

REPORT OF THE 19th BOARD MEETING

The 19th Meeting of the Governing Board (the Board) of the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF) was held on 29 and 30 November 2023 in Geneva, Switzerland. The approved agenda (Annex 1) and participant list (Annex 2) are attached.

1. WELCOMING REMARKS

1.1 The Chair of the Governing Board, Mr Stefano Manservigi, opened the meeting by noting that recent events have heightened the global risk of violent extremism, making GCERF's work all the more important in finding complex solutions to difficult problems.

1.2 The Chair further referred to the pre-meeting between African colleagues – the Group of Friends – in preparation for the 2024 Abuja conference, as an example of how GCERF and its members can spread a culture of prevention, build alliances, and showcase its results, approach and capacity as a convenor for preventing violent extremism (PVE) efforts.

1.3 The Chair introduced the list of decisions to be passed by silent agreement (without discussion), to which there were no objections, and announced that the confirmation of new Board Members would take place on the second day of the meeting.

Preliminary Matters

1.4 The Board took the following decisions:

BM.19/DEC.01: Ms Neila Feki of Tunisia is appointed as the Rapporteur of the 19th Board meeting.

BM.19/DEC.02: The agenda for the 19th Board meeting (BM.19/DOC.01) is approved.

BM.19/DEC.07: The update of the Independent Review Panel (IRP) (BM.19/DOC.16/Annex 1), including the renewal of the mandate of two Members, is approved.

2. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2.1 The Chair welcomed again the renewal of the mandate of the Executive Director (ED), Dr Khalid Koser, and invited him to present his report (BM.19/DOC.02) and vision for the next five years. He asked the Board for inputs into how to address the increasing number of expressions of interest from potential partner countries, despite the limited resources that do not allow GCERF to expand.

Opening Remarks

2.2 The ED extended thanks to the Chair, particularly for his role in expending social capital, and his wide travels on behalf of GCERF. He also thanked the Board Members for their presence at the meeting and for telephone discussions in the preceding weeks to help build a positive outcome. He welcomed the meeting Observers – Côte d'Ivoire, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, and Malta, as well as the International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law (IJJ), Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) – and thanked the team of the GCERF Secretariat for their work on the meeting and more broadly.

2.3 The ED added that the intention of the Board meeting was to provide a forum for discussions, not merely presentations. He highlighted the importance of papers and content not included in the meeting agenda, including:

2.3.1 The expansion of the Global Action Platform (GAP) network to around 300 local community-based organisations (CBOs), who should ultimately become part of the Board to lend further legitimacy to civil society.

2.3.2 The increase in the number of National Advisers to 16, who will be in Geneva for a week in January 2024. This could provide an opportunity for officials in Bern to hear from people on the front line of PVE efforts.

2.3.3 The scale of GCERF results (see BM.19/DOC.15), with tens of thousands of people reached at events, by peace clubs, and trained. GCERF has also supported more than 400 networks and increasing numbers of frontline workers.

2.4 The ED noted further that no other organisation is working at this scale, making GCERF's ability to both make grants and monitor them even more impressive. The organisation's M&E expertise – including independent and thorough evaluation processes – is providing evidence of impacts and outcomes that can make PVE efforts more sustainable and lasting.

Report of the Executive Director

2.5 The global environment is more conducive to violent extremism (VE) than at any time since GCERF was established, with conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East also creating anger and resentment elsewhere (e.g. in the Balkans and North Africa) and exacerbating existing challenges (such as food insecurity in the Sahel). At the same time, the world faces the impacts of climate change alongside reductions in donor contributions. There are three critical questions for GCERF over the next 5 years.

2.6 The first is whether GCERF is working on the right mandate – PVE at the local community level – and whether that mandate is sufficient to sustain an international organisation for five

years and beyond. The ED believes it is, and is unconvinced that GCERF should expand beyond building community resilience to VE to building such resilience to poverty, organized crime and so on. He raised the question of GCERF's grant making focus and whether it should have a greater policymaking and/or capacity-building role. He added that GCERF is not working as extensively as it could be, either in potential hotspots that might spill over or the most critical locations such as Afghanistan or Myanmar. Going forward, if GCERF's mandate for PVE is appropriate, it should work across these contexts.

2.7 The second is whether GCERF's operating model is still appropriate. It was very deliberately copied from other funds (such as the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance) including their country support and funding mechanisms. While this has been positive in some ways, engraining the notion of partnerships and ensuring shared responsibility and country ownership, GCERF has never received the funding necessary to achieve systemic change and has been unable to achieve its full potential. The Board has not engaged as much as it could have, including in terms of resource mobilisation, and the oversight mechanism is disproportionate to the amount of money spent. The ED also believes that, as PVE is not yet recognised as a global public good – unlike health, education, or child and climate-related issues – the model does not quite fit. He suggests that GCERF should avoid becoming an implementing agency and maintain but update the Fund-based model.

2.8 The third is the funding dilemma, to which the Board needs to find a resolution. GCERF largely depends on security or development funding. Security budgets have been shrinking, and in any case have never allocated much money for the softer/PVE aspects of this work. At the same time, GCERF is not perceived as “development enough” by some development actors.

2.9 A number of donors continue to provide core funding (for strategic expenditure and the operational budget), including Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, and the United States. GCERF needs to be agile and take advantage of different funding models, including new and emerging programmes – these include mobilising regional delegations/country embassies rather than central governments as has been done in Kenya, Ghana and the Philippines; mobilising non-security, non-development elements of national administrations that have budgets; and undertaking more integrated programming, for example as implementing partner for thematic, regional, and global programmes that combine security, development, humanitarian (and other) issues. GCERF should also reach out to new donors, such as Brazil, Portugal, and Saudi Arabia. Partner countries also have a critical role to play in helping to mobilise funds. The new resource mobilisation team is an important investment for increasing funding.

2.10 GCERF is not seeking very large amounts of money; and needs help from the Board. Such help needs to include support from Board Members to ensure that GCERF can be more centrally involved in global fora, such as discussions around the Middle East. GCERF should also seek observer status at the United Nations General Assembly. The ED also suggested a network of global envoys: established, esteemed figures who can help GCERF into conversations and raise its profile. An example of this is the new 'Group of Friends' (GCERF's Africa Board Members), who will help GCERF to position PVE and the whole-of-society approach at the African Counter-Terrorism Summit (ACTS) in Abuja in April 2024.

Discussion

2.11 The Chair noted that this help should also increase GCERF presence on the ground and in meetings and that, given GCERF's multistakeholder constituency, civil society and the private sector should be involved. He opened the floor for discussion.

2.12 The Board Member from Civil Society, Policy, Think and Do Tanks Constituency agreed that the original operational model, while useful at first, is now a straitjacket for GCERF. He stated that GCERF needs to establish priorities, a strategic imperative and strategic focus – on resilience against VE rather than impacts – as by nature it is too small and will never enough funding or space to 'do it all'. He added that GCERF is a fund that can take risks, in places where other funders and implementers cannot. It should be active and set the stage, rather than passive or reactive, and establish a threshold for opting out of countries when it can no longer address the root causes of VE. GCERF has convening power, and needs to use the diplomatic track, increasing its presence in global fora. With regard to funding, he asked how GCERF can step out of the ODA framework to prevent perceptions that it is an "instrument of the west" and thus avoid resistance and anger. He was not too optimistic regarding the success of a more integrated/cross-sectoral approach. He welcomed the idea of exploring a decentralised model in regions where GCERF works/has a presence, noting that funding for regions might help to rebalance the funding model.

2.13 Speaking about funding on behalf of Switzerland, the Alternate Board Member noted that although the GCERF core-contribution agreement was only extended by a year, this had nothing to do with its performance or results. Rather it was to do with the ongoing Ukraine crisis, negative growth and consequent cuts in budget and staff within the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) even before the Gaza crisis. However, Switzerland will continue its diplomatic support, including for alternative funding, and agrees that pursuing regional funding is a good idea.

2.14 Speaking on behalf of Nigeria, the Board Member agreed with the assessment of GCERF activities in Nigeria. He said that UN observer status for the organisation is long overdue and

that while GCERF is a thought leader and convenor it could even be an implementing partner. He added that as PVE is increasingly relevant, private-sector involvement is needed.

2.15 Speaking on behalf of Bangladesh, the Board Member agreed that the world is seeing heightened tensions and intolerance, exacerbated by social media, that go beyond national contexts to the regional and global scale. GCERF cannot be everywhere but needs to find its own niche to ensure effectiveness. It might be useful to have a more flexible definition of security, and perhaps a more flexible mandate, talking about radicalisation rather than insecurity. It should aim to reduce vulnerability and marginalisation, addressing social, cultural, and political aspects, and to focus on prevention (be active rather than reactive). GCERF could also work in early warning/early response to early signs of VE (rather than emergencies), which could help with funding issues as this is often cost and time minimal but has maximum impact.

