

FOR INFORMATION

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE INTERIM SECRETARIAT
(FROM 15 MAY TO 31 OCTOBER 2014)**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since entering its new offices and assembling its full complement of staff in mid-September 2014, the Interim Secretariat has achieved the following concrete outputs:

Governance

- Established GCERF as a legal entity;
- Opened a corporate bank account; and
- Convened the first Board meeting.

Resource Mobilisation

- Secured and managed start-up grants for the Interim Secretariat;
- Attracted pledges of support from seven countries and the EU of USD 24 million;
- Identified and consulted new and prospective donors;
- Entered into negotiations for a trustee arrangement ; and
- Researched the requirements for Official Development Assistance status.

Operations Development

- Paved the way for a Board decision on funding projects by September 2015; and
- Developed a proposal for an accelerated funding mechanism.

Communications

- Developed a “landing page” and populated a website for a swift launch;
- Promoted the significance of community engagement and resilience as a strategy for countering violent extremism;
- Undertaken more than 250 bilateral meetings with representatives of government; civil society and the private sector; and
- Undertaken various media interviews to raise the profile of GCERF and its goals.

Human Resources and Finance

- Employed six expert staff including three from overseas, on a full-time basis;
- Managed on a contractual basis finance, human resources, and IT services and prepared for the transfer of these responsibilities soon; and
- Drafted a framework for the Secretariat’s future human resources policies.

Administration

- Set up from scratch a new office space and associated services.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Interim Secretariat of the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (“GCERF”) started work on 1 June 2014, and became fully operational in mid-September 2014. In this time GCERF has been established as a legal entity with a bank account; attracted contributions or pledges from seven countries and the European Union (“EU”) amounting to close to USD 24 million; employed six full-time expert staff; developed a detailed funding model; laid the foundations for the permanent Secretariat in key areas such as human resources, finance and administration; consolidated relations with five pilot beneficiary countries; and convened its first Board meeting.

1.2 This report has been circulated in advance to anticipated members of the GCERF Governing Board, as well as to all persons registered to attend the first Board meeting from 17-18 November 2014. The report provides an overview of the work of the Interim Secretariat during this period. The report also contains a summary of the operating expenses budget for 2014 and expenditure to date by the Interim Secretariat. It concludes with a summary of the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead for the Secretariat and GCERF.

1.3 Following this introduction the report is structured around seven main functional areas in which the Interim Secretariat has been mainly engaged, namely: governance, resource mobilization, operations development, communications, finance, human resources, and administration. In several of these functional areas, further detail is provided in subsequent Board papers which are cross-referenced.

2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

2.1 As detailed below, the six members of the Interim Secretariat have made some progress since coming together as a full team about two months ago. This has been made possible by the significant financial and in-kind support of a number of governments, institutions, and individuals, which the Interim Secretariat would like to acknowledge from the outset:

2.2 The establishment of the Interim Secretariat is thanks primarily to the generous financial and in-kind support of the Government of Switzerland and the Government of the United States.

2.3 The Government of Switzerland identified and covered the first four years' rental costs (to 31 May 2018) of a modest suite of offices well situated in central Geneva. It also assisted with identifying and arranging for the secondment of the Executive Director with agreement from the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP); and has contributed his salary for the first 12.5 months (to 31 May 2015). The Government of Switzerland has also facilitated the swift establishment of GCERF as a Swiss non-profit foundation (on 9 September 2014), as explained in BM01/DOC.02. The total financial value of these contributions already exceeds USD 930'000.

2.4 The Government of the United States has provided a "start-up" grant, amounting to USD 1.1 million; and has extended additional in-kind support valued at a further USD 900'000 in this first year. The primary purpose of the start-up grant has been to cover staff, travel and other additional office expenses. In-kind support has included the loaning of a State Department contractor to the Interim Secretariat, initially for one year; the provision of technical support for the design and creation of the logo and website; help convening several roundtable events; "backstopping" the Interim Secretariat; as well as the direct coverage of various travel, marketing, and meeting costs.

2.5 During this initial period, additional generous contributions have also been received from the Government of Morocco (USD 30'000) and Government of New Zealand (USD 40'000).

2.6 Individuals in both the Government of Switzerland and Government of the United States have also supported the set-up phase for the Interim Secretariat, for example by hosting roundtable discussions and meetings, facilitating contacts and networking, raising awareness within government, and promoting GCERF through media interviews and public speeches.

