

SDGs ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION 2026

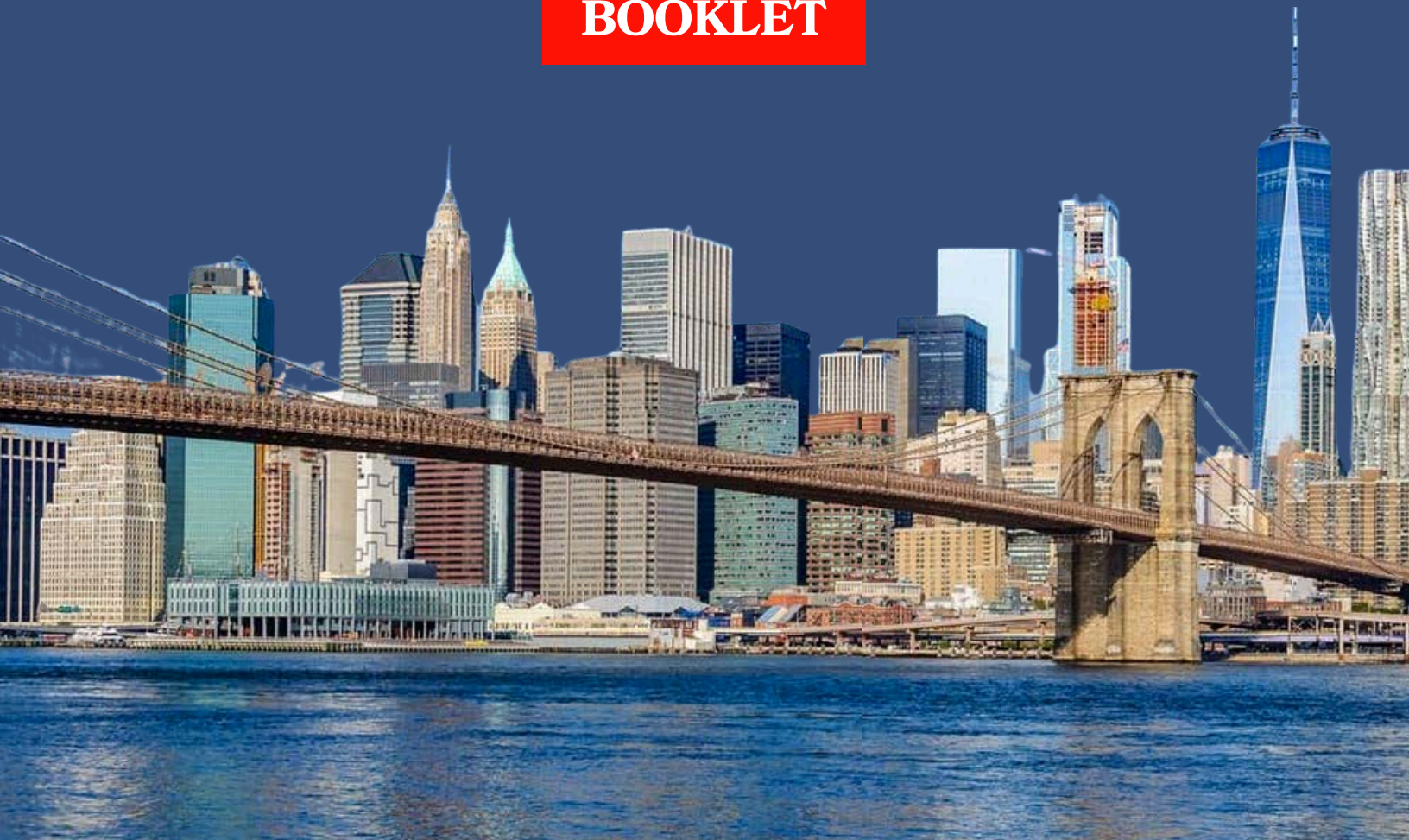
unga-conference.org | jwf.org

22 SEPT
2026
TUESDAY

10:00 AM – 2:00 PM EST

Manhattan, New York

BOOKLET



SDGs ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION 2026

22 September 2026, Tuesday | 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM EST
Manhattan, New York

As a part of the SDGs Conference 2026, the Journalists and Writers Foundation, in partnership with its 56 NGOs from 30 countries, is organizing the SDGs Roundtable Discussion 2026 to discuss critical issues to promote and protect sustainable peace and development. This side-event aims to create a platform for multiple stakeholders, including experts, practitioners, including civil society and youth leaders to raise awareness on social problems and exchange ideas on possible solutions to social, economic, and environmental issues.

Round 1: From Common Ground to the Common Good: Faith Communities Working Together | 10:30 AM – 12:00 AM EST



SDGs CONFERENCE 2026
IN THE MARGINS OF THE UNGA81 SESSION
21-23 SEPTEMBER 2026 | NEW YORK | HYBRID

unga-conference.org
info@jwf.org

ROUNDTABLE 1

**FROM COMMON GROUND
TO THE COMMON GOOD:
FAITH COMMUNITIES WORKING TOGETHER**

**TUESDAY
22 SEPT 2026
10:30 AM - 12:00 PM EST**

REGISTER NOW



In today's interconnected world, the collaboration among diverse faith communities is more vital than ever in promoting sustainable peace, social cohesion, and inclusive development. Interfaith dialogue serves as a powerful platform for building understanding, breaking down barriers, and fostering collective action toward shared goals. Faith-based initiatives can play a critical role in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals for a shared future.

This roundtable aims to explore how faith communities can work together to create more inclusive, resilient, and peaceful societies. The speakers will focus on how interfaith collaboration can empower marginalized voices, elevate women's participation in leadership, nurture the next generation of interfaith leaders, and harness emerging technologies like AI to enhance dialogue and cooperation.

By emphasizing mutual understanding and collective effort, faith communities can significantly contribute to building a more equitable, cohesive, and sustainable future for all.

Key areas for discussion include:

- **Empowering Marginalized Voices and Faith Communities:** Strategies for amplifying underrepresented groups and fostering inclusive participation within interfaith initiatives.
- **Amplifying Women's Voices in Interfaith Leadership:** Promoting gender equality and empowering women to take active roles in faith-based dialogue and decision-making processes.
- **Fostering the Next Generation of Interfaith Leaders:** Nurturing young leaders to sustain and expand interfaith efforts in diverse communities.
- **The Impact of AI and Technology on Interfaith Dialogue:** Exploring how digital tools and artificial intelligence can enhance communication, understanding, and collaboration across faith boundaries.

Through interfaith and intercultural dialogue, shared learning, and collective action, this roundtable seeks to strengthen the capacity of faith communities to work together effectively, contributing to the SDGs and fostering lasting peace and social harmony for future generations.

Round 2: Global Youth Voices on AI, Democracy, and Human-Rights Based Digitalization | 12:30 PM – 2:00 PM EST

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ROUNDTABLE 2

**GLOBAL YOUTH VOICES
ON AI, DEMOCRACY, AND
HUMAN-RIGHTS BASED DIGITALIZATION**

**TUESDAY
22 SEPT 2026
12:30 PM - 2:00 PM EST**

REGISTER NOW

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As digital technologies and artificial intelligence (AI) become increasingly integrated into daily life, their implications for democracy, human rights, and social cohesion are profound. Young people, as both digital natives and active participants in societal change, are uniquely positioned to shape and influence the future of digitalization. Engaging youth voices in discussions around AI and digital governance is essential to ensure that technological advancements promote social good, uphold democratic values, and protect human rights.

This youth panel aims to provide a platform for young leaders and innovators to share insights, experiences, and innovative solutions related to AI and digitalization. The session will focus on empowering youth participation in governance, exploring AI's role in addressing societal challenges, and fostering responsible digital citizenship.