2.16 Speaking on behalf of Yemen, the Board Member agreed that donors are not giving money, that even the UN is suffering and that in addition to there not being enough funds, they are not going to the right places. GCERF needs to consider sustainability and the longer term, to think out of the box, and to connect outreach and awareness with development to avoid going backwards (as with the Gaza war). Connecting action and sustainability will ensure donors will see sustainable impacts (e.g. building infrastructure rather than conducting workshops).

2.17 Speaking on behalf of the United Kingdom, the Alternate Board Member noted that the country has substantial P/CVE expertise, thanking GCERF for its inputs and expressing the value of its relationship with GCERF. The Member asked the ED to elaborate on how GCERF has used the expertise in the room. She also noted the importance of GCERF participating in global conversations, and that this is a critical moment for thinking about the way forward.

2.18 Speaking on behalf of Albania, the Constituency Member expressed thanks for GCERF's work in the country and in the region, and wondered whether GCERF should also explore spillover effects of extremism. VE is morphing, including in connection with climate change and the pandemic, while the national, religious and other drivers of extremism may be leading to new conflict in the Western Balkans. The government of Albania is thinking of making a new core contribution.

2.19 Speaking on behalf of France, the Board Member agreed that the ED's questions are important. She reiterated support for GCERF, its mandate and its activities on the ground, noting that the country is considering increasing support (including through the secondment of an expert). During this phase of critical evaluation of GCERF's first ten years, France considers that both its PVE mandate and the countries in which it is active remain very relevant. In response to the ED's comment that GCERF is not active in certain contexts, she said that GCERF's value

also lies in case-by-case action and not in duplicating efforts where other actors are already present, noting in this context that VE might be spreading from the Sahel to other countries, such as Guinea. She stated that in terms of resources, straddling security and development is more of a strength than a dilemma. She agreed that GCERF should be more involved in global processes, notably in Africa.

2.20 Speaking for Tunisia, the Board Member noted that PVE has considerable advantages for all societies in terms of lives and money saved, and in creating an enabling environment for development. Political support is needed for PVE, and the member expressed thanks for the engagement of GCERF and the Swiss government to promote a holistic, prevention approach across two rounds of grants.

2.21 Speaking on behalf of Chad, the Board Member agreed with the ED's vision, both in terms of GCERF and the broader context. Terrorism and the fight against it are evolving, with increasingly extremist positions – this means that the GCERF mandate must also evolve. At the same time, it is a young organisation and needs to consolidate, gain wisdom, maturity and effectiveness so that the model can be replicated by others. GCERF can help to develop and/or promote combined, non-traditional methodologies that balance security, development and humanitarian concerns which are increasingly attractive to donors and can help acquire additional resources from new sources (including beneficiary countries). She agreed that countries could contribute to global advocacy, including by promoting GCERF in forums. She welcomed the establishment of the 'Group of Friends' and an increased use of GCERF as a mechanism/platform for political/diplomatic discussions on PVE.

2.22 Speaking on behalf of Niger, the Constituency Member supported the mandate, stating that the GCERF approach to PVE is important and that it needs to address contributing factors – especially for young people (for example in the Sahel) as an integral part of other actions. Operationally, GCERF straddles humanitarian/development organisations and should align itself to models that already exist: it is not an IGO or an NGO, it has a specific and precise nature. He added that climate change is a contributing factor to conflict and radicalisation.

2.23 Speaking on behalf of Italy, the Constituency Member stated that the mandate should be maintained and not enlarged: there is a risk of losing focus, when existing issues are already challenging enough in the context of current changes. He agreed that GCERF should be more involved in international fora, including the ACTS in Abuja and the Global Coalition Against Daesh and stated that Italy stands ready to support it in such endeavours. With regard to funding, GCERF needs to find alternatives and be creative, it is also the responsibility of donors to be creative.

2.24 Speaking on behalf of Ghana, the Alternate Board Member expressed gratitude for GCERF's response following the country's request for support in June 2023 relating to internally

displaced people on the border with Burkina Faso. He praised the clarity of thought and speed of GCERF's reaction, including emergency funding, that targeted action where it was needed (e.g. providing livelihoods). Such responses are critical going forward, and similar support should be provided in other countries, particularly those with crises that are not on the global radar.

2.25 Speaking on behalf of Somalia, the Alternate Board Member confirmed the accuracy of the GCERF report on activities in the country and agreed that resources are a challenge. He noted a risk of forthcoming violence and mass displacement and requested continued support from GCERF – and continued donor support for GCERF – to ensure activities to prevent radicalization activities in both Somalia and similar countries.

2.26 Speaking on behalf of Iraq, the Alternate Board Member agreed that PVE is more effective and cost-effective than responding to VE. They noted that both Iraq and Syria want to repatriate displaced people within their borders, and that involving civil society organisations (CSOs) is important, as is working more flexibly. A strategy is needed, with a clear line between social and security measures, and some places (e.g. those formerly under ISIS control) will need much more resources than others. He added that climate change is a very important issue. With regard to GCERF's model, change and flexibility are important, and work with regional representatives in countries such as Iraq to create consolidated projects could help with funding challenges.

2.27 Speaking on behalf of the EU, the Board Member stated that as a donor the EU appreciates GCERF's ability to work at the community level. Its mandate is extremely relevant and should be consolidated. She noted that GCERF can rely on the EU to advertise its work in all of its delegations. It is the responsibility of donors to ensure that PVE and counter-terrorism (CT) remain high profile, as security is essential to development. Detailed and creative discussions about what is working, what is not, and what should be changed are needed.

2.28 Speaking on behalf of Qatar, the new Board Member looked forward to enhancing the relationship between GCERF and Qatar and to more action-oriented work in future.

2.29 Speaking on behalf of Denmark, the Alternate Board Member saw GCERF's mandate as straightforward and what the country had signed up for. He announced that they had just committed to continue core support to the end of 2026.

2.30 Speaking for Japan, the Board Member valued GCERF's unique expertise, and expressed the desire to work with regional partners such as Australia and New Zealand.

2.31 The ED stated that this was a good start to opening the discussion to ensure the GCERF is fit for purpose, future-proofed, and can continue to raise money. He had heard some

consensus that its mandate should be maintained while the operational model needs tweaking, and welcomed the solutions-oriented discussion and positivity. In answer to the question on sharing expertise, he said that GCERF was set up as a grant-making organisation, which involves a lot of learning, and that it has been bringing communities together through the GAP and transmitting community knowledge to the country level. More needs to be done at the global level. Regarding the operational model, he noted that the global funds are high-level, large scale, have massive political backing and working on 'global public goods' and therefore not directly applicable to GCERF.

2.32 The Chair summarised the discussion as agreement that GCERF still has a mandate to continue work on the solid basis achieved so far, with a flexible approach: VE has changed, so PVE also needs to do so. He said that further discussion is needed on how to share expertise, including at the global level, to make links between experiences and create exchanges. He stated that increasing resources to increase GCERF work should not be over-complicated, and suggested again accessing different sources at the federal and regional levels. He noted that concrete suggestions are available in the Board documents, providing inputs to build on. Finally, he said that sources of possible widespread VE should be anticipated, that GCERF should remain aware of possible impacts and discuss what (if any) specific action should be taken.

3. TOWARDS GCERF'S THIRD STRATEGY

3.1 The ED noted that GCERF's current strategy expires at the end of 2024 and needs to be renewed (see BM.19/DOC.03). The process will be informed by the Board's discussion. He raised four key points:

3.1.1 The current series of key performance indicators (KPIs) are on track; while GCERF is behind in a number of areas (e.g. resource mobilisation) there are no real concerns (see BM.19/DOC.03/ANNEX 1).

3.1.2 The second stage of the three-stage diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) strategy within communities and grant activities is just beginning. The third stage (for the Board level) will begin at the end of 2024 (see BM.19/DOC.03/ANNEX 2).

3.1.3 The conundrum of expansion: how can GCERF continue work with new partner countries with limited funds?

3.1.4 In terms of funding and replenishment, GCERF has begun the process of switching from a pragmatic/ad hoc model to something more systematic (a funding cycle and pledging events). Another pledging event will be needed towards the end of

2024 for the new strategy. This could be hosted by a country, in that country, not necessarily associated with a high-level event.

Discussion

3.2 The Chair opened the floor for discussion, particularly welcoming comments on expansion and replenishment, from both government and other sources (e.g. the private sector).

3.3 The Alternate Board Member for Germany committed to continue supporting GCERF and expressed the country's belief in its unique approach, added value and niche. They do not wish to broaden the mandate. They believe GCERF's integrated approach is increasingly important but needs to be better sold. The organisation should increase its thought leadership role, and the Member asked what support it would need from the Board to do this. They also asked what, concretely, a creative solution to financing might mean. With regard to the Strategic Management Plan (see BM.19/DOC.03/ANNEX 1), Germany wishes to pursue a feminist foreign policy, seeing it as imperative for more sustainable programmes..