2.7 The Interim Secretariat has been given a “head start” by building on the Framework Document that emerged from three Steering Group meetings in advance of the establishment of GCERF, as well as minutes of the discussions that took place during these meetings. The Framework Document (included as an Annex 1 to BOD.01/DOC.02) presents a consensus achieved at the Steering Group meetings around a series of proposals, including regarding governance, a funding model, and grant management. Respecting the hard work and negotiations that underpin this document, the Interim Secretariat has used it as a foundation for its work and as a source of “guiding principles” for GCERF. While all of the papers presented to the first Board meeting are traceable to the Framework Document, at times the original proposals there have been expanded or adapted, as a result of further thinking, additional consultation, and the realities of translating principles into practice.

2.8 Finally, the Interim Secretariat would also like to acknowledge the contribution of Ms Carol Bellamy, who, following facilitation of the Steering Group meetings, has travelled extensively and contributed considerable time and energy supporting the set-up of GCERF, as well as providing feedback and guidance in preparation for the first Board meeting. Informal support and advice has also been gratefully received from several other institutions and individuals.

3. GOVERNANCE

3.1 A significant amount of time at the Interim Secretariat over the last few months has been spent on issues broadly falling under the heading “Governance”, with particular attention to legal compliance, effective systems for decision-making, strong financial oversight, and responsible resource mobilisation. Care has been taken to respect the boundary between governance and management.

3.2 First, the Interim Secretariat has worked closely with the Government of Switzerland in the creation of GCERF as a Swiss non-profit foundation, confirmed on 9 September 2014, as well as on establishing relationships with Swiss authorities such as the Commerce Registry and the Supervisory Authority for Foundations.

3.3 Second, as an Interim Secretariat functioning before the first Board meeting, another task has been to prepare the agenda and papers for Board deliberations and decisions. Specifically, six substantive papers have been prepared (and translated) for this meeting: the Legal Status of the GCERF; this report of the Executive Director; Governance Documents (Bylaws and Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest); a Funding Model; a Resource Mobilization Strategy and Policy on Contributions; a plan for the establishment of the Secretariat; and an Operating Expenses Budget for 2015.

3.4 The preparation of these papers has entailed comprehensive research and analysis. As explained above, the Framework Document has provided important insights, guiding principles, and specific recommendations for the majority of these papers. Lessons have also been learned, and applied appropriately, from other global funding mechanisms, for example the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. In addition, the Secretariat has met extensively with representatives from other grant-making organisations; and consulted the governance documents of other institutions in Geneva with similar legal status.

3.5 Third, the Interim Secretariat has supported Ms Carol Bellamy in identifying and briefing members of the anticipated Board constituencies. A series of background documents have been developed to help prepare Board members, and most have been briefed individually. Meetings have also taken place with prospective future members of some of the Board constituencies, so that the Secretariat will be prepared to assist these constituencies as they extend their membership after this first Board meeting.

4. RESOURCE MOBILISATION

4.1 As explained in Section 2 above, generous financial contributions have already been made by a number of governments to support the set-up and infrastructure for the Secretariat. Quite some time has been spent securing these funds, for example in preparing and negotiating grant proposals and budgets, accounting, and reporting. While the start-up grants from Switzerland and the United States had already been committed by the time the Interim Secretariat was established, those with Morocco and New Zealand were negotiated by the Interim Secretariat.

4.2 Beyond this set-up phase, clearly the long-term sustainability of GCERF and the achievement of its goals depend on attracting sizeable contributions from governments as well as the private sector and foundations. By 1 June 2014, when the Interim Secretariat started work, a number of countries had indicated a willingness to contribute to GCERF's grant-making as it becomes operational. Considerable effort has gone into trying to translate these expressions of interest into firm commitments, at times through face-to-face meetings in capitals between these potential donors and Ms Carol Bellamy and Dr Khalid Koser. As of 31 October 2014, and as detailed in Table 1 below, firm commitments have now been received from Australia, Canada, the European Union, Qatar, New Zealand, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. When added to those contributions already made, this brings the total amount pledged or contributed to GCERF to just under USD 24 million over the next five years. Securing these contributions remains a priority and will be the focus of significant efforts over the coming months.

Table 1: Actual Contributions and Pledges in USD (in thousands)

| Donor | Actual Contributions | Pledges | Total Contributions and Pledges |
|----------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|--|
| Australia | 0 | 1'325 | 1'325 |
| Canada* | 0 | 1'336 | 1'336 |
| European Union | 0 | 6'450 | 6'450 |
| Morocco | 30 | 0 | 30 |
| New Zealand | 40 | 40 | 80 |
| Qatar | 0 | 5'000 | 5'000 |
| Switzerland | 930 | 4'200 | 5'130 |
| United Kingdom | 0 | 500 | 500 |
| United States | 1'100 | 3'000 | 4'100 |
| Total | USD 2'100 | USD 21'851 | USD 23'951 |

* A correction to the contribution of Canada was communicated during the meeting.

