

Copenhagen, Denmark

IN MEMORY OF PROF. JOHN G. RUGGIE



On 16 September the world lost one its brightest global social engineers ever. Following a decade of struggle for GLOBAL CSR to assist defining, how businesses in a world of market economies should deal with the core of social sustainability, namely human rights, Prof. John G. Ruggie crowned a longstanding career at Harvard University, Kennedy School, and trusted advisor to the UN by developing the ***UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (the UNGPs)***.

The UN Secretary-General's Special Representative, Prof. John G. Ruggie, from 2005 to 2011 travelled to all parts of the world convening large meetings with all the many stakeholders to the then highly contentious area.

He managed to move states, businesses, and civil society into a space of clear analysis and principled pragmatism. While carefully listening to all concerns and ideas, he ingeniously identified the common ground and crafted first the political framework in 2008 and three years later, in 2011, the practical application of the framework, the UNGPs. Prof. John G. Ruggie solved the Gordian Knot of business and human rights.

During the ten years that has passed since the unanimous endorsement by the UN Human Rights Council of the UNGPs, Prof. John G. Ruggie has tirelessly and generously devoted his brilliant mind and deep knowledge to support the proper implementation of the smart mix paradigm created by the UNGPs.

On a personal note, it has been a privilege and an honour for GLOBAL CSR founder, Sune Skadegaard Thorsen, to learn from Prof. John G. Ruggie. From the first dinner in August 2005 at a modest Copenhagen restaurant on his way to get funding to his mandate from the Swedish government, a dinner where the strategy of his mandate, would be discussed from a drawing on a napkin, over the many discussions during the meetings of the BLIHR, to the last conference outlining Pillar One in the UNGPs, that the Danish and Canadian governments, with GLOBAL CSR and ICJ, Denmark, organised in Copenhagen, it was a gift to witness Prof. John G. Ruggie's formation of the future of responsible business conduct.

During the past ten years Prof. John G. Ruggie has bestowed the many thousand initiatives and projects to enable scaling up of business respect for human rights with clear direction and guidance, while educating a host of brilliant young professionals, who can assist us all realise the strong vision for social justice that characterised his own life.

Prof. John G. Ruggie's imprint on the world will last for many generations to come. Today, we would have wished that John could have experienced the impressive effects in Europe with the upcoming regulation on mandatory human rights due diligence; and that he could have guided us for many years to come. Whereas our bodies are fragile and temporary, we are not in doubt that Prof. John G. Ruggie's concepts and ideas will not only outlive us all, but his work holds the potential for us all to enable a just and dignified future for many generations to come.

Thank you Prof. John G. Ruggie and may you rest in peace.

Sune Skadegaard Thorsen
and the GLOBAL CSR team