3.4 The Board Member for the Netherlands was happy to see that GCERF is undertaking a year of consolidation before expansion. They asked for a better process for examining new partner country requests, suggesting that such requests be clustered, and their merits and risks be discussed at Board meetings (replacing the current system).

3.5 The Board Member from the Private Sector and Foundations constituency sounded a cautionary note regarding identifying hot spots, which is in practice very difficult due to complex, interwoven, historical conflicts that don't lend themselves to discrete interventions. He added that the extractive and social media sectors are most interested in PVE and that the ED would soon be meeting representatives from the former to discuss developing local strategies in the countries/settings in which they operate (e.g. in Mali, Burkina Faso and Ghana is where GCERF could start).

3.6 The Chair referenced the Christchurch Call as an example of partnerships with social media platforms to prevent hate speech and radicalisation, noting that this is an area in which GCERF can build concrete actions: targeted exchanges and projects such as tool development.

3.7 Speaking for Australia about replenishment, the Alternate Board Member noted for the benefit of other GCERF donor countries that confusion has crept into development agencies about the siloing of security versus development. He reminded them that global funds exist to do things that are too risky for governments and leverage specific expertise and credibility, and that both demand and security concerns will only grow. Donor country aid agencies should

push to counter excuses not to fund organizations like GCERF – the representation of partner countries at the Board meeting shows that it counts.

3.8 The Constituency Member for Norway announced that the country had just signed an agreement for another three years of support for GCERF. He welcomed the food for thought in the background papers for the meeting. While it is risky to change the mandate, there is room to manoeuvre within the existing mandate, including with regard to CSO interventions on the root causes of VE, the security/development nexus and, as mentioned by several partner countries, climate change.

3.9 Speaking on behalf of Switzerland, the Alternate Board Member said that, like others, they prefer a focus on PVE but also welcome better communication on how PVE is linked to other issues (it is not just a goal in itself). He wondered whether it is possible to use extreme violence as an entry point. He agreed with the Netherlands about the need for more Board discussions on new partner countries. Switzerland also supports all efforts to increase funding for organisations led by women.

3.10 The ED took up this point, noting that a red flag in the KPIs is a decrease in the number of organisations led by women and youth, but also that GCERF has recently pledged to increase that number to 40 percent by 2025. He added that he had proposed to Germany to examine the intersections between climate change and VE. An important reason to consolidate over the next year is to decrease the pressure on the Secretariat with a focus on wrap-up and planning. In terms of managing expansion, Kenya has remarked that the benchmark set by GCERF for new partner countries is too low. GCERF is now credible enough to demand more from new partners (with regard to funds, the Country Support Mechanism (CSM) etc.). There is work ongoing with the private sector (Total) in Mozambique, and he agrees that working locally is the best way. He will continue to think about extremism versus violence as an entry point.

4. GCTF INITIATIVE ON FUNDING AND ENABLING COMMUNITY P/CVE: CHALLENGES, RECOMMENDATIONS AND EMERGING GOOD PRACTICES

4.1.1 Dr André Alves dos Reis, GCERF Performance and Impact Manager, made reference to the Results Update (see BM.19/DOC.15), noting that it is part of GCERF efforts to make its fit for purpose: better, with a wider impact, and more meaningful, based on the understanding that the community level is where grievances and radicalisation are growing. He then spoke about the GCTF Initiative, implemented by GCERF since 2021 (see BM.19/DOC.14). The GCTF endorsed the end product, the [GCTF Recommendations for Funding and Enabling Community-level P/CVE](#), in September 2023. The Initiative aimed to promote dialogue and share knowledge and results to better fund and enable community-level P/CVE, with Australia and Indonesia co-chairing a GCTF CVE working group.

4.1.2 The Recommendations include a focus on the local level; long-term, flexible funding for CBOs; a reminder that applying for a grant is not resource-free for CBOs; ensuring that funds go directly to CBOs to do what they do best; providing the freedom to localise monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks, to make sure that M&E (including external evaluations) is a part of the local ecosystem, to focus on the local production of knowledge and ensure that up to 85% of projects are tailored to context (with 15% core content); and ensuring evaluations are conducted once projects have finished. Dr Alves dos Reis stressed that GCERF must (and does) itself follow these recommendations, to show commitment and 'practice what it preaches'.

4.1.3 Dr Alves dos Reis asked the Board to consider guiding questions for the discussion (see BM.19/DOC.14), but notably: How can GCERF sustain engagement? How can GCERF be part of broader localisation discussions (not just in PVE but also in development), learn and contribute? How should GCERF go forward, for example with regard to climate change issues? He emphasised that dialogue about the results and Board input are needed.

Discussion

4.2 Speaking on behalf of Albania, the Constituency Member noted that the country programme had planned for stability and taken into account M&E and a learning curve over years.

4.3 The Board Member from the Private Sector and Foundations Constituency said that engagement is needed with donors (such as USAID) on how better to localise and to increase recognition among donors and in countries that the localisation process provides an opportunity for sustainability.

4.4 Speaking on behalf of Finland, the Constituency Member stated that their comments could also be linked to earlier discussions and noted that presenting good practices (as well as what has not worked) at international fora is always extremely effective and inspiring (albeit human-resource intensive) for interested partners. They also suggested that GCERF communicate recent successes to Board Members and provide them with the lines to take at the various fora in which they participate, to enable Members to advocate for GCERF. They added that they were very happy to see greater GCERF engagement at more international events/networks. On wider policy discussions, climate change makes sense and GCERF should also consider joining forces with peace mediation activities.

4.5 Speaking for Nigeria, the Board Member asked whether the report had specific recommendations, and how to establish a broader conversation on these – including at the regional level, for example with the AU Peace and Security and Humanitarian Commissioners, or with ECOWAS.

4.6 Speaking for the USA, the Board Member stressed that the Board and its Members can do more to carry some of the weight for GCERF, including with ministers, in raising awareness and funds.

4.7 The Board Member from Civil Society, Policy, Think and Do Tanks Constituency expressed appreciation that GCERF had always looked at the long-term impacts of its work.

4.8 Dr Alves dos Reis responded that the work had focused on the GCERF mandate – community-level P/CVE – having an impact on the conditions that lead people to join extremist groups. Trust is important and impact evaluations show local impacts. There are ways to work on a different level. For example, country teams are bringing governments and communities together to talk, share knowledge, and build trust and learn to work together. Governments are also looking to replicate GCERF projects, and GCERF is helping governments to frame national strategies. It is a work in progress. This also relates, again, to the mandate and how far can GCERF push it in terms of increased resources and partnerships. In response to Finland, peace mediation is a big area of work – where do communities come in? Can they help prevent individuals and group torpedoing peace processes? Broader policy engagement is also needed, including at the regional level (for example, through ECOWAS). Finally, it is important for the Board to suggest topics (such as peace mediation and climate change) and fora to help GCERF to scale up, create impacts and influence the P/CVE field.

5. GOVERNANCE

5.1 Governance and Ethics Committee (GEC) report

5.1.1 The Chair of the GEC, Mr Anthony Carroll, introduced the GEC report (BM.19/DOC.13). He stated that a performance review of the GCERF Board Chair would be presented during the closed Executive Session of the Board Meeting and noted the poor response from Board Members to the review survey.

5.1.2 GCERF's Ethics Officer, Caroline Walsh, stated that there were no current conflicts of interest and reminded Board Members that declaration of interest forms need to be submitted on time to avoid reputational damage to GCERF.

5.1.3 The GEC Chair informed the Board that Canada had resigned its Board position (due to internal human resource restraints) but committed to continue supporting GCERF. Switzerland's core contribution will end at the close of 2023, and the Chair expressed regret on this decision, but appreciated the continued support from Switzerland that contributed to the rental costs of GCERF offices in Geneva and in some cases, to local programmes from its Embassies. In three partner countries, there have been unconstitutional changes in government from those that initially sought a Board-approved partnership with GCERF; this will be discussed later in the meeting. New constituencies on the Board following the reforms need to be mobilised

(BM.19/DOC.17). The GEC Chair invited the Chair of the Board to consider the formation of a new Board committee to advise on global strategy, review progress on strategic objectives, endorse country investment strategies, and track progress on results. Finally, he noted that the cost of Board meetings is significant and rising, as per the 2024 Budget (BM.19/DOC.11).

Discussion

5.1.4 Speaking for the European Union, the Board Member stated that they would prefer to keep strategic discussions, on new country entries in particular, at the Board level rather than create a new committee.

5.1.5 The GEC Chair responded that there is a gap between the twice-yearly discussions at the Board Meetings and decisions requiring data that are made more frequently. Other Boards have Executive Committees or working groups to work on issues that cannot be dealt with during Board Meetings. As GCERF grows and becomes more complex, such a committee could provide more and/or better input on a more regular basis.

