who might be missing from the room.

It quickly became apparent that if digital tools and technologies are to be useful in accelerating local impact, local context needs to be carefully considered

in their use. Therefore, practitioners and digital enablers could benefit from a framework to help bring to the surface the particularities of that local context, so that they can design, implement or select the relevant digital tools and technologies.

The second part of the workshop focused on the local context and actors, and how their roles might be augmented, enabled or impeded by digital technologies. The United Nations Development Programme zero-waste food market project in Panama was used as a case study.

Combining insights from the first and second parts, the workshop moved to a plenary reflection on what practitioners should look out for and consider so that digital technologies are used appropriately to enable local action. Among the elements mentioned were inclusivity and equality, digital governance and security, doubling efforts, matchmaking, private sector engagement and accountability, social listening, self-sustainability financially and in terms of skills, and measurement and intersectionality.

The participants gained new insights and professional connections, and expressed a shared interest in working towards tangible, co-created outcomes. This will require a deep dive into thematic pillars identified during previous Geneva SDG Community meetings regarding the possible implications of the digital transformation. As a next step, the SDG Lab will consider possible formats to guide these discussions further.

Panelists at the launch of the Geneva Sustainable Development Goals Data Forum

© UN PHOTO: EDWARD MISHAUD

MEASURING PROGRESS: LAUNCH OF THE GENEVA SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS DATA FORUM

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals represent a tremendous challenge for national statistical offices, which struggle to meet the data demands of the 231 unique indicators included in the Goals' monitoring infrastructure. According to estimates, not a single country is able to provide data on every indicator, and most countries are only able to offer one or more data points on 55% of the indicators. The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022 noted that most data on the Goals remains aggregated, making it difficult to assess the experience of vulnerable groups and ensure that no one is left behind.

What are the best practices, challenges, and insights into doing data better for the Goals? Perspectives on this topic were presented on 11 November at the launch of the Geneva Sustainable Development Goals Data Forum. During a roundtable discussion convened by UN Geneva's SDG Lab and hosted by the Global Governance Centre at the Geneva Graduate Institute, participants from the United Nations system, representing the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the World Health Organization,

from civil society organizations, such as the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data and the Network for International Policies and Cooperation in Education and Training, from academia, specifically the Geneva Graduate Institute, and from the private sector, namely from Deloitte, shared their views and offered examples.

Speakers noted that Sustainable Development Goals data goes beyond being just a technical and reporting matter. It is about understanding how data informs decision-making to ensure that programmes and initiatives to deliver the Goals leave no one behind. At the same time, as the panellists noted, data is intrinsically linked to questions of transparency, accountability, privacy, and equality, and poses capacity challenges for Governments in responding to these and other concerns.

The Geneva Sustainable Development Goals Data Forum and its November launch event are one of several SDG Lab initiatives, carried out via the Geneva SDG Community, to bring together organizations working on data to foster greater debate and better showcase what International Geneva is doing on this topic which is so central to sustainability.

BUILDING BRIDGES 2022: ALIGNING FINANCE WITH SUSTAINABILITY

With over 2,000 participants and 65 events, Building Bridges Week underlined the need and the urgency for Sustainable Development Goals-oriented investments for climate action, biodiversity and social justice. Held in Geneva from 3 to 6 October, Building Bridges Week comprised a range of activities, including workshops, a networking village and a high-level summit. UN Geneva's SDG Lab is a founding partner of Building Bridges Week and an active participant.

The Building Bridges movement recognizes that the complexity of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development requires the active involvement of all actors in society, not least the financial sector. It therefore brings together the United Nations, international organizations, academia, civil society and the financial sector for one ambitious goal: to tackle the world's most significant challenges by mobilizing and accelerating the flow of financial investments to help achieve sustainable development.

Understanding the integrated nature of the challenges posed by the 2030 Agenda, the SDG Lab convened two workshops as part of Building Bridges Week: "Demystifying risks to SDG investments in African markets" and "Digital transformation of the financial sector: risks and opportunities for SDG financing". In addition, the SDG Lab provided support to the United Nations Development Programme and AlphaMundi Group for their panel discussion entitled "Investing for change in Africa".

