

On Friday, 25 September, GCERF and the Global Center for Cooperative Security co-hosted a breakfast discussion in New York to explore the link between countering violent extremism (CVE) and promoting sustainable development, and specifically how CVE initiatives can bridge the divide between security and development communities. Chaired by GCERF Executive Director Dr Khalid Koser, panelists included Chair of the OECD Development Assistance Committee, **Mr Erik Solheim**; Bangladesh's Foreign Secretary, **Mr Md. Shahidul Haque**; and Australia's Ambassador for Counter-Terrorism, **Mr Miles Armitage**.

Panelists began the breakfast discussion in agreement that the most effective tools used by CVE practitioners are founded in development. Emphasizing the surge in violent extremism around the globe, Ambassador Armitage underscored the need to "get the balance right" between security and development, primarily because there is a limit to what military efforts alone can achieve. Similarly, Mr Solheim remarked that if the international community continues to misunderstand how politics affect these sensitive issues, military responses won't matter. Speaking from experience, Mr Solheim affirmed that "we must always try engagement, even with the most disgraceful of groups." Offering anecdotes from South Asia, Foreign Secretary Haque confirmed the inherent tension between security and development communities and echoed the need for coherent national and international counter-narratives to dispel claims promoted by violent extremists.

Participants also posed questions to the panelists and offered insights from their own experiences. They cautioned the group to "be careful not to apply a CT or CVE lens to everything we do in development," a mistake one attendee said had been made in the years since the 9/11 attacks when government responses to security concerns complicated efforts by the development community. One guest elaborated, "You cannot promote development through the barrel of a gun." Other comments highlighted the urgency for a more coordinated approach to CVE; saying that unless we do so, we run the risk of losing our collective experiences. Guests also spoke about the critical need to better engage women and religious leaders in the community; stressing that women are among those best positioned to affect change and counter narratives.

The well-attended event included scholars, practitioners, and diplomats from around the globe, many of whom were in New York to participate in the UN General Assembly meeting. Upon conclusion, there was consensus that more coordination and coherence is required to bridge the divide between security and development communities, and that the sharing of good practices must be prioritized so that individuals and institutions, like GCERF, can fulfil their potential.

25 September 2015, "CVE: Exploring the Development and Security Nexus"