4.3 In addition, the Interim Secretariat has approached a series of other potential government donors, some of which have expressed an interest in supporting GCERF, including Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, and the United Arab Emirates. As detailed in the Resource Mobilization Plan (Annex 1 to BM.1/DOC.06 - Part 1), a next step for the Secretariat will be systematically to approach potential governmental and non-governmental donors, across both security and development sectors. Assistance from Board members will be essential, especially to access governmental development agencies and to engage the private sector. The proposed operating expenses budget for 2015 also includes the costs for an additional member of the Secretariat with responsibility to support resource mobilization.

4.4 There are two final aspects of the Interim Secretariat's work to date that broadly fall under the heading "Resource Mobilization." The first concerns the establishment of a trust fund arrangement, as originally envisaged in the Framework Document. For several potential donors there is a strong preference or even requirement that contributions be made initially via a trust fund held by an international organisation. To this end, the Interim Secretariat has entered into ongoing discussions with the World Bank, UNICEF, and the United Nations Secretariat through its Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force.

4.5 The second concerns making an application to the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for inclusion in the List of Official Development Assistance Eligible International Organisations. The Interim Secretariat has researched and consulted on the relevant procedures, which are explained in more detail in BM.01/DOC.06.

5. OPERATIONS DEVELOPMENT

5.1 On the one hand, the Interim Secretariat clearly has not been in a position to undertake grant management before the meeting of the Board (and its approval of a funding model), before the formal engagement of pilot beneficiary countries, or before contributions have been secured. On the other hand, donors have been clear that they expect GCERF to start providing grants as quickly as is feasible and certainly before the end of 2015. Therefore, the Interim Secretariat has been responsible for laying the foundations for operations development and grant management.

5.2 First, a detailed funding model has been prepared for Board approval (BM.01/DOC.05). Once approved by the Board, the funding model provides the basis for the Secretariat to commence an annual funding cycle, with the first funding decisions by the Board by September 2015.

5.3 Second, the Interim Secretariat includes team members with the requisite expertise and experience to implement and manage grants. Between them, they have extensive experience for example of local community engagement around countering violent extremism in several of the pilot beneficiary countries, of grant-making and project management in the field of development, of performance monitoring and evaluation, and of operations development in the context of other global funds.

5.4 Third, the Interim Secretariat has engaged in ongoing dialogue with the pilot beneficiary countries that expressed an interest (formally and informally) during the steering group meetings; as well as briefing other interested potential beneficiary countries. A strategy for beneficiary country engagement is currently being developed, including an inventory of relevant government and civil society entities and expert bodies working on countering violent extremism and directly related issues.

5.5 Finally, and directly in response to a request made by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry at the Fifth Ministerial Meeting of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) on 23 September 2014, the Interim Secretariat has developed a detailed proposal for an accelerated funding mechanism alongside the core funding mechanism, to allow the international community to respond swiftly to urgent issues in violent extremism, and especially to fund initiatives countering radicalization to the group known as Islamic State, ISIL, ISIS or *Da'esh*.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

6.1 The overall approach to communications adopted by the Interim Secretariat to date has been hallmarked by discretion and modesty, in recognition of its interim status, of the mandate of GCERF as a fund, of the political sensitivity of its goals, and of the possible vulnerability of its potential grantees. In this context, the communications undertaken over the last few months by the Interim Secretariat have fallen into three main categories.

6.2 First, the Interim Secretariat has established a “landing page” on the Internet (www.gcerf.org) and a social media presence, including profiles on Twitter (@thegcerf.org) and Facebook. A fully functioning website is currently being developed for launch soon after the Board meeting.

6.3 Second, and while recognizing the need to maintain its grant-making focus, and to complement rather than overlap with hubs of expertise on countering violent extremism (e.g. Hedayah), members of the Interim Secretariat have engaged in public events that have provided the opportunity to promote community engagement and resilience as an important contribution to countering violent extremism. Specifically, they have contributed to public discussions and roundtable events in Abu Dhabi, Brussels, Geneva, New York City, Vienna, and Washington DC., variously convened by the EU, GCSP, GCTF, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), United Nations, and U.S. Department of State. Further, the Interim Secretariat hosted a roundtable event in New York City during the UN General Assembly on 23 September 2014.