5.1.6 The Board Chair suggested that such a committee should facilitate discussions on issues that are then decided by the Board – which would better prepare the Board rather than diminish it.

5.1.7 Speaking on behalf of Switzerland, the Alternate Board Member noted that it is neither easy nor necessary to bring the whole Board together quickly to respond to an issue, and that this has an impact on the daily work of the Secretariat. The proposed committee could provide a ‘quick check’ option. For major decisions, the Board Chair would call the Board together, but for daily-level decisions, the committee could support the Secretariat. The Board Member for Nigeria added that rather than merely creating another layer of administration, the Board should ensure that it is in the best interests of the Secretariat.

5.1.8 Speaking on behalf of Italy, the Constituency Member asked about the financial implications of such a committee and whether it could be established using existing resources. The GEC Chair responded that it is intended to be a more easily available body, rather than another layer, and should therefore require minimal resources.

5.1.9 The Constituency Member for Norway wondered whether it was possible to differentiate between the full Board and a constituency model, with a smaller meeting of one representative from each constituency.

5.1.10 The ED responded that this decision would require some consideration, but that such a committee would be similar to the Finance and Audit Committee (FAC) in that it could

undertake the 'detail' work so that the Board can take informed decisions. GCERF's Finance and Compliance Manager, Nicolas Ferigoule, noted that the cost for this existing committee is zero, not counting the time of the committee members.

5.1.11 The Board Chair was unclear about how such a committee would work or empower the Board and requested a short description for later decision (through written procedure or at the next Board Meeting). The GEC Chair agreed to circulate a short discussion document. The Board Member for the European Union supported this proposal, adding that terms of reference (TORs) and implications would be required.

5.1.12 The Board approved the decision regarding GEC appointments (**BM.19/DEC.04**).

5.2 GCERF's Approach to Partner Countries with Unconstitutional Changes in Government

5.2.1 GCERF's Deputy Executive Director (DED) and Head of Portfolio Management, Dr Lilla Schumicky-Logan, expressed appreciation for colleagues in the field – as well as country teams and country managers – who are key to engagement. She noted that three partner countries have had unconstitutional changes in government – Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger – and that GCERF has produced a paper (BM.19/DOC.04) following consultations with affected countries and some donors. She summarised the rationale for continued GCERF engagement in these countries as follows:

- Political instability increases needs on the ground, including the need to engage with CSOs on PVE and support at-risk populations.
- All GCERF grants go to communities, not governments.
- In all three countries, GCERF can currently proceed with its programmes in the same way as before the unconstitutional changes in government – including monitoring, auditing, and external evaluations. If this is no longer the case, GCERF can stop work and withdraw.
- A level of trust has been built between communities and civil society actors. If GCERF withdraws, this may break that trust and create space for VE actors.
- GCERF is a risk-management mechanism: it can engage in communities where others cannot for political or other reasons. Every portfolio and grant has a risk-management matrix with very specific measures that are reviewed and updated.
- Most of the activities supported are apolitical (youth/women/livelihoods). Politically sensitive activities are put on hold and discussed with grantees for revision – there is a high level of flexibility and adaptation (as a result of good practices/lesson learned during COVID-19).
- GCERF is an impartial entity, based in International Geneva, and is perceived as fairly neutral in partner countries.

5.2.2 GCERF's Sahel Country Manager informed the Board that they had spoken to donor representatives at length about children 'combatants' (hosted in Burkina Faso by Denmark) and women survivors (hosted in Mali by the Netherlands). None of the donor partners had enough information – in the case of Mali, GCERF was the only organisation to support women survivors in one location. GCERF's collaboration with donors in capitals and locally can provide insight into the issues faced by these groups and many others. They stressed that the Board is not merely deciding on this position – behind every number is a name, a life, a hope, and a specific context.

5.2.3 On behalf of the Netherlands, the Board Member noted that this was a very sensitive topic, having been discussed in previous Board meetings, and was relieved to hear that GCERF has unhindered access to the organisations it works with (in their opinion this was the most important criteria). She formally proposed that programmes in partner countries merit discussion by the Board each time there is an unconstitutional change in government. They added that the Netherlands had not cut ties with these countries and does not suggest that GCERF should do so, but advocates caution in interactions with governments and counterparts and in terms of funding streams.

5.2.4 Speaking from the position of Mauritania as current President of the G5 Sahel, the Alternate Board Member recommended that GCERF not stop resilience projects in these countries, as most work for the benefit of the population. These projects should at least be maintained, if not increased/diversified. He added that they do not think the government of the three countries will create problems for GCERF in terms of evaluation and monitoring. They asked that GCERF not penalise populations – especially vulnerable populations – for what their governments' actions. The Alternate Board Member agreed that the regionalisation of projects/programmes is a very good idea, particularly in contexts where countries are linked by borders, religion, etc., and that such projects could also help reduce costs. Specifically, he suggested a pilot project in G5 Sahel, where GCERF is already active, that will address wider needs, as well as new projects in Mauritania. He noted the increasing participation of Arab states in GCERF, indicating its success despite funding challenges. He also noted that in 2024, four of the five countries of the G5 will have elections and expressed the hope for future stability and a return to constitutionality.

5.2.5 The Chair reminded the Board that the paper is intended for discussion, not decision. He stressed that the choice of the word "change" is deliberate, and that the paper is as neutral as possible. There is no need for a political discussion – the Board's only interest is whether such change impacts on GCERF activities.

5.2.6 Speaking for Niger, the Constituency Member expressed surprise at seeing this paper on the agenda, stating that GCERF cannot be involved in politics: its mandate is prevention and

resilience, with a focus on populations. He did not see why internal political situations should impact on discussions – if GCERF goes against its mandate it will not achieve its objectives.

5.2.7 Speaking for Chad, the Board Member expressed pride in being part of GCERF and that the organisation had investigated – both theoretically and on the ground – the conditions enabling it to be present in such countries. She was pleased that people in communities will continue to receive support.

5.2.8 Speaking for Burkina Faso, the Constituency Member agreed that GCERF must remain apolitical. He expressed delight at being a partner country and seeing the impacts of its work, noting that terrorists are targeting children because they lack recruits.

5.2.9 Speaking for Mali, the Constituency Member reminded the Board that political change is not necessarily unconstitutional, and that GCERF must not be politicised; this will compromise its neutrality and reputation and might lead to corruption.

5.2.10 Speaking for Nigeria, the Board Member noted that the subject is a passionate and emotional one, adding that reopening Embassies is more costly than closing them (implying that GCERF should remain in these countries).

5.2.11 Speaking for Switzerland, the Alternate Board Member stated that in general, they support the approach, but also support conflict-sensitive, do-no-harm approaches. He recommended that a Board Meeting should be called to discuss the situation every time an unconstitutional change in government occurs in a partner country, and reminded the Board that while GCERF is risk-friendly, donor governments are less so. GCERF should continue to share thinking on the subject.

5.2.12 Speaking for the United Kingdom, the Alternate Board Member said that the discussion was a good use of Board time. She added that each government will each have their own policies and even legal constraints on the subject. She stated that the UK would support a framework/list of points that could guide the conversation and clearly define the remit of work in such countries – for example with partners – to ensure that projects will not continue without checks.

5.2.13 Speaking for France, the Board Member restated their position that the main way to support such communities is to re-establish constitutional governments and that GCERF could not use French contributions in these three countries. GCERF should also take a case-by-case approach, with clear risk-management measures.

5.2.14 Speaking on behalf of Albania, the Constituency Member asked whether GCERF is going to intervene where it is needed the most. Is GCERF going to expand in line with expanded VE momentum?

5.2.15 Speaking on behalf of the private sector, the Board Member noted that GCERF could learn lessons from work in South Africa in the 1980s, where organisations operated even where government was unfriendly or even hostile.

5.2.16 Speaking on behalf of the EU, the Board Member emphasised the importance of supporting vulnerable communities and the need for ad hoc discussions and analysis for each country. They requested reinforced risk-management matrices and monitoring mechanisms.

5.2.17 The DED expressed particular thanks to partners in the Sahel and stated that GCERF will take all advice and suggestions into consideration.

5.2.18 The Chair summarised the discussion, saying that the question must be whether GCERF can work in contexts and whether it can achieve its objectives in line with its rules.

6. REHABILITATION & REINTEGRATION PROGRAMMATIC UPDATE

6.1 Update on Pre-Departure of Third-Country Nationals from North-East Syria

6.1.1 The DED introduced the paper (BM.19/DOC.06), noting the GCERF has the capacity to engage with more countries and stands ready if any wish to repatriate their nationals. She handed the floor to Kevin Osborne, Deputy Head of Portfolio Management Unit (DHPMU).