In the lead-up to and throughout Building Bridges Week, the SDG Lab also focused on keeping the Sustainable Development Goals at the centre of the dialogue, ensuring more diversity of views and voices, and demonstrating tangible and concrete examples of "building bridges" collaborations. Here are some of the results:

We shared a common UN message

United Nations officials delivered a common message throughout Building Bridges Week: that the Sustainable Development Goals must be the framework for a sustainable future that all sectors, including the financial sector, should address and respond to.

Senior UN officials engaged in Building Bridges Week included the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, Tatiana Valovaya, the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Rebeca Grynspan, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Capital Development Fund, Preeti Sinha, the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Ghana, Charles Abani, the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Kenya, Stephen Jackson, and the Digital Transformation Programme Coordinator at the United Nations Environment Programme, David Jensen.

We ensured geographic diversity by bringing voices from the Global South to the fore

The SDG Lab, in collaboration with other UN partners such as the United Nations Development Programme, endeavoured to bring different perspectives to Building Bridges Week. The 2030 Agenda is global and, while the Sustainable Development Goals apply to all countries, the need in terms of access to finance is undeniably more significant in the Global South. With this in mind, it was crucial to support participation by stakeholders in the regions facing these challenges. Some key voices at Building Bridges Week were the Chief Executive Officer of the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre, Yofi Grant, and the Chief of Staff at MarketForce Kenya, Muthoni Wachira.



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We promoted sustainable finance

A series of interviews looked at sustainable finance from the perspectives of four individuals involved in the Pipeline Builder pilot project, a joint initiative of the SDG Lab and the Ground Up Project. The Pipeline Builder, which has been inaugurated in Ghana, aims to streamline and boost financial flows to projects aligned with national sustainable development strategies.

In the lead-up to Building Bridges Week, the Director-General of the UN Office at Geneva, Tatiana Valovaya, shared her perspectives on what is at stake for the finance community as it shifts towards sustainable investing, in an article published as part of a special second-anniversary print edition of *Geneva Solutions*, in collaboration with Geneva newspaper *Le Temps*.

Scan the QR code to read the article by the Director-General of the UN Office at Geneva, Tatiana Valovaya, on sustainable investing.



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At the opening of Building Bridges Week, the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Rebeca Grynspan, speaking on behalf of the UN system, emphasized that the only way to break through cascading economic crises, inequalities and instability is through smart and bold investments.



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Participants at an SDG Lab workshop noted that cybersecurity is a key element to ensuring the success of the growing digitization of the financial sector. Government, regulators, the financial industry and even vulnerable segments of the population need to be involved in co-designing and testing digital products and services.



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Sharing perspectives from an emerging-market economy, the Chief Executive Officer of the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre and one of the SDG Lab's workshop moderators, Yofi Grant, underscored the pressing need to do more to bring the private sector into the Sustainable Development Goals fold.

BUILDING BRIDGES FOR SUSTAINABLE FINANCE - BEYOND GENEVA

The Building Bridges initiative for sustainable finance, co-founded by UN Geneva's SDG Lab in 2019, aims to spur action on finance for the Sustainable Development Goals. In November 2022, the SDG Lab partnered with Sustainable Finance Geneva and the International Institute for Sustainable Development to bring a glimpse of the Building Bridges movement to the Development2030 conference in Brussels.

At a panel discussion focused on forging more partnerships between the finance and development communities, sustainable finance practitioners from Geneva shared advice, perspectives and insights on aligning investments with the Sustainable Development Goals. The speakers unpacked sustainable finance and impact investing at a conference where these topics are at an early stage of exploration, particularly for many attendees coming from the humanitarian sector. And with the Development2030 conference scheduled to be held in Geneva in late 2023, there is even greater potential to foster further collaboration for sustainable finance.

Panellists working in the field of sustainable finance around the world, including in Geneva, share insights at an event jointly organized by the SDG Lab, Sustainable Finance Geneva and the International Institute for Sustainable Development, at the Development2030 conference in Brussels.

