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UN Peacebuilding Commission

The United Nations Peace Building Commission recently held a panel discussion on post-conflict development and what is essential to maintaining a sustainable peace. The panel made it clear that reinforcing peace building capacity had to be “done right and done right away”. Putting in place the proper support systems, such as clean water, electricity, and education can greatly lessen the chance of states returning to conflict. This preventive investment is key to creating an environment that is secure, using microfinance, south-south cooperation, and private sector investments that lead to resource mobilization. These different areas were spoken about at length by the three panelists.

Representing the African Development Bank, John Kanyarubona spoke of the importance of marshalling resources for these objectives, he also spoke about how the ADB is carrying out these financial operations and the rationale behind working with states defined as fragile. According to Mr. Kanyarubona the ADB has had a four step evolution in dealing with these fragile states. During the 1980s, what is described as the “business as usual” era, the ADB did not interfere in the internal affairs of debtor countries. Yet what he described as a “proliferation of coup d’états” forced the bank to take a greater role in each country's internal affairs due to the misuse of provided funds. From 1995-2003, the bank engaged in an “arms length” approach, forcing strict sanctions upon countries that did not meet good governance policy regulations. This approach has since evolved, with the ADB helping relieve debts and setting up programs for performance based resource allocation. This enhanced engagement did a great deal of good, however performance based approaches were not so successful in countries with chronic institutional breakdowns. The ADB has taken on more tailored approaches for each country, with its Fragile States Unit providing financing for targeted institutions that are key to supporting peaceful society.

Following Mr. Kanyarubona, was H.E. M.S. Puri, Ambassador from India, who specializes in Economic, Financial, Development, and Human Rights. In his presentation he discussed the IBSA Forum, a cooperative organization consisting of the countries of India, Brazil, and South Africa. Through this medium of south-south cooperation infrastructure in all three countries has been significantly developed. The forum provides technical exchange as well as financial support for a whole range of programs from health, agriculture, and energy to defense, public administration, and information society. The ambassador also spoke briefly about youth and its involvement in development. Engaging the youth of a country in work that is rewarding and positive towards society is essential to maintaining stability and the success of any development programs. H.E. Ambassador Puri also spoke about the IBSA Trust Fund, which is in

cooperation with the UNDP, and the funds mission to provide countries with finances to develop on their own terms, within their own capacity.

Matthieu Stieffel, coming from the private sector, spoke about the engagement possibilities for private investment in post conflict areas. According to Mr. Stieffel a range of opportunities exists for profit driven development potential. By focusing on involving the corporate actor countries will inevitably have an easier time marshaling resources and channeling them for development. Through actors the a non-governmental, such as the Clinton Global Initiative and others that on economic development, post conflict states can be rebuilt. Mr. Stieffel spoke at length about the benefits of inviting such programs and companies, but failed to highlight many of the potential problems that can arise from such independent investments.