



*Geneva Conference on Preventing Violent Extremism – The Way Forward*

Session 4 - Mobilizing Resources, 7 April 2016

Remarks by GCERF Chair, Ms Carol Bellamy

Thank you Ambassador Greninger for your kind introduction. Let me also thank the organizers for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund – GCERF – where I am chair of the Governing Board. I'm also pleased to have the opportunity to share this panel with Ambassador Piet de Klerk who is one of our Board members.

I think it is very important that the organizers have identified mobilizing resources as a key agenda item for today's conference. Because I think there is real risk that we are beginning to 'talk the talk' on preventing violent extremism, but not yet 'walk the walk'. Summits, conferences, and dialogues are important, but even more important is action. I am proud that GCERF is about to start issuing its first grants to local community initiatives to build resilience against violent extremism in Bangladesh, Mali and Nigeria. We have heard again and again today about a funding gap that needs to be filled, and GCERF is starting to fill that gap.

Implementing the UN Action Plan, whether at international, regional, national or local levels, requires money, and in my experience with GCERF resources for preventing violent extremism are still too scarce.

Let me make three observations on the basis of my experience.

First, the majority of the limited funding to date for preventing violent extremism comes from the security and counterterrorism side of the house. These government agencies have enormous budgets, of course, but the vast majority of their funds are still spent on security, military, intelligence, and law enforcement responses. There is still skepticism in these parts of government for investing significantly in 'softer' and more preventive responses, especially as these cannot deliver immediate results. I think there should be a greater allocation of funds to PVE from these budgets.

Still, I think there is greater potential to raise significant funds from the development arms of government, and allow me to acknowledge that GCERF receives a very generous contribution from the Swiss Development Agency SDC. But just as many security actors are skeptical of development approaches, so many development actors are nervous of the 'securitization' of development funds. We need to work harder to build understanding between security and development actors. Preventing violent extremism is relevant to both agendas. Indeed the way I characterize GCERF is that we use development principles and tools – women's empowerment, vocational training, income-generating activities, arts and sport - to achieve security outcomes by building resilience in communities at risk.

I think there have been two important recent initiatives that should help build the bridge between security and development. The first is the new development agenda that recognizes that ultimately achieving development goals depends on security. SDGs 10 and 16 are especially relevant. Second, as we have heard from Ms LeMore, OECD-DAC has recently recognized PVE interventions as 'DAC-able'.

My second observation is that resourcing PVE need not always mean generating new funds. Many of the projects and programmes currently funded around the world are already relevant to PVE – education, women's empowerment, youth, social justice, food security, refugee assistance and so on. What is needed is to enhance these initiatives to make them more PVE-specific. For example, education is clearly PVE relevant. Hopefully better educated youth are more able to think critically and find constructive alternatives to what is on offer from extremist groups. But making educational initiatives PVE-specific means adjusting curricula to include for example interfaith dialogue or religious understanding. It also means including an element on PVE in our monitoring and evaluation frameworks. The line between what is PVE-relevant and PVE-specific is not always clear, and points up again the need for more research in this field.

My third point is that we should not place all our hopes on the private sector. For sure the private sector has a vested interest in preventing violent extremism. Violent extremism diverts talent, disrupts supply chains, and puts entire regions out of reach of safe investment. GCERF is a public-private partnership, and we have benefited from very important in-kind contributions from our private sector partners, including as a member of our Governing Board. But I do not think it is realistic for GCERF – or any other PVE actor – to expect significant financial resources from the private sector at least in the short term. More promising in my opinion is to look to the private sector to create jobs and economic opportunities in affected communities. I look forward to hearing from WEF about its experience in mobilizing private sector support for PVE.

As the Chair of the global fund on preventing violent extremism, my main job is to raise money. I look forward to working with all of you to overcome the existing obstacles to mobilizing resources for PVE, to ensure that we really can implement the UN Plan of Action.