



IN THIS ISSUE :

	Public-Private Partnership programs	1
	BHF Priority: Reconstruction in Afghanistan	1
	BHF Partners: UNDP & UN Global Compact	2
	BHF President talks at Webster University Conference	2
	BHF Meetings this Month	3

April 25th 2003
Volume 1, Issue 1

BHF NEWS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

"We are pleased to present the first BHF bi-monthly newsletter. We would be grateful to have your responses and feedback."

-Ambassador J. Maresca

Public-Private Partnership Programs

During this last year, the BHF has shifted its primary focus to developing concrete public-private cooperative projects, especially in areas of post-conflict reconstruction, where they are needed most. This is a new type of activity which can contribute to **post-conflict development and stabilization**.

In observing the post-conflict situation in Kosovo the BHF concluded that an effort must be made to attract and involve specific businesses in projects to **reconstruct production facilities** and help people move away from dependency on aid. This effort must largely be made privately because international organizations and NGOs do not have the necessary expertise and resources to

rehabilitate production plants. The BHF has set out to do this **in cooperation with the UNDP** in post-conflict **Afghanistan** with considerable success.

The BHF model builds on the growing consciousness of **corporate social responsibility**. It also makes use of the credibility and on-the-ground presence of international organizations, the readiness of local investors to support interesting business projects, and the desire of local authorities to expand job opportunities and stimulate economic activities. Projects of this kind can be replicated in any post-conflict or developing region where there is business interest, some investment funding, and local support.

BHF Priority: Reconstruction in Afghanistan

The BHF's new post-conflict projects are being implemented in Afghanistan, which serves as the pilot country. Brainstorming meetings have been organized on a number of sectors relevant to the reconstruction process. Most recently a meeting reviewed the problem of **access to safe drinking water** in Afghanistan. The organization has also had initial meetings on possibilities for public-private cooperation in post-conflict Sudan, Angola, Eritrea, Swaziland, and other countries on the African continent.

In Afghanistan the BHF is implementing projects for production facilities in several emergency areas, including **medicines, food, electricity, construction and communications**. Projects so far range from a generic medicines production facility,

flourmills, an electricity generating plant, a factory for housing construction materials, and communication satellite systems. Each of these entails a philanthropic or non-profit contribution by a foreign company, as well as a contribution by Afghan businesspersons who will be the full owners of the facilities.

These projects fulfill the people's needs in emergency sectors and were developed according to the **Afghan National Development Framework**. They have been welcomed by ministers of the Afghan government, as well by the mayor of Kabul, who recently visited the BHF to encourage such work and to pledge his assistance.



Afghan doctor and EGA president visit the land where the generic medicines plant will be constructed.

BHF PARTNERS: UNDP & UN GLOBAL COMPACT

In pursuit of actual on-the-ground investment projects, the BHF has formed a **partnership with the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery of the UN Development Program (UNDP)**. This partnership is laid out in an overall Memorandum of Understanding between BHF and UNDP. More specific terms will be reflected in detailed partnership arrangements for each project, since these differ in their details.

BHF and UNDP have committed themselves to ensuring that specific investment projects will be examples of

responsible corporate behavior as well as stimulants for local economic recovery. The two organizations are working closely with the **UN Global Compact** to keep this aspect in the forefront. Local investors are screened, and the managers of the new businesses will follow policies of good corporate practices, exclude child labor, encourage the employment of women and respect labor and environmental rights. BHF and UNDP will retain a role in management of the new enterprises for a period of time to help establish these policies.



UNDP's Umer Daudzai, Afghan Minister of Reconstruction and BHF's Eleonore Kopera Meet in Kabul.

BHF President talks at Webster University Conference

“One of the greatest problems the world faces is this: where will the resources come from to meet humanitarian challenges?”, said BHF President John Maresca in his speech on *The Role of the Private Sector in Post-Conflict Reconstruction*. This was the topic of a two-day conference hosted by Webster University in Geneva on 28 April 2003.

Ambassador Maresca shared with the crowd of students and professionals the importance of bringing more of the private sector's resources, energy and creativity to support the world's humanitarian problems. “Every year the private capital available for investment in the world increases by more than \$1 trillion, and more than half of the world's 100 biggest economies are not countries – they are companies.”

The BHF was created with the aim to encourage and facilitate collaboration between humanitarian organizations and the private sector in support of post-conflict reconstruction activities. The BHF's goals in post conflict situations are twofold: to shorten the period of time a post-conflict country requires emergency aid and to achieve sustainable economic development for peace and security.

In order to achieve these goals, the BHF formed a partnership with UNDP and jointly, the two organizations are reconstructing the production infrastructure of Afghanistan with the help of partner companies. This means building factories in sectors of major importance including food, medicines, housing and electricity.

Only companies have the expertise and resources to build production factories, and by rebuilding the factories people have the possibility to develop a viable economy and move away from dependency on aid. The pilot country for this new model is Afghanistan. “These projects, based on our model, take advantage of business philanthropy, as well as the growing desire of businesses to behave responsibly, to accomplish humanitarian objectives in societies which need help,” added Ambassador Maresca in his talk. Key for the success of these projects is the fact that the factories are fully owned by Afghans. This gives locals back a sense of ownership, and, because of new employment opportunities, hope for the future.