6.1.2 The DHPMU provided an overview of the process to establish the pilot project, including the preparation of a risk matrix and work done by the Project Advisory Steering Group. The grantee has been selected, and next steps include the selection of beneficiaries, establishment of the Superheroes team and M&E. He expressed gratitude for the support of partners in the Western Balkans and of the grantee, Al-Amal, and emphasised the importance of the research element. The long-term aim of the project is to reduce the number of third-country nationals in north-east Syria.

Discussion

6.1.3 On behalf of the USA, the Board Member noted that the situation in north-east Syria was of real concern to their country, and that this programme is absolutely critical. He expressed appreciation for GCERF's flexibility and willingness and its responsiveness to pressing needs even where they arise outside its typical programming. He also thanked partners in Albania, North Macedonia and the Philippines and committed their strong support.

6.1.4 On behalf of Albania, the Constituency Member also expressed gratitude for the quick turnaround of the project.

6.1.5 On behalf of Iraq, the Alternate Board Member referred to the agreement at the 18th Board Meeting to use a camp approach and asked why this was chosen – in Iraq, the rehabilitation programmes take place in both camps and in home communities. They also asked how psychosocial, security and other elements will be measured.

6.1.6 On behalf of Germany, the Alternate Board Member expressed their wish to support the project further, and specifically repatriation and future international engagement to comprehensively address this issue.

6.1.7 On behalf of Italy, the Constituency Member stressed the importance of the project and its focus on a very sensitive issue spanning human rights and security. He expressed the hope that the project will be raised at the next meeting of the Global Coalition Against Daesh to spread the word and get input.

6.1.8 On behalf of Tunisia, the Board Member noted that while the project is fairly clear in its broad lines, it is complex in terms of implementation. She asked about the judicial treatment of/penal responsibility for repatriated individuals.

6.1.9 The Constituency Member from Albania answered the question from Iraq, emphasising that the risk matrix focused on zero risk and do no harm. The specific camp was selected due to the environment and to safeguard both returnees and the people who will work in the camp. They reminded the Board that this is a pilot programme.

6.2 Approach to Rehabilitation and Reintegration

6.2.1 The DED provided an overview of GCERF's approach to rehabilitation and reintegration (R&R) (BM.19/DOC.07), developed through consultations with a core group with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) producing guidance on community-based C/PVE and workshops with communities. She described GCERF's added value in a field already supported by many UN organisations, including:

- a whole-of-community approach
- a flexible approach and flexible target groups
- knowledge creation and sharing (including through the GAP and knowledge products)
- specialist training
- tailored monitoring and review of the integration process.

Discussion

6.2.2 Speaking on behalf of the EU, the Board Member stated that this was an EU priority and they were looking forward to GCERF work on this in the future.

6.2.3 The DHPMU added that there is a forthcoming publication on the R&R process, as well as a partnership with the International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law (IIJ) to fund grants to community organisations working on legal issues (partnership with IIJ), and training in psychosocial issues for frontline workers.

6.2.4 Speaking on behalf of Japan, the Board Member expressed support for the approach and acknowledged the importance of communities in this process, particularly for creating an accepting environment and for building sustainable societies and resilience.

6.3 Country Investment Strategy for Kyrgyzstan (BM.19/DOC.09)

6.3.1 The Chair noted that Kyrgyzstan would be the first partner country from Central Asia and introduced the representative from Kyrgyzstan, joining the meeting virtually.

6.3.2 The Constituency Member from Kyrgyzstan introduced the draft strategy, noting that rapidly changing situations require greater attention to certain target groups. The four main pillars of the strategy are to:

- support R&R from Iraq and north-east Syria (especially for women and children)
- support the work of frontline workers in R&R
- support the resocialization and reintegration of people charged with terrorism and released from prison.
- create enabling environments and prevent new departures.

The country is considering joining the pre-departure project in north-east Syria. The Constituency Member from Kyrgyzstan requested Board approval of the draft strategy, as well as further support from partners for GCERF.

6.3.3 The DED thanked the Kyrgyz colleagues both in Bishkek and in Geneva, noting that if the strategy was approved on that day, the expression of interest could be released in December 2023 and implementation could start by April 2024. She added that GCERF is in ongoing talks with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

6.3.4 The Chair opened the floor for questions and observations, of which there were none.

6.3.5 The Board took the following decision:

BM.19/DEC.05:

- a. approved the GCERF Strategy for Investment in Kyrgyzstan as detailed in BM.19/DOC.09/Annex 1; and
- b. requested the Secretariat to proceed with grant-making at a value of up to USD 8m.

6.4 Country Investment Strategy for Albania (BM.19/DOC.08)

6.4.1 The DHPMU noted the high levels of trust from Albania since work started in 2019, and efforts made to transition from GCERF support given that R&R is a long-term process. A multi-agency/multi-use centre is being established near Tirana. This will be funded by the government and taken over by the mayor, to look after returnees and others through the national referral mechanism.

6.4.2 Speaking for Albania, the Constituency Member recalled the long learning journey taken with GCERF since 2019 that has resulted in a multi-layered, multi-stakeholder approach with government and civil society, and a transition strategy that is not just about R&R but also prevention and addressing drivers. They requested Board approval of the draft strategy.

6.4.3 The Chair noted that such building on previous experience and diversifying is a strength of GCERF.

6.4.4 Speaking for Japan, the Board Member requested clarification about the plan to transfer the centre to the municipal authority, including in terms of financing.

6.4.5 The DHPMU replied that GCERF provided stop-gap support for returnees, and that by the end of this strategy period the Albanian government will be responsible for taking on all responsibility and all costs. GCERF and partners are preparing to rehabilitate an appropriate space identified by the municipality of Tirana. Cost-sharing is currently on a 50-50 basis and will transition to 100% of costs covered by the government.

6.4.6 Speaking for the United Kingdom, the Alternate Board Member pointed to similarities with their national Prevent strategy, noting that it is essential to ensure that any national referral mechanism can be embedded, and that training and capacity-building on informed consent be carried out.

6.4.7 The Board:

BM.19/DEC.06:

- a. approved the GCERF Strategy for Investment in Albania as detailed in BM.19/DOC.08/Annex 1; and

b. requested the Secretariat to proceed with grant-making at a value of up to USD 2m.

7. EXTRAORDINARY BUSINESS: SPECIAL INTERVENTION FROM UKRAINE

7.1 At the start of the second day of the meeting, the Chair introduced an extraordinary business item to the agenda. He explained that he had been contacted by the government of Ukraine the previous day to request an intervention to the Board to express a desire to explore engagement with GCERF. He ceded the floor to Ms Valeriya Ionan, Deputy Minister for Digital Transformation (joining the meeting virtually from Kyiv).

7.2 The Deputy Minister told the Board that Ukraine is building a digital state but faces challenges linked to the invasion. Part of this digital work is building community resilience, and Ukraine is eager to explore engagement with GCERF and benefit from its expertise. The work includes developing digital services for democracy, cyber hygiene, and literacy, as well as preventing and countering disinformation to discourage extremists. They are also exploring digital options for counselling and support as part of R&R for veterans and others affected by war. There is a broad mandate in-country for collaborating with GCERF, including from the ministries of Foreign Affairs, Veteran Affairs and Social Policy. A formal letter requesting collaboration will be submitted to GCERF in the coming weeks.

7.3 The Chair noted the immediate solidarity among Board Members and took note of the Deputy Minister's comments and ideas. He thanked her for her intervention. The Chair stated that the Board would discuss further once the proposal was received and referred Board Members to earlier discussions about expansion.

7.4 On behalf of Switzerland, the Alternate Board Member asked for clarification about whether Ukraine is intending to become a full partner or requesting another type of partnership. It was not clear whether the request was only about resilience building and where the VE element lay. They stated that this would need better framing/explanation to report back to capitals.

7.5 On behalf of Germany, the Alternate Board Member was also curious about the VE angle. They said that GCERF needs to think very carefully about this space as there are already a number of R&R actors in the country – what would GCERF's role be? While they understood the digital challenges, and saw the possibility for good synergies with Ukraine, Germany would be very cautious when considering this request.

7.6 The Chair did not know any more than was shared during the online intervention. His understanding was that Ukraine would join in accordance with GCERF rules, and that there would be a digital component. He stated that it was not appropriate to have a debate at this

meeting as there has not yet been a formal approach; when such an approach is made, normal rules and procedure will follow. While Switzerland and Germany's comments were very relevant, questions cannot be answered yet.

7.7 On behalf of Germany, the Alternate Board Member requested clarification on this process, assuming that there would be a full Board discussion rather than the ten-day no objection procedure.

7.8 The Chair confirmed that the ten-day procedure would not apply as a much more in-depth discussion would be required. He would assess whether this discussion can wait for the next Board meeting or will require a special (e.g. online) meeting. He emphasised again that this would not be a silent decision but an all-Board discussion. The Chair then returned the meeting to normal business.

8. REPORT OF THE FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE (FAC)

8.1 GCERF's Finance and Compliance Manager (FCM), Mr Nicolas Ferigoule, reported on behalf of the FAC Chair, who sent apologies. Since the 18th Board meeting, there have been two meetings of the FAC to review the 2024 budget (which it endorsed) and the funding situation.

9. FINANCE

9.1 The FCM gave credit and thanks to the finance team for their work. The 2024 budget (BM.19/DOC.11), as already noted, is a consolidation budget. The upcoming year is the third and last year of a three-year strategy and GCERF wants to meet as many targets as possible. The budget is realistic and activity-based: the workplan has been translated into numbers. It also includes some costs related to the preparation of next strategy.

9.2 In terms of figures, these are approximately the same as the previous year, slightly restructured. The budget proposes a decrease of 7% in grant commitments, reflecting the massive investments in partner countries in 2023 rather than a cutback. This will provide breathing space to enable the achievement of targets and the consolidation of existing investments already made, while enabling investment in new partners (Ghana, Indonesia, and Kyrgyzstan).

9.3 Direct costs (other portfolio management costs) will increase, in part to build human resources (HR) and improve the HR structure: the current focus on grant-making comes at the expense of other key activities. The increase to 57 active grants from January 2024 will create a lot of extra work and space and time are needed to manage these. However, there will also be an increase in evaluations (to 6 or 7) and 38 project audits; these are a necessary cost as they increase the quality of grants and grantee capacity. The GAP, policy work, and knowledge

products are also equally important parts of GCERF's work. GCERF is a risk-taking organisation, an expert in the field, with a reliable and trustworthy reputation: all of this has a cost.

9.4 There will also be an increase in operational expenses for a number of reasons, including currency fluctuations (USD/CHF). GCERF is also investing in a resource mobilization team (including a budget for staff and trips), as agreed at the 18th Board meeting with an expected return in the mid-long term in the form of additional funding. Additional costs also include one-off necessary expenses, such as the new, bigger office; costs related to the 2024 replenishment (e.g. a campaign consultant); and improvements in processes and tools (e.g. the automation project that will reduce the need for additional human resources). While operational expenses have risen from 15% to 17% of overall project costs, it is anticipated that in 2025 these will decrease below 15% threshold thanks to work in 2024 (including resource mobilisation).

9.5 Budget coverage stands at 83% but GCERF is confident it will be able to cover the outstanding amounts (e.g. thanks to different donor cycles). It is exploring other sources of funding (including ambitious proposals with the ADB and Saudi Arabia), and expects commitments to materialize into concrete contributions. If this is not the case, the budget will be revised in April ahead of the June Board meeting – although reductions will of course be at the expense of activities and results.

9.6 With regard to the funding situation, since the paper (BM.19/DOC.12) was produced Denmark, France and Norway have confirmed their contributions, for which GCERF extends its thanks, while Albania and Italy have made new commitments and contributions are anticipated from the EU, Qatar and USAID. Some numbers were still being adjusted at the time of the meeting (e.g. Japan's expected contributions for 2024 have been reduced). Looking beyond 2024, more funding will be necessary, as work will begin on the new strategy and replenishment. GCERF hopes donors will match its ambitions with funds. Current contributions stood at USD 180 million.

Discussion

9.7 Speaking on behalf of Italy, the Constituency Member asked how many people will work in the resource mobilisation team and for how long it would operate. He also asked how changes to objectives and activities would be decided in the event of insufficient funds, and whether the Board would be involved.

9.8 The FCM responded that the resource mobilisation team would consist of a team head and two or three specialists, all of whom would work according to normal GCERF two-year contracts. They are expected to stay with GCERF for the long term. Any changes to activities

would be subject to a prioritisation exercise to decide what is essential and what can be postponed. He noted that the budget will in any case have changed by the next Board meeting.

9.9 Speaking on behalf of Chad, the Board Member requested that any changes be made to budget lines other than those directly supporting beneficiaries (i.e. communities).

9.10 The FCM stressed that cutting field activities is the last resort. GCERF is committed to delivering and monitoring programmes, but some will be prioritised over others. The FAC and the Board will see this in budget revisions– but communities will always be prioritised. He added that such changes have never been necessary, as GCERF has always received adequate funds.

9.11 Speaking on behalf of the United Kingdom, the Alternate Board Member noted that expansion and consolidation both seem to remain on the table as the budget continues to project into the future. They also asked for additional information on replenishment and on resource mobilisation.

9.12 Speaking on behalf of the EU, the Board Member expressed the hope that operating costs would be below 15% as soon as possible. She added that GCERF could rely on the EU signing a commitment for EURO 6 million in the new year (2024).

9.13 The FCM explained that consolidation does not mean freezing activities and stopping work: GCERF always has to renew grants in partner countries and implement in new countries that have already been approved. It means that GCERF staff are enabled to do more than grant-making. Replenishment costs will include those for consultants, campaigns, travel, and an event in late 2024/early 25. The budget will be adjusted as these costs are defined. The (very new) Saudi Arabia proposal is for USD 10 million allocated to core funds and certain countries in the Middle East, and the Board will be updated as soon as possible. The FCM thanked the EU for confirming the contribution and noted the comments about the operating expenses. Some recruitment will be dependent on available funding (so will not be immediate), and governance costs have also increased, notably due to the cost of Board meetings. The FCM will report further to the FAC and the Board at their next meetings.

9.14 The Chair thanked Board Members for their comments and proceeded to the adoption of BM.19/DEC.09 and BM.19/10, noting for the latter that this will relieve pressure on the Chair and the ED.

9.15 The Board:

BM.19/DEC.09:

- a. appreciated the work of the Finance & Audit Committee (FAC) for its thorough review of the proposed budget and notes its endorsement;

- b. approved the 2024 budget as follows:
 - Revenue: USD 33.9 million
 - Expenses: USD 33.2 million; and

- c. noted that 83% of the proposed 2024 budget is funded at this time. Confirmation of announced contributions as well as new funding is needed.

9.16 The Board:

BM.19/DEC.10:

- a. noted its previous approval of the signatory authority on an individual basis of each of the Chair and the Executive Director (BM.01/DEC.15); and

- b. approved the additional signatory authority of the Finance and Compliance Manager.

10. CONSOLIDATED CORE FUNDING MODEL (CCFM)

10.1 The DED introduced the CCFM, which was developed with the support and objective input of an external consultant. The process began in 2022 and involved dozens of consultations with partners as well as a meeting in Nairobi in May 2023 that resulted in revised TORs for CSMs. She emphasised that the CCFM is therefore not just a Secretariat creation, but a joint product.

10.2 The CCFM is an attempt to future-proof the grant approval process. When GCERF was established, every grant was approved by the Board. While this was required because the organisation was still young, the process was very long. At the 10th Board meeting in 2019, the Board agreed to delegate the authority to approve grants up to USD 1 million following CSM approval. However, the size of grants and the number of partners engaging are increasing and GCERF wants to ensure that the funding model does not have to be revised again. Three key changes have been made:

- Folding the Accelerated Funding Model into the Consolidated Core Funding Model
- Introducing emergency funding in new partner countries
- Raising of the ceiling to USD 2.5 million.

10.3 Speaking on behalf of Germany, the Alternate Board Member requested confirmation that grants are becoming bigger because they are including more partners and whether the figure is USD 2 million or USD 2.5 million.

10.4 Speaking on behalf of Japan, the Board Member stressed the importance of appropriate programme M&E and hoped that the CCFM quarterly reports would be shared with the Board.

10.5 Speaking on behalf of the United Kingdom, the Alternate Board Member asked how GCERF had arrived at the figure of USD 2.5 million and what it means in practice.

10.6 The DED confirmed both the figure of USD 2.5 million and that grants are becoming bigger because they are including more partners. She noted that the increase in the delegated authority amount is due precisely to the increase in the number of partners. Indeed, GCERF is looking for more partners to increase expertise within partner countries, including through consortia with sub-recipients. With regard to M&E and information sharing, GCERF has received a lot of positive feedback on due diligence and grant management. National Advisers, whose primary job is to engage with grantees, monitor and provide practical advice and capacity-building. In the Secretariat, country teams have regular calls with grantees to ask questions and follow up on recommendations. Narrative and financial reports are produced quarterly, and every six months, the results frameworks are reviewed and assessed. GCERF has a tool that reviews grantee performance on a quarterly basis. In addition, GCERF contracts third-party monitoring, consultations, and in-person evaluations. There are many checks, balances, and monitoring mechanisms. As the FCM noted, GCERF is also trying to automate some of these processes.

10.7 Speaking on behalf of the EU, the Board Member asked how GCERF establishes existing capacity before issuing a grant.