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“We built a session that was truly in the spirit of Building Bridges. It included speakers from a range of institutions, it broke down complex financial topics in a digestible way, and it aimed to build understanding between the finance community and the sustainable development community. It is our hope that by continually raising awareness and knowledge of sustainable finance, we can encourage more actors to participate in fundamentally transforming the financial system to align with the needs of people and the planet.”

KALI TAYLOR

Sustainable Finance Geneva community manager

DOING OUR PART FOR SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



Some 13 years ago, thanks to a lot of innovation and a bit of risk-taking, UN Geneva became the first entity to be connected to GeniLac, Geneva's thermal network. Through GeniLac, water from Lake Geneva is used to cool conference rooms at the Palais des Nations.

This ecologically friendly energy endeavour has proved to be very successful. It paved the way for more buildings on UN Geneva's campus to be connected, and enabled the Services industriels de Genève (SIG) - Geneva's local energy provider - to determine the value of upgrading the underlying system. This upgrade is now well under way and SIG hopes to connect the GeniLac system to 350 buildings by 2045, thereby avoiding 70,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions annually. UN Geneva is also installing infrastructure that will allow it to use GeniLac for heating as well as cooling, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions for heating by 80%, which currently amount to approximately 3,500 tons a year.

In 2022, as part of efforts to promote sustainability, UN Geneva partnered with SIG to showcase to the public the evolution of GeniLac and highlight UN Geneva's pioneering role in this sustainable energy solution.

Scan the QR code to learn more about GeniLac.



Scan the QR code to watch a news clip about GeniLac and UN Geneva.



NEW ELECTRIC VEHICLES FOR THE SECURITY AND SAFETY SERVICE

This year, UN Geneva's Security and Safety Service acquired two new fully electric vehicles and began replacing its remaining petrol and diesel vehicles with multipurpose electric vehicles that are suitable for all daily and emergency tasks. This initiative, which involved teams across UN Geneva's divisions working seamlessly together, is part of our ongoing sustainability efforts.



© UN PHOTO: CHRISTOPHE MARCHAT

UN Geneva Security and Safety Service staff with the two new electric vehicles

BIODIVERSITY IN ARIANA PARK

The Palais des Nations stands in the 46-hectare Ariana Park, one of the biggest parks in Geneva. Although construction works and climate change continue to take a toll on the ecosystem of the park both above ground and below ground, UN Geneva is striving to meet the Sustainable Development Goals, notably their environmental targets, and those of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030), by enhancing the park’s resilience and biodiversity.

In 2020 and 2021, 285 new trees were added to the 1,376 existing trees. In 2022, some 500 more trees and shrubs were planted, mostly local species such as maple, oak, holly and dogwood. In total, Ariana Park now boasts nearly three hectares of forest.

UN Geneva is also replacing grass with varieties tested for the local climate, allowing us to save on water, fertilizers and pesticides. Wherever possible, manicured lawns in the park have been converted into prairies that are home to a rich variety of wildflowers and teem with wildlife. A new focus on soil health is also leading to an expansion of the park’s hedges and mulched and bush-covered areas, which promote animal and microbial biodiversity.



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Wildflowers grow outside Building H.



© UN PHOTO: SOPHIE TORELLI CHIRONI

Flowers bloom in front of Building E.

Bees are just some of the species of wildlife to be found in Ariana Park.



© UN PHOTO: MATIJA POTOCNIK

Newly planted trees and wildflowers grow in Ariana Park.



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UN GENEVA AT THE EUROPEAN ENERGY TRANSITION CONFERENCE

UN Geneva took part in the 23rd European Energy Transition Conference, at Geneva, from 31 May to 2 June. Held in a different European location each year, the event brings together thousands of participants to discuss the transition to renewable energy and adaptation to climate change.

As part of 2050Today, a Geneva climate action initiative, and together with other international organizations, UN Geneva presented the measures implemented to make the Palais des Nations more sustainable, resilient and cost-effective, such as using lake water to cool its buildings.