“Maresca's Law: For every opportunity, there is a business person who is interested in the opportunity.” – Ambassador Maresca

BHF MEETINGS THIS MONTH

MEETING WITH AFGHANI MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS

On 26 February, BHF and UNDP met with the **Afghan Minister of Communications, Mr. Masoom Stanekzai**, in Geneva. The meeting was held to explore possibilities for public-private partnership projects in Afghanistan's telecommunications sector. Minister Stanekzai expressed a great **need for telecommunications infrastructure** throughout the country, specifically in the remote provinces. Of the 32 provinces in Afghanistan, only 4 are connected to

communications networks. Improved communication in remote regions would help stabilize the country and support employment creation. BHF and UNDP are currently discussing a possible partnership with a major telecommunications company in Europe which could contribute their resources and expertise to help connect Afghanistan's remote provinces.

LAND ACCESS ISSUE: BHF/UNDP MEETING WITH THE KABUL MAYOR

On 13 March, the BHF was visited by the **Mayor of Kabul, Mr. Anwar Jekdalek**, and his Deputy. The meeting was arranged by UNDP's Afghan Area Based Specialist, Mr. Umer Daudzai, who also participated the meeting. Other participants included the BHF's co-founder and former president of the ICRC, Dr. Cornelio Sommaruga. The Mayor welcomed the joint BHF-UNDP projects in Afghanistan and urged the

partners to implement them as soon as possible. Furthermore, he promised to support Afghan investors in getting **access to land** for the construction of the plants to be built under this joint initiative.



Meeting with Kabul Mayor at BHF offices.

MEETING ON WATER SECTOR IN AFGHANISTAN: PROGRAMS & CHALLENGES

On 25 March, representatives of UN agencies and Geneva-based international organizations met with the private sector at BHF's offices for a first meeting on Afghanistan's **reconstruction process in the water sector**. The central issues regarded access to water in rural and urban areas in post-conflict Afghanistan. This was the BHF's seventh meeting in its series of public-private sector meetings to discuss the needs of emergency sectors in Afghanistan, including medicines, food, electricity, housing, communications and water.

The meetings aim to generate potential public-private cooperation in the

reconstruction of this post-conflict country.

The three guest speakers included the **Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees'** project coordinator, Mr. Sten Andreasen; the head of Humanitarian Mission and Crisis Management Department at **Generale des Eaux, Vivendi**, Mr. Thierry Vandeveld; and Mr. Ulf Meyer-Scharenberg, Head of the Hydraulic and Environmental Engineering Department at **RRI Beller**. Other participants present were from the ICRC, IFRC, UNICEF, UNHCR, ICN, UNOPS, UNDP and Nestlé.

THE BUSINESS HUMANITARIAN FORUM

Address:

**7 bis, avenue de la Paix,
Boite Postale 1340,
1211 Genève 1, Suisse**

Phone:

++41 (0)22 730 86 80

Fax:

++41 (0)22 730 86 90

E-mail:

bhinfo@bhforum.ch

Join us @:

www.bhforum.ch

ABOUT THE BUSINESS HUMANITARIAN FORUM

The Business Humanitarian Forum (BHF) was created to encourage dialogue and mutual support between the business and humanitarian communities. Their efforts are rooted in the knowledge that businesses and humanitarian organizations hold common interests in the stability and prosperity of developing societies and countries in transition. Greater understanding will increase cooperation between the two sides, ultimately benefiting individuals and stabilizing societies in post-conflict and developing countries.

The BHF is a non-profit association based in Geneva and was founded in January 1999 with encouragement from UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. Participants in the founding session include leaders from the United Nations and International Humanitarian Organizations such as Sadako Ogata, former High Commissioner for Refugees, Cornelio Sommaruga, former president of the International Committee of the Red Cross and Vladimir Petrovsky, Director General of the United States Council of the United Nations Offices in Geneva, , as well as leaders from private business and

business associations, such as Thomas Niles, President of the United States Council of International Business, and The Honorable John Whitehead, former Chair of Goldman Sachs. BHF advisors include Mohamed Sahnoun, UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Africa and Maria Cattai, Secretary General of the International Chamber of Commerce.

The BHF has initiated several reconstruction projects in post-conflict situations and helped create partnerships between businesses, humanitarian agencies and local governments. Furthermore, the BHF has sponsored hands-on workshops and conferences to heighten awareness of the important role business can play in alleviating humanitarian problems. Partners have included: The United Nations, the International Chamber of Commerce, Forum Europe, the World Bank, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, *Humanitarian Affairs Review*, the Center for Strategic and International Studies and the NEPAD Business Group.

In order to continuously commit its resources and staff to these projects, the BHF welcomes any contributions from donor companies, foundations or private individuals. For more information, please see: "[Support for BHF](#)" on the BHF website.



BUILDING MUTUAL SUPPORT BETWEEN
HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS AND THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY