



University for Peace  
Université pour la Paix



# Workshop Report

## Joint Training Workshop

### Public-Private Partnerships in Peacebuilding

Business Humanitarian Forum

Geneva, September 26, 2006

## ***Introduction***

The purpose of the training workshop, which was convened by the Business Humanitarian Forum, the UN-affiliated University for Peace and the U.S. Institute of Peace, was to sensitize attendees to the mutual benefits of public-private partnerships in peacebuilding activities, to demonstrate ways in which the public and private sectors can work together in this area,



and to discuss techniques to enhance the capabilities of the attendees and their organizations to accomplish this goal. More generally, the partners designed this workshop to emphasize the central role of the private sector in peacebuilding, especially concerning investments and the creation of companies and jobs that would allow people to provide for their families and to build a sustainable life outside the sphere of conflict.

The training workshop received the endorsement of the Director General of the UN office in Geneva.

The workshop was attended by members of the UN community of organizations in Geneva, representatives of international organizations, NGOs and other non-profit organizations, and private businesses.

## ***Rationale for the Workshop Design***

Members of the three partner organizations formulated together the workshop design, based on several principles:

1. To benefit from the rich experience and knowledge of workshop participants.
2. To allow space for participants' sharing of experiences and knowledge using small group setting and plenary Q&A and commentaries.
3. To fuse the unique knowledge and experience of each of the three partner organizations, and impart them on workshop participants.
4. To conduct workshop activities in an interactive participatory fashion.

Guided by these principles, the workshop started with an overview of the history and related literature of public-private partnerships in peacebuilding. The overview also included a discussion of how such partnerships may operate within a framework of conflict analysis and efforts for peace. This was followed by opening a space for participants to share and present information on their experiences, challenges and opportunities of public-private partnerships.

A panel of experts representing private sector and international organizations then reflected on their experiences using specific case studies from Sudan, Somaliland and Bosnia. This was followed by a concrete, hands-on presentation on effective approaches for building public-private partnerships, and for their cooperation in the field.

These sessions were intended to establish a theoretical and practical knowledge base derived from the contributions of the presenters and the participants. The subsequent session, building on that foundation, consisted of a simulation of a latent conflict situation in which public and private actors engaged in negotiations related to peacebuilding efforts, followed by a debriefing by the participants on the lessons learned from the exercise.

Finally the workshop concluded with a wrap up of the ideas, concepts and suggestions that were generated by participants and presenters.

## ***Key Insights from the Workshop***

The workshop proceedings generated an abundance of ideas, concepts, tips and suggestions. This was not surprising given the quality and expertise that was present in the workshop (see list of attendees). The major discussions in the workshop may be categorized as follows:

1. ***Emphasis on partnerships and relationships***: Participants and presenters emphasized that successful public-private partnerships are based on nurturing healthy relationships. This usually required interpersonal contacts between members of these organizations.



Their efforts and interaction would contribute to reducing prevalent negative stereotypes, and ensure that each partner brings to peacebuilding efforts what they “do best.” Within this category, several points were emphasized:

- a. The role of charismatic leaders. Participants emphasized the significant role that charismatic leaders in these organizations played.
- b. Building bridges: How? The question of how members of public and private organizations can build bridges was brought up, and stimulated ideas and suggestions. It does deserve further focused discussions and formulations.
- c. Need to sustain relationships. As the success of partnerships usually relied on effective interpersonal relations and charismatic roles, a concern arose about how organizations can sustain such relationships. This led to an emphasis on:
  - i. Documentation of lessons learned
  - ii. Dissemination of knowledge and experiences
  - iii. Awareness of the particularity of each conflict and related efforts for peace
  - iv. Understanding that each public-private partnership is unique to the circumstances giving rise to its formation
  - v. Ensuring project continuity in the event a charismatic leader leaves an institution

2. **Guidelines for the Private Sector:** The participants and presenters shared several guidelines for how the private sector may contribute to efforts for peace. These included:

- a. The private sector can play a role not only in the peacebuilding stage, but also in pre- and during- conflict times. This required careful conflict assessment to guide interventions.
- b. The formulation of a strong notion of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) must guide the private sector's efforts in order to ensure lasting consistent effects, keeping in mind that the basic purpose of the private sector is to "do business."
- c. The private sector should establish legitimacy, and seek legitimacy from potential partners.
- d. The private sector should continuously seek a balance between profit making and concern for human rights, environment, development and other factors crucial for sustaining peace. CSR plays a major role in striking this balance.
- e. The private sector should also pay attention to cultural considerations and sensitivities.

3. **Strengths of the Private Sector:** The workshop discussion highlighted several of the areas of strength that the private sector brings to the peacebuilding effort. Several participants stated that such areas of strength did not only represent what the private sector could do, but also what it could model for others, hence introducing effective practices into the function of their partners. These areas of strength included:

- a. The central role of the private sector with regard to peacebuilding lies in its capacity to invest and to create jobs / companies thus allowing people to provide for their families and to move on with their lives.
- b. The private sector uses practices that reflect non-discrimination and inclusion of all members of the society. Such practices, prevalent especially in the practice of trans-national businesses, provide a model of peaceful coexistence to societies divided based on ethnicity, religion or other factors. These practices demonstrate the relative importance the private sector gives to economic factors compared to political and other factors.
- c. The private sector employs continuously negotiation and rational compromising techniques to achieve common interests with various partners and even competitors. This practice, natural to the function of the private sector, is often what contending conflict parties need in order to explore peaceful resolutions. The private sector can contribute in several ways by providing training in these areas, or, when possible, contribute to the actual negotiations between parties.
- d. The private sector, especially at the national and local levels, usually operates within a network that includes related businesses. These networks can provide a support system for reconstruction and peacebuilding efforts, when other organs of the society have been damaged or disintegrated.

4. ***The Challenges Ahead:*** While participants and presenters recognized the potential of recognizing and elaborating on public-private partnerships, they acknowledged the challenges facing such partnerships. These included:

- a. There exist some negative perceptions among the private sector, public sector, international organizations and NGOs about each other's motives, competency and mode of operation. This leads at times to a reduced trust, which hinders the need to build healthy relationships.
- b. The role of the private sector, which often includes financial contributions to development and post conflict reconstruction, may be ambivalent regarding issues of social justice, which are usually in the core of conflict sources. In such cases, the private sector contributions may not yield expected dividends, or may even be regarded with suspicion as efforts to reinforce an unjust status quo. This is especially the case in societies that are developing from non-market to market economies; in such situations the private sector can sometimes be a hindrance to reconstruction and social development.
- c. The complexity of conflict sources and issues, and post conflict priorities, makes decisions for public-private interventions equally complex. Decision makers in this regard will continuously need to be attuned to the fluid conflict situations and their changing needs and priorities.
- d. The expansion of the role of the private sector in areas such as security during times of conflict poses serious questions from legal, ethical, and social perspectives. This subject requires further focused discussions in various settings.

## ***Outcomes***

Judging from the feedback received in the evaluation forms and discussions with participants, the meeting satisfactorily fulfilled the expectations of the attending representatives.

Of the 16 evaluation sheets that were handed back, 87.5 % rated the quality of the overall workshop program as satisfactory / very satisfactory. The same percentage of participants felt that the main objective of the workshop, that is to sensitize attendees to the mutual benefits of public-private partnerships in peacebuilding activities was achieved / very much achieved.

Comments from the participants included the notion of having gained knowledge and insight regarding building partnerships with the private sector; others emphasized the need to seek new opportunities of interacting with the private sector in regard to operational objectives of their organization.



Three quarter of the participants agreed, however, that future training workshops should be held over two days given the dense program.

### *Next Steps*

The project partners are now considering when and where to hold future workshops. Consultations will be held with the Secretariat of the newly-formed UN Peacebuilding Commission as to how to replicate the workshop and with which UN agencies and other participants. The possibility exists for offering the training to specific types/groups of participants.

The project partners are currently further reviewing the evaluations received from the participants and will discuss ways to improve the format and substance of the workshop. The partners are also considering a web-based e-learning program for use in remote locations.

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## *Annex 2: Program Schedule*

Public-Private Partnerships in Peacebuilding  
 Joint Training Workshop in Geneva  
 September 26, 2006

- 8:30 – 9:00 Registration
- 9:00 – 9:30 Opening remarks; Overview of Course; Participant introductions
- 9:30 – 9:55 Presentation: elements of Peacebuilding; interdependence of Peacebuilding elements, objectives and interests; economic situation in/problems of post-conflict areas; limits to humanitarian aid; need for security; role of the media
- 10:00 – 10:45 Breakout groups discuss Peacebuilding experiences/problems; prepare group reports on main lessons learned from these experiences
- 10:45 - 11:00 Coffee break
- 11:00 – 11:45 Groups reassemble in “plenary” session; present group reports; general discussion of reports
- 11:45 – 1:00 Panel Presentation by Peacebuilding actors/partners – characteristics and perceptions. Panelists:  
 NGO – Matthias Stiefel, Interpeace  
 Private Sector – Christine Batruch, Lundin Petroleum  
 IGO – Joseph Ingram, World Bank
- 1:00 – 1:45 Buffet Working Lunch, Conference Lobby Area
- 1:45 – 2:05 Presentation: Peacebuilding partnerships – how to cooperate. Role of the private sector; how to work with the private sector; how to work with the public/IGO sector; partnership building techniques; private sector financial aspects.
- 2:05 – 2:30 Working Group Exercise – Briefing and Organization
- 2:30 – 3:30 Role playing exercise: building partnerships
- 3:30 – 3:45 Coffee break
- 3:45 – 4:30 Debriefing reports on role playing exercise outcomes
- 4:30 – 5:00 Summing up of the Workshop – “Bringing it all together”
- 5:00 – 5:30 Course evaluation (oral and written); End of Workshop