During the three-day event, the Perception Change Project distributed to the public the booklet *170 Actions to Combat Climate Change* and the infographic “International Geneva for affordable and clean energy”. This infographic, made up of contributions from 12 international organizations in Geneva, shows how these organizations are working towards Sustainable Development Goal 7 on affordable and clean energy. The Perception Change Project also contributed activities, aimed particularly at young people, such as an interactive quiz.

Scan the QR code to read the *170 Actions to Combat Climate Change* booklet.



Scan the QR code to visit the *170 Actions to Combat Climate Change* website.



Scan the QR code to see the “International Geneva for affordable and clean energy” infographic.



© UN PHOTO: ESTHER CAPPELLI

Perception Change Project interns present information on sustainability at the Palais des Nations at the European Energy Transition Conference.

#YOUNEEDTOKNOW EXHIBITION AT THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION PUBLIC FORUM

UN Geneva partnered with the World Trade Organization (WTO) to hold the *#YouNeedToKnow: Making Trade Work for People and Planet* exhibition at the WTO Public Forum, from 27 to 30 September. The Public Forum is WTO’s largest annual outreach event, at which participants discuss developments in world trade and propose ways to enhance the multilateral trading system. This year’s event was attended by 3,200 people from around the world.

The *#YouNeedToKnow* exhibition, which comprised ten stand up banners on the Lakeview Terrace at WTO headquarters, communicated facts and figures about the Sustainable Development Goals and showcased how trade can play a decisive role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This exhibition is part of the *#YouNeedToKnow* series, an initiative by UN Geneva’s Perception Change Project and the Fondation pour Genève to raise public awareness about the Sustainable Development Goals and suggest daily actions that everyone can take to contribute to a more sustainable world.

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The *#YouNeedToKnow* exhibition at the World Trade Organization

Sustainable Development Goals “pop-up” space in the East Wing at Geneva Airport



© UN PHOTO: NICCOLÒ VENTURA

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS SPACE AT GENEVA AIRPORT

A Sustainable Development Goals “pop-up” space was a feature of the East Wing at Geneva Airport throughout 2022, thanks to a partnership between UN Geneva’s Perception Change Project, Geneva Airport, and Lagardère Travel Retail. This collaboration between the public and the private sectors was aimed at reinforcing the public’s awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The space included a kids’ corner, reflecting the role of children as the leaders of the future. Lagardère funded Sustainable Development Goals-branded Caran d’Ache coloured pencils, which were provided to children in the kids’ corner. Publications produced by the Perception Change Project were distributed. Postcards were also given out, so that travellers could write messages to the UN about their personal commitments towards achieving the Goals.

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Children explore the Sustainable Development Goals “pop-up” space at Geneva Airport.

170 ACTIONS TO EMBRACE A SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLE

What can each of us do in our daily lives to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals? UN Geneva’s Perception Change Project provides numerous suggestions in its *170 Actions* series of booklets.

170 Actions to Embrace a Sustainable Lifestyle, the fourth booklet in the series, was released in 2022. It is centred on achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 12 on responsible consumption and production. As with the other booklets, *170 Actions to Embrace a Sustainable Lifestyle* sets out 170 ideas – ten for each Goal – for action that each one of us can take. It is available in printed form and online, in English and French.

Scan the QR code to download *170 Actions to Embrace a Sustainable Lifestyle*.



Scan the QR code to visit the *170 Actions to Embrace a Sustainable Lifestyle* website.



The latest publication by UN Geneva’s Perception Change Project: *170 Actions to Embrace a Sustainable Lifestyle*

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A team representing North America, Central America and Caribbean States won the “Road to the World Cup 2022” football tournament in June.

ROAD TO THE WORLD CUP 2022

Ahead of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) Men’s World Cup 2022, UN Geneva’s Perception Change Project highlighted the role that sport can play in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Perception Change Project partnered with the UN Geneva Football Club to support the Permanent Mission of Qatar in organizing a football tournament called “Road to the World Cup 2022”. Eight teams, made up of representatives from the diplomatic community in Geneva, played at the Stadium of Varembe on 22 June to promote tolerance, respect, cooperation and solidarity.