Key areas for discussion include:

- **AI for Social Good:** Exploring the potential of AI to address global challenges such as climate change, health crises, and inequality; showcasing youth-led projects and initiatives leveraging AI for positive social impact.
- **Youth Participation in Governance and Decision-Making:** Discussing avenues for young people to influence policy and digital governance; highlighting youth-led advocacy and platforms that facilitate engagement with policymakers.
- **Impact of AI on Democratic Processes and Civic Engagement:** Analyzing how AI influences electoral processes, public discourse, and civic participation; addressing challenges such as algorithmic bias, censorship, and digital manipulation.
- **Innovative Approaches to Combat Misinformation and Enhance Media Literacy:** Sharing strategies and tools developed by youth to combat misinformation; promoting media literacy education to empower young people to critically evaluate information.
- **Youth Initiatives to Reduce Polarization, Hatred, and Hostility:** Presenting innovative projects aimed at fostering inclusivity, dialogue, and understanding in pluralistic societies; discussing the role of digital platforms and community engagement in building social cohesion.
- **Youth and Digital Tools for Peacebuilding:** Discussing the role of digital platforms and social media in mobilizing youth for peacebuilding efforts; Exploring how digital platforms and strategies amplify youth voices in conflict prevention and reconciliation processes.

This youth panel will serve as a dynamic forum for young people to express their visions, share best practices, and collaborate on innovative solutions that leverage AI for democracy, human rights, and social cohesion. By elevating youth voices, we aim to foster a more inclusive and responsible digital future aligned with the principles of human rights and democratic participation.

PROGRAM DETAILS

Date | Time | Venue

Date: September 22, 2026 – Tuesday

Time: 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM EST

Venue: Manhattan, New York

Format

10:00 AM – 10:30 AM EST

OPENING SESSION

Welcome Remarks and Keynotes

10:30 AM – 12:00 PM EST

Round 1: : From Common Ground to the Common Good: Faith Communities Working Together

- Empowering Marginalized Voices and Faith Communities
- Amplifying Women's Voices in Interfaith Leadership
- Fostering the Next Generation of Interfaith Leaders
- The Impact of AI and Technology on Interfaith Dialogue

12:00 PM – 12:30 PM EST

LUNCH BREAK

- Networking / Light food and drinks

12:30 PM – 2:00 PM EST

Round 2: Global Youth Voices on AI, Democracy, and Human-Rights Based Digitalization

- AI for Social Good: Exploring the Potential of AI to address Global Challenges
- Youth Participation in Governance and Decision-Making
- Impact of AI on Democratic Processes and Civic Engagement
- Innovative Approaches to Combat Misinformation and Enhance Media Literacy
- Youth Initiatives to Reduce Polarization, Hatred, and Hostility
- Youth and Digital Tools for Peacebuilding

2:00 PM – 2:15 PM EST

Closing Remarks

- Closing Remarks and Photo Opportunity

Participants

Interfaith, civil society and youth leaders, including policymakers, academics, journalists, and practitioners worldwide will participate in the roundtable discussions and the workshops.



Manhattan Cruise Tour

4:00 PM – Circle Line Cruises
Departing from Pier 16 at South Street Seaport
www.circleline.com

Departing from Pier 16 at South Street Seaport, this 50-minute cruise gets you up close to Lady Liberty with stunning views of the Manhattan skyline and Ellis Island. Participants must arrive 30 minutes before departure at Pier 16.

Circle Line Cruises - Pier 16
89 South St, New York, NY 10038
4:00 PM - 5:00 PM

***Registration is required -
Global Partners and international guests only.**



Empire State Building

Standing 1,250' (381m) tall, it was the world's tallest building from 1931 until the World Trade Center was completed in 1972.



One World Trade Center

Built to memorialize the Twin Towers, the 1,776' (541m) "Freedom Tower" is the tallest building in the Western hemisphere.