6.4 Third, the Interim Secretariat has responded selectively to requests for media engagements, recognizing on the one hand the need to be selective, but on the other the potential value of the media for raising awareness of the Fund and its work. Over the last few months, interviews have been published by *The Guardian* (UK newspaper) and by Swiss newspapers *Le Temps* and *Le Matin*, and broadcast on Swiss public radio station RTS. GCERF has also been referenced in various articles and commentary from around the world, including *BBC News*, *Deccan Chronicle*, *Dhaka Tribune*, *Foreign Affairs* and *International Herald Tribune*. Similarly, numerous organisations and institutions have mentioned GCERF on social media, including the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP), Hedayah, and the Tony Blair Faith Foundation, among others

7. FINANCE

7.1 The Interim Secretariat was established before GCERF had a legal status. As set out in BM.01/DOC.07, to enable rapid start-up, its finances, human resources (see below), and information and communications technology services have been generously managed by

GCSP, with oversight by the Executive Director of the Interim Secretariat. All contributions to date have been received into a GCERF project account held by GCSP, and all expenses paid by GCSP. The GCSP Head of Finance submits accounts on a monthly basis, which are reviewed in face-to-face meetings. GCERF pays GCSP on a “fee-for-service” basis.

7.2 In early November 2014, GCERF opened a corporate bank account (with UBS) and all future contributions will be received in this account. Included in the proposed budget for the Secretariat is an additional team member to assume responsibility for financial management. The proposed budget for 2015 includes the costs of an audit of the GCERF project account held by GCSP, once the final transfer of all funds takes place.

7.3 Total expenditure as of 31 October 2014 has been USD 431'707. Table 2 below breaks down expenditure by the Interim Secretariat as of 31 October 2014 under three areas of expenditure: staff, office, and travel. Also provided are the figures for (i) the proposed Operating Budget 2014 - which incorporates budgeted expenditure to 31 December 2014 including a number of contingencies and provisions; and (ii) the expenditure forecast to 31 December 2014 - which is based on an extrapolation for the remainder of the year from current monthly expenditure, provided by GCSP's Finance Department.

Table 2: Expenditure and Budget Breakdown for 2014 in USD

| Totals | Expenditure as of 31 October 2014 | Forecast to 31 December 2014 | Operating Expenses Budget 2014 |
|---------------|--|---|---|
| Total Staff | 298'517 | 460'083 | 525'211 |
| Total Office | 107'339 | 157'955 | 247'853 |
| Total Travel | 25'851 | 57'430 | 67'267 |
| Total: | USD 431'707 | USD 675'467 | USD 840'330 |

7.4 As Table 2 highlights, total forecast expenditure to 31 December 2014 is currently 19.6 per cent under the total Operating Expenses Budget for 2014. This is explained by:

- (a) Cost savings (12.4 per cent) expected on total staff expenditure due to the later than initially budgeted start of some team members and salary variances.
- (b) The significant variance between total office expenditure in the proposed Operating Budget 2014 and forecast expenditure to 31 December 2014 (36.3 per cent) primarily consists of the following elements:
 - i. as-of-yet unrealized expenditure on equipment installation, hardware and software purchases and related start-up costs that are still expected

- but currently not subject to any specific acquisition orders (representing 41 per cent of the 36.3 per cent identified); and
- ii. as-of-yet unrealized services fees related to the setup of GCERF's human resources and financial management systems, as well as provisions for legal and auditors fees related to 2014 (representing 43 per cent of the 36.3 per cent identified).

(c) Cost savings expected on forecast total travel expenditure against the Operating Budget 2014 (14.6 per cent) are linked to the diligent allocation of available resources and the opportune attendance of externally hosted events in international fora for GCERF purposes, where travel expenses have been covered by hosting organisations or governments rather than GCERF.

8. HUMAN RESOURCES

8.1 The team of the Interim Secretariat is comprised of six staff members.

8.2 As part of the start-up grant from the Government of United States, it was agreed that two of the four staff positions financed under that grant would be pre-selected by the Government of the United States. A third staff position was filled directly through the loan of a State Department contractor, the costs associated to which are covered directly by the Government of the United States as part of their in-kind contribution. Two other team members (including the Executive Director) have been seconded to GCERF from GCSP, and a final team member was recruited locally in Geneva.

