Preface

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International Business under Adversity: A Role in Corporate Responsibility, Conflict Prevention and Peace, analyses the essential issues of a corporate responsibility entailed by firms' international activities. The wide spread of specific sets of values, ways of thinking and living, infrastructures and technologies is commonly associated with the motivations of conflict, crisis and terrorism. What is the true impact of international business on values, what on certainties and uncertainties in host communities? Does international business activity accelerate crisis or peace? How can we conceive the "change agent" role of a corporation in a broad cultural and socio-political context? What is the true purpose of corporate citizenship and corporate social responsibility (CSR)?

The objective of this book is twofold. One, it is to help understand nodes of interconnectivity between business profit and community benefit in responsible activities that respect the larger business environment, communities and the planet as a whole, and that encourage peace. Two, it is to provide a starting point for upstream mitigation, in which collective action allows disruption to be avoided at its very roots.

A diversity of contributions, surrounding the leading argument, shed light on issues covering the role of minority groups in corporate networks, the possible bridges between cultural, corporate and political communities worldwide, the potential roles of international business and industries in promoting peace and conflict prevention in developing countries, the international legal and institutional framework, and the issues that corporations and communities share in this context.¹

On the basis of a review of theory and practice, and a collection of research studies and case examples, the authors propose vehicles of mitigation and develop a tool kit to help solve goal incompatibility and hierarchy imbalance for the benefit of all.

The reader will discover, ultimately, that returns on conflict prevention investments, CSR and responsible business are part of the intangible assets that constitute the know-how of top management and international business leaders. Similar to other corporate citizenship or CSR initiatives, conflict prevention contributions are only considered appropriate for

corporations when they do not affect its core finances or core business, but rather take place at the margin of core activity and are in line with corporate strategy and performance aspirations.

The most accessible starting point for corporate contributions in this field is the establishment of best practices, not by benchmarking on others, but by innovating the way in which corporate contributions can be made – for the benefit of all stakeholders and granting returns on investment in the long run.

The objective of this book is the better understanding of international corporations' options, practices and tools in the area of social responsibility, conflict prevention and sustainable peace keeping.

Thank you to all contributors for their engagement in this book project and for their important contribution to awareness raising in this field.

Finally, I wish to dedicate this volume to the memory of Professor Dr Wladimir Sachs, co-author, former colleague, brilliant academic and friend, who died while this book was being finalised, after a long disease.

NOTE

1. The authors' points of view are self-standing and independent, and do not necessarily reflect the stance of the editor or other authors of this book. All contributions provide essential material for the discussion of international firms' responsibilities in the larger community. The views of Chapter 12 do not reflect those of Deloitte Mexico.