



For the past 52 years, the international music industry has met annually at MIDEM - the leading international business event for the music ecosystem - to engage in discussion, evaluate trends, strike deals, recognize success, attract talent and showcase performing artists.

This year, for the very first time, the United Nations was invited to address the gathering. Caroline Petit, Deputy Director of UNRIC, conducted a workshop with Hilary Ogbonna from SDG Action Campaign and Jordi Puy, a private entrepreneur from Sounds Diplomacy, on the role of music in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Musicians and the music industry can, and already are, playing a critical role in raising awareness of the SDGs and how to achieve them. Their effort is equally needed to further link profitability and sustainability in the industry.

Jordi Puy from Sound Diplomacy explained how he collaborated with seven mayors across Europe to deliver music strategies that increase the value of music ecosystems in their respective cities. Hilary Ogbonna showcased examples of how musicians are lending their voices to communities in Africa and beyond, and how their messages are crucial as they are the

ones that the masses, including the poor and the vulnerable, are listening to every day and can be inspired or influenced by.

*“Music makes cities, towns and places better. Music makes cities more vibrant. Music creates jobs and fosters skills. Music promotes social inclusion. Music is everywhere. The music industry can bring creative and alternative angles to a topic that often seems too large to be grasped by man” – Jordi Puy, Sound Diplomacy.*

Music has the power to change society. This was stressed by artists like Angelique Kidjo and Youssou N'Dour at the recent European Development Days in Brussels. They explained how musicians spread an awareness of important issues, such as violence against women or peace in war-torn countries, in a way that statistics or high-level conferences are often unable to. Both artists launched a wider appeal for more commitment by everyone, particularly fellow musicians, so that the 17 SDGs become a reality. The time is now and the music industry can do more to encourage whole generations to own the SDG challenge. If more musicians, producers and record companies understand the urgency and the importance of the SDGs, the world would be one big step closer to making them a reality. Music would have, once more, contributed to ever-lasting change, as it did at so many important junctures in history.

While at MIDEM, Ms Caroline Petit had the opportunity to meet the event’s director Alexandre Deniot, who expressed his support for the SDGs. The interest and potential for collaboration with the industry, musicians, festival organisers and influencers needs to be harnessed.

*“It’s remarkable that, with 193 countries and 7 billion people, we only have to do these 17 things and life gets better for a lot of people. And as long as you ask Beyoncé to say one of them and [former UN secretary-general] Kofi Annan to say another one, it becomes something that kids talk about” – Chris Martin, Coldplay.*

More videos: ‘Tell everybody’ video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iDhP41MGVCM>