8.3 The Government of Switzerland has helped expedite the issuance of work permits for three non-Swiss resident staff members appointed. The availability and pre-selection of several members of the team, as well as their work permit facilitation, has significantly contributed to the rapid set-up and effective functioning of the Interim Secretariat.

8.4 The Executive Director (Dr Khalid Koser) along with a Programme Advisor (Ms Wahiba Jendoubi) started their secondment to the Interim Secretariat on 1 June 2014; Ms Tal Sagorsky (Senior Legal and Policy Advisor) started work on 1 August 2014, Mr Jonathan Wood (Senior Operations Advisor) on 5 August 2014, Ms Amy Cunningham (Community Engagement and Resilience Advisor) on 18 August 2014, and Ms Amanda Fazzone (Senior Community Engagement and Resilience Advisor) on 16 September 2014.

8.5 Between them these six team members (four women, two men) have nationality of nine countries and speak seven languages. They combine leadership and management skills in multilateral settings; in-depth experience working with community-based organisations

worldwide to counter violent extremism; substantial experience working with multi-constituency boards; understanding of the mechanisms through which governments, multilateral agencies, corporations, foundations, and NGOs engage in this domain; training and capacity-building expertise; negotiating and drafting of donor contribution agreements, and beneficiary grant agreements and related accountability mechanisms, grant management, and a proven track record in effective performance monitoring and evaluation and impact assessment. As detailed in BM.01/DOC.07, the Interim Secretariat seeks Board approval for the appointment of two further team members, to support resource mobilisation and to oversee financial management. In addition, the secondment of new staff may also be an option welcomed by the Secretariat.

8.6 GCSP currently provides human resources management services for the Interim Secretariat on a “fee-for-service” basis, including contracts and payroll. As detailed in BM.01/DOC.07, when the Headquarters Agreement with the Government of Switzerland comes into force, the Secretariat will assume full responsibility for its human resources management. Until that time, all team members of the Interim Secretariat are employed on GCSP contracts and subject to GCSP human resources rules and regulations, with the exception of one team member on direct loan from a United States State Department contractor. This transition is expected to occur no later than the end of March 2015. The transfer of human resources responsibilities will also require GCERF to define its own human resource strategy, systems, rules and regulations, including compensation levels, all of which have been drafted, in part to permit for projecting expenditure in 2015.

9. OFFICE ADMINISTRATION

9.1 The logistical effort to establish a new office should not be underestimated, and took up a considerable amount of time during the first months of the Interim Secretariat, before the arrival of the full team. For example, the Interim Secretariat has: designed the layout of the office space; solicited and compared quotes from potential suppliers before purchasing office furniture; worked with the GCSP information technology division to set up Internet and telephony infrastructure and purchase IT equipment (discounts were available through bulk orders at GCSP); secured temporary subsidized accommodation for team members arriving from overseas; negotiated corporate accounts and rates with a travel and hotel company, as well as a stationery supplier; contracted cleaning services; contracted professional translators and interpreters; negotiated discounted rates for the meeting room and hotel accommodation for the first Board meeting; and established a shared drive with back-up facility and a contacts database.

9.2 The rent for the GCERF office space was covered from 1 June 2014; but the team was only able to work there from 18 August 2014. Up to then, desk space was generously provided by GCSP.

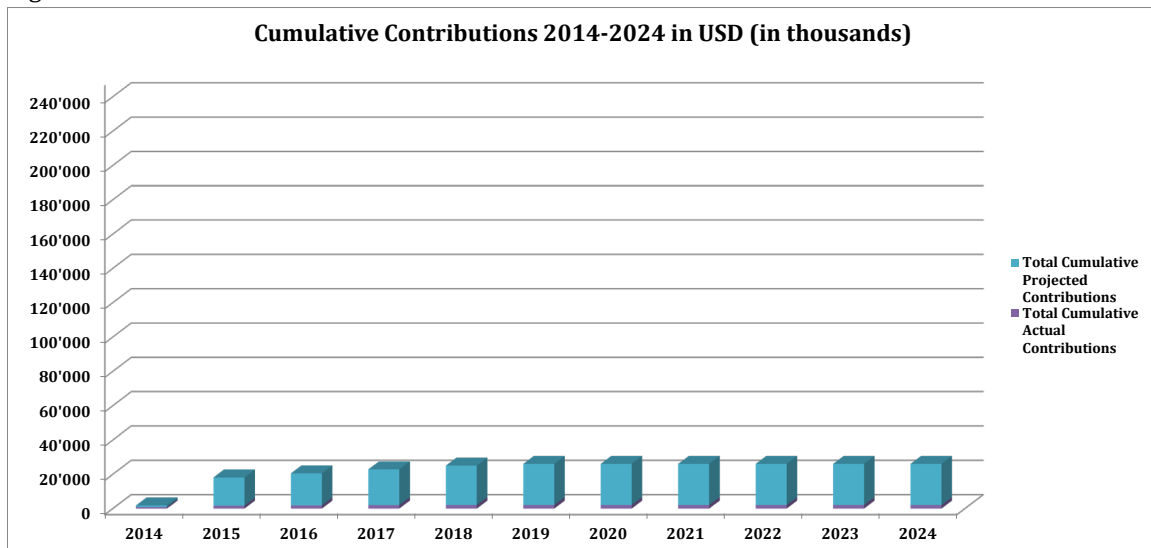
10. LOOKING AHEAD: OPPORTUNITITES AND CHALLENGES