10.8 The DED stated that the figure of USD 2.5 million is the maximum and has been established for future-proofing. Once a call has been released and proposals received from potential grantees, these are reviewed by the Secretariat and the CSM and then due diligence is conducted in person. This includes a long questionnaire about grantee capacity, including financial and M&E systems. A shortlist is established and discussed with the CSM alongside the results of the due diligence before GCERF proceeds to grant-making. It is a very robust, thorough, 3- to 4-month process, and in 90% of cases, GCERF gets it right – though there have been cases of discovering insufficient capacity during grant-making, at which point the process has been stopped.

10.9 The Chair requested Board approval for Decision **BM.19/DEC.II**.

10.10 The Board:

BM.19/DEC.II:

- a. approved the consolidated funding model; and

- b. requested the Secretariat to continue incorporating lessons learned and experience into GCERF operations, to continue enhancing efficiency, effectiveness, and impact.

11. CONFIRMATION OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS

11.1 The Chair requested Board approval for Decision BM.19/DEC.03 confirming changes to the Membership of the Board (postponed from the first day of the meeting).

11.2 The Board noted the following changes in its Membership (each without signatory authority) since the 18th Board meeting:

BM.19/DEC.03:

- **Australia, Japan and New Zealand:** Mr Koichi Warisawa replaces Mr Tetsuya Yamada as the Board Member;
- **Bangladesh, the Philippines and Kyrgyzstan:** Ambassador Mohammad Sufiur Rahman replaces Ambassador Masud Bin Momen as the Board Member;
- **Canada:** Ms Christine Constantin has resigned and Canada is no longer represented on the Board;
- **Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, and Finland:** Ms Naomi Yorks is the Board Member for this constituency;
- **Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, and Finland:** Ms Anka Feldhusen replaces Ms Heike Thiele as the Alternate Board Member;
- **Kenya, Somalia and Mozambique:** Mr Abdullahi Mohamed Nor is the Alternate Board Member for this constituency;
- **Switzerland:** Ambassador Christian Frutiger has resigned and is no longer represented on the Board;
- **Tunisia and Iraq:** Mr Ali Ali Abdullah Abbas Al-Bdair is an Alternate Board Members for this constituency;
- **United States of America and United Kingdom:** Mr Ian Moss replaces Mr Irfan Saeed as the Board Member;
- **United States of America and United Kingdom:** Ambassador Hema Kotecha is Alternate Board Member for this constituency;
- **Private Sector and Foundations:** Mr Anthony Carroll replaces Ms Jessica Long as the Board Member.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12.1 The Chair opened the floor for any other business.

12.2 Speaking on behalf of the EU, the Board Member requested clarification about the earlier discussions about the formation of a new committee, hoping for TORs to be produced quickly and for it to be established as soon as possible (through written silent procedure rather than at the next Board meeting).

12.3 The Constituency Member from the Private Sector and Foundations Constituency spoke about GCERF's thought leadership role, and wondered if there was a specific plan for sharing its 10 years of lessons. He added that while GCERF needs to more present at fora, this has cost implications. GCERF will need to be selective and to start costing such participation.

12.4 The ED noted that the GCTF initiative is a good example of GCERF's thought leadership role – the Recommendations have been widely disseminated and welcomed – and that the Secretariat is considering something similar for climate change. GCERF should be doing more to share the ongoing lessons learned and he would like to formalize the thought leadership role through a staff Member in the Secretariat responsible for policy, advocacy, and dissemination, but there are budgetary constraints. He acknowledged that travel is a big cost and that efforts are made to restrict expenses.

12.5 The Chair suggested sharing a workplan and list for information sharing and greater participation. This will require input from Board Members, who can bring attention to opportunities/events and make commitments to advocate for GCERF at such events (particularly if GCERF itself can't be there). This will generate interest and potentially money. He suggested the Secretariat should start work on such a list quickly so that plans can be made to prepare for and attend events and support Board Members in preparing for events (e.g. the Group of Friends attending the Abuja conference).

12.6 The Board Member from the Private Sector and Foundations Constituency asked whether GCERF could establish a master list for sharing and inputs from Board Members (networks, experience, and knowledge).

12.7 The ED thanked the Board Members for one of the most positive, constructive, and strategic Board meetings yet conducted. He extended congratulations to the Chair for the extension of his mandate (BM.19/DEC.08) at the previous evening's Executive Session of the Board. He also thanked the observers, as well as the Secretariat team and particularly the Head of External Affairs who organises the Board meetings.

12.8 The Chair expressed his hopes that he can further empower the Board so that it can be transformed into a community for joint action, a forum for a different kind of multilateralism. GCERF can become a celebrated example of how decisions can be taken as close to the ground as possible. He extended special thanks to the GCERF's Special Envoy to Africa and closed the meeting.

ANNEX 1
BM.19/DOC.01: DRAFT AGENDA

WEDNESDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2023

Conference Room “Genève”, Varembe Conference Centre (CCV), 9-11 Rue de Varembe, 1202 Geneva

Time	Topic	Document	Presenter
09:30 – 10:00	Welcome Coffee		
10:00 – 10:15	Welcoming Remarks and Preliminary Matters		Board Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of Rapporteur • Approval of Agenda • Confirmation of New Board Members 	DOC.01 (for decision) * ¹	
10:15 – 11:15	Report of the Executive Director	DOC.02 (for discussion)	Executive Director
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five-year mandate 		
11:15 – 11:45	Coffee Break		
11:45 – 12:30	Towards GCERF’s Third Strategy	DOC.03 (for discussion)	Executive Director
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Management Plan • Diversity, Equity and Inclusion • Expansion • Replenishment 		
12:30 – 13:00	GCTF Initiative on Funding and Enabling Community P/CVE	DOC.14 (for discussion)	Performance & Impact Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results Update 	DOC.15 (for information)	
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch		
14:00 – 15:00	Governance		Chair of the GEC Deputy Executive Director, Sahel Country Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GEC Report • GCERF’s Approach to Partner Countries with Unconstitutional Changes in Government • Constituency Management 	DOC.13 (for decision) DOC.04 (for discussion) DOC.17 (for information)	
15:00 – 15:15	Coffee Break		
15:15 – 16:15	Rehabilitation & Reintegration Programmatic Update		Deputy Executive Director, Deputy Head of Portfolio Management
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on Pre-Departure of Third-Country Nationals from North-East Syria • Approach to Rehabilitation & Reintegration • Country Investment Strategies for Albania and Kyrgyzstan • Portfolio Update 	DOC.06 (for discussion) DOC.07 (for discussion) DOC.08/09 (for decision) DOC.16 (for decision) *	

¹ Decisions with an asterisk (*) will be adopted without discussion if there are no objections before the commencement of the Board meeting.

- IRP Update

16:15 – 17:15 **Executive Session** GEC Chair, Board Members only

17:15 – 18.45 **Reception**

THURSDAY 30 NOVEMBER 2023

Conference Room “Genève”, Varembe Conference Centre (CCV), 9-11 Rue de Varembe, 1202 Geneva

Time	Topic	Document	Presenter
09:00 – 10:00	Meetings for: (1) Donor Constituencies (2) Partner Country Constituencies (3) Non-Governmental Constituencies		
10:00 – 10:15	Coffee		
10:15 – 10:30	Finance and Audit Committee (FAC) Report	DOC.10 (for information)	Chair of the FAC
10:30 – 11:15	Finance • Budget 2024 • Funding Situation	DOC.11 (for decision) DOC.12 (for discussion)	Finance & Compliance Manager
11:15 – 11:45	Consolidated Core Funding Model	DOC.05 (for decision)	Deputy Executive Director
11:45 – 12:00	Any Other Business		Board Chair
12:00	End of the Meeting		
12:00 – 14:00	Lunch & Networking		
14:30	Visit to GCERF's New Office (optional)		

ANNEX 2

PARTICIPANTS LIST (*attending virtually)

GOVERNING BOARD CHAIR

Mr Stefano Manservigi

BOARD MEMBERS

Australia, Japan and New Zealand

Board Member: Mr Takahiro Shiota, Minister-Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Japan to the International Organizations in Geneva on behalf of Mr Koichi Warisawa, Director, International Safety and Security Cooperation Division, Foreign Policy Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Tokyo

Alternate Board Member: H.E. Mr Jeffrey Roach, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations Office in Geneva

Constituency Members:

New Zealand: Mr Chris Langley,* Divisional Manager, International Security and Disarmament Division, New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade, Wellington

Ms Emma Rennie,* Policy Officer, International Security and Disarmament Division, New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade, Wellington

Ms Chie Owada, Deputy Director, International Safety and Security Cooperation Division, Foreign Policy Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Tokyo

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and North Macedonia

Board Member: Mr Mensur Hoti, Director of Department for Public Safety, Ministry Internal Affairs, Pristina on behalf of H.E. Mr Xhelal Sveçla, Minister of Internal Affairs of Kosovo, Pristina