Statue of Liberty

Standing 305' (93m) tall, Lady Liberty has welcomed visitors since she was bequeathed to America from France in 1886.



Brooklyn Bridge

The longest suspension bridge when it opened in 1883, its 276' (84m) high towers are built of limestone, granite and cement.





SDGs CONFERENCE >>> 2026

IN THE MARGINS OF THE UNGA81 SESSION



23 SEPTEMBER 2026 | 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM EST | NEW YORK | HYBRID

10:30 AM EST

PANEL 1: RENEWING MULTILATERAL SYSTEMS FOR A NEW GLOBAL FRAMEWORK

12:15 PM EST

PANEL 2: BRIDGING DIVIDES: STRENGTHENING CIVIC TRUST AND REBUILDING SHARED VALUES

2:00 PM EST

PANEL 3: PRESS FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENT JOURNALISM AS A CROSS-CUTTING ENABLER OF PEACE

Manhattan, New York



JOURNALISTS AND WRITERS FOUNDATION



JWFoundation_



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SDGs CONFERENCE 2026

In the Margins of the UNGA81

WEDNESDAY

23 September 2026 | 10:00am – 4:00pm EST New York | HYBRID

Register

In-Person | New York

Register

Virtual | Zoom

Register

SDGs ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION 2026

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22 SEPT
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TUESDAY

10:00 AM - 2:00 PM EST
MANHATTAN, NEW YORK

RSVP
REQUIRED

ROUND 1: FROM COMMON GROUND TO THE COMMON GOOD: FAITH COMMUNITIES WORKING TOGETHER

ROUND 2: GLOBAL YOUTH VOICES ON AI, DEMOCRACY, AND HUMAN-RIGHTS BASED DIGITALIZATION

SDGs ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION 2026

In the Margins of the UNGA81

TUESDAY

22 September 2025 | 10:00am – 2:00pm EST New York

In-Person | New York

Register

3 DAYS OF ACTION



DAY 1: JWF High-Level Reception 2026

(Monday, Sept. 21, 2026)

On the opening day of the High-Level Week, this networking event gathers global partners from various countries to engage with UN Ambassadors, diplomats, journalists, academics, and human rights defenders.

As advocates of sustainable peace and development, participants introduce their transformative actions towards a more prosperous world while establishing new networks to generate future multistakeholder collaborations. The High-Level Reception hosts over 150 delegates and global partners worldwide, including Ministers, UN diplomats, civil society members, journalists, academics, youth advocates, etc.



DAY 2: SDGs Roundtable Discussion 2026

(Tuesday, Sept. 22, 2026)

SDGs Roundtable Discussion discussed critical issues to promote and protect sustainable peace and development globally. This side-event aimed to create a platform for the international delegations of interfaith leaders, civil society

members, academics, and experts to share their expert opinions, exchange ideas on various development challenges and offer inclusive solutions to the contemporary challenges on social, economic, and environmental issues. Speakers explored the pivotal role of interfaith dialogue in achieving the SDGs while sharing civil society best practices and initiatives for the SDGs. SDGs Roundtable Discussions host distinguished speakers from around the world, including prominent interfaith leaders, civil society pioneers, peacemakers, academics, etc.



DAY 3: SDGs Conference 2026

(Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026)

This multi-stakeholder platform generated an opportunity to offer inclusive policy suggestions to address setbacks of the stagnating implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The SDGs Conference also unfolded

key thematic discussions aligned with broader global development frameworks, offering a once-in-a-generation opportunity to revive multilateralism with the mission of reflecting the realities of our day and address future challenges and opportunities. SDGs Conference 2026 hosts outstanding speakers across the globe, including UN Ambassadors, journalists, academics and human rights defenders, and prominent civil society leaders.



ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES 2026

Manhattan Cruise Tour: Our international guests will have the chance to embark on the Manhattan Cruise Tour on Sept. 22nd, offering a spectacular view of the NYC Skyline from the boat. **Institutional visits,** Additionally, we will arrange institutional visits, meet-and-greet sessions with NGO leaders, and family dinners to foster meaningful connections and lasting friendships.