10.1 While the Interim Secretariat has made progress across a range of areas over the last few months, clearly this is just the start. If approved, the various proposals in the Board papers presented to this meeting already mandate a series of deliverables by the Secretariat moving forward, and a work plan for the Secretariat is laid out in BM.01/DOC.07.

10.2 More broadly, a number of opportunities and challenges clearly face GCERF as it seeks to fulfil its mandate of becoming the first global effort to support local, community-level initiatives aimed at strengthening resilience against violent extremist agendas.

10.3 Principal amongst these is fund-raising. Figure 1 below presents graphically cumulative projected and actual contributions based on current commitments and pledges, and demonstrates a very significant shortfall against the goal of raising sufficient funds to grant USD 200 million to projects over the next decade.

Figure 1



10.4 So far the Interim Secretariat has mainly focused on government agencies with a specific counter-terrorism or security mandate; and many of these have been cautious in committing support to GCERF, in part because of a lack of resources, and in part because GCERF and its impact remain largely unproven. It may be reasonable to assume that once the Board and Secretariat are fully established, once the funding model is fully developed and approved, and in particular once projects are identified for funding, some of these donors may be less cautious about their engagement.

10.5 At the same time an important opportunity for fund-raising is presented by the potential to engage with development agencies, which in most government settings have significant budgets. It is clear that GCERF is working at the security-development nexus, broadly adopting development principles and tools, but targeted on specific communities and demographics at risk of radicalisation and on security-related outcomes. Engaging development actors (as potential donors and/or as members of Board constituencies) has at times proved challenging because of the dual character of GCERF; but will be essential to raise the funds required to make GCERF sustainable in the longer term. This also has implications for GCERF's vision and mission statements, and how it projects itself publically.

10.6 The proposed Accelerated Funding Mechanism may also provide an opportunity for additional fund-raising, designed as it is to provide the international community with the ability to respond swiftly to urgent issues, especially countering the group known as Islamic State, ISIL, ISIS or *Da'esh*. As already explained, additional funding will be required both to support projects through the Accelerated Funding Mechanism, but also to enable the Secretariat to step it up. Moving forward it will be important to maintain the distinction between the Core and Accelerated Funding Mechanisms, and also to reduce the risks that the latter may impinge on the former, for example by jeopardizing an application by GCERF for inclusion in the List of Official Development Assistance Eligible International Organisations.

10.7 Another challenge has been engaging the private sector. While many commentators have noted the added value of GCERF's public-private partnership, private sector involvement has been limited during these early months. Some sectors may be directly affected by the risk of violent extremism, for example extractive industries and companies with supply chains in countries at risk. In other cases, there has been some interest in supporting community engagement from a corporate social responsibility perspective, particularly focusing on education and skills training. Another avenue of interest has been from social media and technology companies, whose products may be tools for strengthening community engagement and resilience against violent extremism.

10.8 In order to try to further mobilize the private sector, the Interim Secretariat is currently developing a draft strategy on private sector engagement, which will outline direct financial and in-kind private sector contributions GCERF may benefit from. A roundtable event for the private sector in San Francisco is also being planned in December 2014 (generously supported by the Government of the United States). The Secretariat looks forward to support in particular from the private sector Board constituency in this regard.

10.9 Finally, it is important to recognize that the coming year represents a testing ground for GCERF. Operationalizing the Core and Accelerated Funding Mechanisms present

significant challenges; overcoming hurdles to fund-raising will not be easy; engaging fully the private sector and civil society constituencies needs more work; and GCERF needs to situate itself appropriately and strategically. The Secretariat looks forward to the support of the Board in responding to these challenges, and realizing the opportunities for GCERF to achieve its critical goals.