

GCERF Outreach Event – Geneva, 7 July 2014: The role and added value of GCERF

Unofficial Summary

On Monday 7 July, the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF), based in Geneva, held a panel discussion on the role and added value of the newly created fund. The event was co-hosted by the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations Office and other international organisations and held at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP).

On the panel were Ambassador Zamir Akram, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations Office at Geneva and Specialized Institutions in Switzerland; Minister Counselor Amadou Opa Thi- am, , Permanent Mission of Mali to the United Nations Office at Geneva and Specialized Institutions in Switzerland; Ambassador Stephan Husy, Coordinator for International Counterterrorism of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs in Switzerland; Dr Khalid Koser, Executive Director of the GCERF Interim Secretariat; and Mr Eric Rosand, Director of Multilateral Affairs in the Bureau of Counterterrorism, U.S. State Department. GCSP's Deputy Director and Academic Dean, Dr Mohammad-Mahmoud Ould Mohamedou, chaired the discussion.



The discussion brought together representatives from governments, international organisations, foundations and the private sector based in Geneva. The panelists introduced GCERF as the first of its kind, bringing together public and private actors, at the local and international level, covering sector-specific and global issues. They emphasised that in order to prevent violent extremism, there is a need to understand the security-development nexus from the grassroots level.

The panelists stressed that currently one of the main challenges faced in efforts to counter violent extremism is generating partners and resources to address local drivers. They highlighted the importance of re-calibrating towards a long-term approach in which local socio-economic factors are taken into account as a basis for promoting community resilience. GCERF directly addresses this challenge by serving as an interactive funding mechanism that connects donors with local initiatives in a sustainable manner.

GCERF will begin with a small group of implementing countries where local communities face the challenge of violent extremist agendas, and where grassroots organisations have difficulty securing funding for effective projects such as vocational training, civic engagement, and women's empowerment. GCERF will seek to fund innovative projects for example in sports, theatre, social media, and life-skills development. It will apply lessons learned from other funding mechanisms as well as more broadly from the field of international development in developing its programme of work. The experiences of the initial implementing countries will inform an expansion to new countries and projects.

What distinguishes GCERF is its emphasis on multiple stakeholders at all levels and its ability to provide space for country-level coordination and alliances between international organisations, NGOs, grassroots organisations and local governments, targeting the specific outcome of countering violent extremism. GCERF projects will be located at the nexus of security and development and will create a hub of expertise to inform policy.

The inaugural governing board meeting is planned to take place in November, with a high-level public launch in 2015. Funds will be distributed during the course of next year, and a call for proposals will be placed on our website. www.gcerf.org.