PAST EVENTS

SDGs ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION 2025

23 Sept 2025, Tuesday | 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM EST

630 Second - Guild Hall, 630 Second Ave New York, NY 10016 | unga-conference.org | jwf.org



ROUND 1: THE ROLE OF INTERFAITH DIALOGUE FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT



Rahul Watson Govindan
Chief Executive
New Zealand Philanthropy
New Zealand



Rocío Cortés Rodríguez
Head of International
Affairs, Department of
Theology, Pontifical
Catholic University of Chile
Chile



Cenap Aydin
Director of Tevere Institute
Expert in Interreligious
Dialogue
Italy



Imam Dr. Talib M. Shareef
President and Imam
Historic Masjid
Muhammad
The Nation's Mosque
USA



Noel Mifsud JP
Multicultural Education
and Languages
Ministerial Committee
Australia



SDGs ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION 2025

23 Sept 2025, Tuesday | 12:00 PM - 1:30 PM EST

630 Second - Guild Hall, 630 Second Ave New York, NY 10016 | unga-conference.org | jwf.org



ROUND 2: GLOBAL YOUTH VOICES FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE



Samet Shabani
Expert on Countering
Violent Extremism
North Macedonia



Lavinia Teodorescu
International Military
Staff, Cooperative Security
Division North Atlantic
Treaty Organization
Romania



Melek Busra Ozel
Youth Coordinator
Nordic Youth Platform
Denmark



Lukman E. Ismaila
Postdoctoral
Research Fellow
Johns Hopkins
University SOM
Nigeria



Zeynep Selma Guney
JWF Research Intern
B.A. in Philosophy,
Politics, & Economics,
University of Rochester
USA



Elif Soylemez
JWF Research Intern
B.A. in Criminology
Toronto Metropolitan
University
Canada



Kubra Kaya
Youth Representative
Balturka Culture
Academy
Lithuania





SDGs CONFERENCE 2026

IN THE MARGINS OF THE UNGA81

FORMER HIGH LEVEL SPEAKERS



H.E. Epsy Campbell Barr
Former Vice President
COSTA RICA



H.E. Helen Clark
Former Prime Minister
NEW ZEALAND



H.E. Celia Parnes
Former Head of the
Secretary of Social
Development **BRAZIL**



Hon. Thanasis Chimonas
Vice Mayor for
Social Integration of
Migrants, Refugees **GREECE**



H.E. Dr. Hajo Sani
Ambassador, Permanent
Delegation Nigeria to
UNESCO **NIGERIA**



**The Hon. Chief Justice
Chris Kourakis**
AUSTRALIA



Mr. Adama Dieng
Former Special Advisor
of the UN Secretary-General
on the Prevention of Genocide



Dr. Wayne Henry, JP
Director-General of the
Planning Institute,
Ministry of Finance &
Public Service **JAMAICA**



**Prof. Mariateresa
Garrido**
Associate Professor,
University of PEACE
COSTA RICA



Ms. Ulziisuren Jamsran
Former UN Women
Representative
KYRGYZSTAN



Ms. Vivian Heyl
Representative of the
Minister of Education
CHILE



Mr. Naseer A. Faiz
Chargé d'Affaires,
Permanent Mission of
Afghanistan to the UN
AFGHANISTAN



SDGs CONFERENCE 2026

IN THE MARGINS OF THE UNGA81

FORMER HIGH LEVEL SPEAKERS



H.E. Sophia Tesfamariam
Ambassador, Permanent
Mission of Eritrea to the UN
ERITREA



Ms. Sasa Jurečko
Deputy Permanent Rep.,
Permanent Mission of
Slovenia to the UN,
SLOVENIA



H.E. Thilmeeza Hussain
Former Ambassador,
Permanent Mission of
Maldives to the UN
MALDIVES



H.E. Stan O. Smith
Former Ambassador,
Permanent Mission
of Bahamas to the UN
BAHAMAS



H.E. Charlotta Schlyter
Former Ambassador,
Permanent Mission of
Sweden to the UN
SWEDEN



H.E. Markova Jaramillo
Former Ambassador,
Permanent Mission of
Panama to the UN,
PANAMA



Ms. Jenifer Fenton
Spokesperson,
UN Special Envoy for Syria
Senior Media Adviser



Mr. George Abualzulof
Senior Human Rights
Advisor to the UN
Country Team
UN OHCHR



Mr. Thomas Gass
Former ASG, Policy
Coordination & Inter-Agency
Affairs of UN DESA



Ms. Lakshmi Puri
Former ASG, Deputy
Executive Director of
UN Women



Ms. Michelle Breslauer
Head of Leadership
and Policy, UN Global
Compact

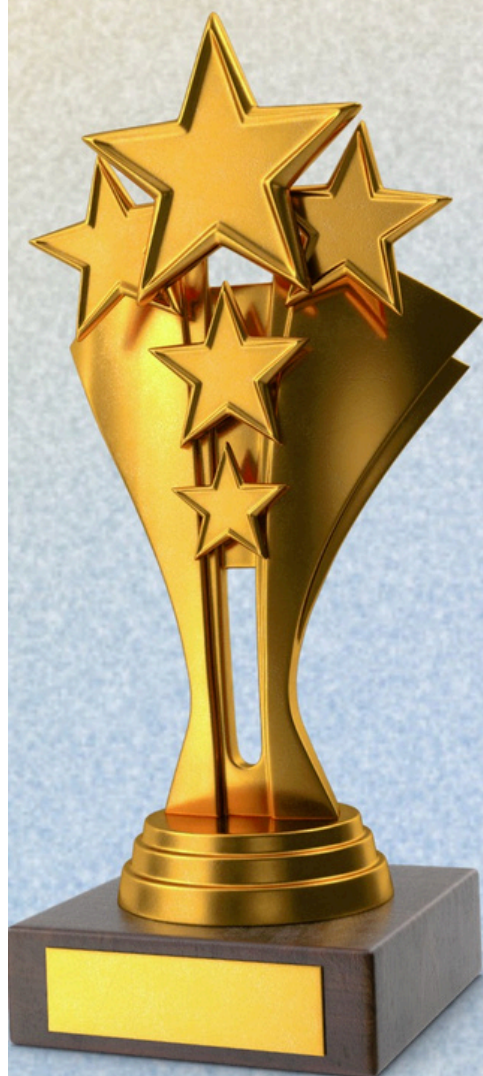


Mr. Sarmad Khan
Director, ACUNS



PIONEERS IN

SDGs AWARDS 2026



1st Place: Pioneers in SDGs
Award + **\$2,000** cash prize

2nd Place: Pioneers in SDGs
Award + **\$1,000** cash prize

3rd Place: Pioneers in SDGs
Award + **\$500** cash prize

5 Additional Awards **250\$**
cash prize each

5 Changemakers Award
100\$ cash prize each

Nominations Are Open!

Submission Deadline
15 September 2026

**Scan this QR Code to
Submit your Projects**



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

1 NO
POVERTY



2 ZERO
HUNGER



3 GOOD HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING



4 QUALITY
EDUCATION



5 GENDER
EQUALITY



6 CLEAN WATER
AND SANITATION



7 AFFORDABLE AND
CLEAN ENERGY



8 DECENT WORK AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH



9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE



10 REDUCED
INEQUALITIES



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES
AND COMMUNITIES



12 RESPONSIBLE
CONSUMPTION
AND PRODUCTION



13 CLIMATE
ACTION



14 LIFE
BELOW WATER



15 LIFE
ON LAND



16 PEACE, JUSTICE
AND STRONG
INSTITUTIONS



17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS



**JOURNALISTS AND
WRITERS FOUNDATION**

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