Alternate Board Member: Mr Zlatko Apostoloski, National Coordinator for Prevention of Violent Extremism and Counter-Terrorism of North Macedonia, Skopje

Constituency Members:

Albania: Mr Denion Meidani, Director/National Coordinator, The CVE Coordination Center, Ministry of Internal Affairs of Albania, Tirana

Ms Dragana Kolevska, Office of the National Coordinator for Prevention of Violent Extremism and Counter-Terrorism of North Macedonia, Skopje

Bangladesh, the Philippines and Kyrgyzstan

Board Member: H.E. Mr Mohammad Sufiur Rahman, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to the United Nations Office in Geneva

Constituency Members:

Kyrgyzstan: Mr Bakyt Dzhusupov,* Director of the Third Political Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, Bishkek

Mr Aidyn Seidakhamatov,* Attaché, Permanent Mission of the Kyrgyz Republic to the United Nations Office in Geneva

Md. Abdullah Al Forhad, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations Office in Geneva

Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger

Board Member: H.E. Ms Madeleine Alingué, Minister and Secretary of State for Economy, Development Planning and International Cooperation of the Republic of Chad, N'Djamena

Alternate Board Member: Mr Saleck Ould Mohamed Ainatt, Advisor in charge of Regional Integration and National Coordinator of G5 Sahel, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Promotion of Production Sectors of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, Nouakchott

Constituency Members:

Burkina Faso: H.E. Mr Emile Zerbo, Minister of Territorial Administration, Decentralization and Security of Burkina Faso, Ouagadougou

Ms Sanogo Mariam Tounkara, Director General of Religious, Customary and Traditional Affairs, Ministry of Territorial Administration, Decentralization and Security of Burkina Faso, Ouagadougou

Mali: Mr Alassane Demba Touré, First Counsellor, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Mali to the United Nations Office in Geneva

Niger: H.E. Mr Laouali Labo, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Niger to the United Nations Office in Geneva

Mr Adjid Ahmat Idriss, Permanent Secretary for NGOs and Humanitarian Affairs, Ministry for Economy, Development Planning and International Cooperation of the Republic of Chad, N'Djamena

Mr Abdoul Aziz Daouda Salifou, Second Counselor, Permanent Mission of Niger in Geneva

Civil Society, Policy, Think and Do Tanks

Board Member: Mr Fulco Van Deventer, Vice-Director, Human Security Collective, The Hague

European Union

Board Member: Ms Maria Rosa Sabbatelli, Head of Unit, FPI.I –Peace and Stability – Global Threats, Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI), European Commission, Brussels

Constituency Member: Ms Sihame Zanifi, FPI.I –Peace and Stability – Global Threats, Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI), European Commission, Brussels

France, Denmark and Italy

Board Member: Ms Amélie Delaroche, Deputy Head, Counter Terrorism and Organized Crime Department, Strategic, Security and Disarmament Directorate, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, Paris

Alternate Board Member: Mr Christian Bunk Fassov, Counterterrorism Coordinator, Department of Security Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Copenhagen

Constituency Members:

Italy: Mr Alberto Dal Degam, First Counsellor – Head of Office, Office for Transnational Threats and Integrated Strategies, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Rome
Ms Lou Teigner,* Assistant, Counter Terrorism and Organized Crime Department, Strategic, Security and Disarmament Directorate, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, Paris

Germany, Netherlands, Norway and Finland

Board Member: Ms Naomi Yorks, Deputy Head of Section, Counterterrorism & National Security Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, The Hague

Alternate Board Member: Ms Anka Feldhusen, Director for Civilian Crisis Prevention and Stabilisation, Federal Foreign Office, Berlin

Constituency Members:

Finland: H.E. Ms Päivi Kairamo, Ambassador for Counterterrorism Cooperation, Legal Service, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Helsinki

Norway: Mr Svein Olav Svoldal, Senior Advisor, Section for Global Security and Disarmament, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oslo

Ms Janna Lisa Chalmovsky, Desk Officer, Cluster Transnational Organized Crime & Instability, Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism and Terrorism, Division S03 Crisis Prevention, Stabilization, Peacebuilding, Federal Foreign Office, Berlin

Ms Marloes Leeuwrik, Senior Policy Officer, Counterterrorism & National Security Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, The Hague

Indonesia

Mr Andhika Chrisna Yudhanto, Deputy III for International Cooperation, National Counter Terrorism Agency of the Republic of Indonesia (BNPT), Jakarta

Mr Reski Kurnia Ilahi, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Indonesia to the UN, WTO and other International Organizations in Geneva

Kenya, Mozambique and Somalia

Alternate Board Member: Mr Abdullahi Mohamed Nor, Director General, Tubsan National Centre for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism; Senior Advisor to the President of the Federal Government of Somalia, Mogadishu

Constituency Members:

Mozambique: H.E. Mr Amadeu Paulo Samuel Da Conceição, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Mozambique to the United Nations Office in Geneva

Ms Rukia Ahmed, Head of Programmes and Partnerships, Tubsan National Centre for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism, Mogadishu

Nigeria and Ghana

Board Member: H.E. Mr Abiodun Richards Adejola, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the United Nations Office in Geneva

Alternate Board Member: Mr Edward Asomani, National Security Coordinator, Ministry of National Security of the Republic of Ghana, Osu - Accra

Constituency Members:

H.E. Ms Sena Siaw-Boateng, Ambassador and Chief Director, Ministry of National Security of the Republic of Ghana, Osu - Accra

Ms Oghoritsewarami Mattu, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the United Nations Office in Geneva

Mr Prince Osei-Tutu, Director, Human Security, Ministry of National Security of the Republic of Ghana, Osu - Accra

Ms Jennifer Whajah, Technical Advisor, Ministry of National Security of the Republic of Ghana, Osu - Accra

Private Sector and Foundations

Board Member: Mr Tony Carroll, Founding Director, Acorus Capital; Adjunct Professor, Johns Hopkins University, Washington, D.C.

Qatar

H.E. Mr Faisal Abdullah Al-Henzab, Ambassador, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar, Doha

Switzerland

Board Member: H.E. Mr Christian Frutiger, Ambassador and Assistant Director General, Head of Global Cooperation of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Bern

Alternate Board Member: Dr Daniel Frank, Deputy Coordinator for International Counter-Terrorism, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, Bern

Constituency Members:

Ms Geneviève Contesse, Policy Advisor, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, Bern

Mr Tarek Rouis*, Programme Manager, Embassy of Switzerland in Tunisia, Tunis

Tunisia and Iraq

Board Member: Ms Neila Feki, Vice-President, National Counter Terrorism Commission of the Republic of Tunisia, Tunis

Alternate Board Member: Mr Ali Abdullah Abbas Al-Bdair, Head of the National Committee to Combat Extremism, Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) of the Republic of Iraq, Baghdad

Constituency Members:

Ms Sonia Abbassi,* Permanent Secretary, National Counter Terrorism Commission of the Republic of Tunisia, Tunis

Ms Nourchène Mlaouah,* Director Responsible for Relations with Civil Society, International Cooperation and Training, National Counter Terrorism Commission of the Republic of Tunisia, Tunis

United Kingdom and United States of America

Board Member: Mr Ian Moss, Deputy Coordinator for Counterterrorism, Bureau of Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C.

Alternate Board Member: H.E. Ms Hema Kotecha, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva

Constituency Members:

Mr Dexter Ingram, CT/CVE Office Director, Bureau of Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C.

Mr John Herbst, Eurasia Team Lead, Bureau of Counterterrorism, Office of Programs (CT/P), U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C.

Mr Will Robey, Drivers of Terrorism Hub Team Leader, Counter Terrorism Department, National Security Directorate, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, London

Yemen: Dr Nazar Abdullah Nasser Basuhaib, Vice Minister of Planning and International Cooperation of the Republic of Yemen, Aden

OBSERVERS

Mr Maman Sambo Sidikou, GCERF Special Envoy to Africa

Cote d'Ivoire

Mr Bi Zah Patrice Gohi, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva

Kazakhstan

Mr Yertay Khabiyev, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva

Malaysia

Ms Siti Aishah Abdul Rahman, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Malaysia to the United Nations Office Geneva

Malta

Ms Kimberley Bonello,* Second Secretary, Department of Global Issues, Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade of Malta, Valetta

Mr Nathanael Cauchi Jones,* Second Secretary, Department of Global Issues, Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade of Malta, Valetta

International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law (IJ)

Mr Reinhard Uhrig, Director, Administration and Outreach, Valletta

Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP)

Ms Ekaterina (Katya) Demushkina, Deputy Director Europe & MENA region, IEP, Brussels

Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

H.E. Ms Nassima Baghli, Ambassador and Permanent Observer, Permanent Delegation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva

Mr Halim Grabus, Counsellor, Permanent Delegation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva

GCERF Secretariat