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The role of the private sector in different aspects of conflict resolution has received increasing attention in recent years. This is due to several factors. First, the private sector, domestic or multinational, is often present in contexts of armed conflict and exposed to its risks and impacts, which frequently compel it to act. Second, it has the capacities (human, resources, managerial and technical, among others) to intervene in different ways. Third, what has been called the ‘privatisation of peace’ is underpinned by the wider global trend of privatising services and functions traditionally provided by the state or the international community. In conflict contexts, states have frequently been described as ‘fragile’, that is unwilling or unable to provide essential services and functions to at least part of their populations – leaving the private sector, in many instances, to perform such roles.

This paper will discuss the diverse roles played by the private sector during Track 1 peace processes in particular, drawing on a variety of examples from different contexts.² These

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² The paper draws on International Alert’s research and experience on the ground, working with both domestic and multinational companies in conflict-sensitising their operations, and enabling them to become part of wider peace constituencies. In particular, we draw and build on Angelika Rettberg’s contribution to a recent research project carried out by International Alert. See Rettberg, A., ‘Local businesses’ role in formal peace negotiations’ in Banfield, J., Gündüz, C. and Killick, N. (eds) *Local Business, Local Peace: the Peacebuilding Potential of the Domestic Private Sector*, London, 2006. For more information on International Alert’s work with the business community, see http://www.international-alert.org/our_work/themes/business.php?page=work&ext=set

examples illustrate that where the private sector enjoys credibility (sometimes higher than state parties), has access to conflict parties, and a strategic interest in the resolution of a conflict, it can become actively involved and have significant impact on the course of a peace process, for better or worse.

The paper does not take a normative stance on the desirability, legitimacy or appropriateness of private-sector involvement in peace processes. Rather, it takes the pragmatic stance that private-sector participation is a reality in many armed conflicts. The question therefore for other third parties, be they peacemakers, peacekeepers or peacebuilders, is how to relate to private-sector actors, and how to work with them in such a way that they can contribute positively to wider peace efforts, rather than doing harm. Under what circumstances private-sector involvement is desirable and can be effective are critical questions. International conflict mediators need to be aware of challenges and opportunities arising from the presence of private-sector actors within their area of operation.

Successful peace negotiations and implementation of peace agreements is often seen to require business-sector support. Evidence also suggests that if the private sector is not adequately drawn into a peace process, its interests not taken into account, or its involvement not managed well, it can play the role of a potential spoiler, undermining peace efforts.

In some cases, the private sector will support a conservative economic agenda in pursuit of stability and maintaining a status quo, and its economic priorities may call for a small state apparatus with limited regulatory capacity. This can directly oppose the need to address certain economic root causes of conflict through reforms (for instance of land ownership and redistribution), and priorities for recovery, such as state-building.³ The private sector may be benefiting from the status quo, and the conflict may be about changing the status quo. This might even make business a party to the conflict, and so some elements of the private sector may resent the outcome of peace, while others may invite it.

Finally, the private sector is not monolithic: domestic enterprises range in size and capability. On one hand they have local knowledge and a greater stake in peace; on the other hand they may have entrenched interests and relationships to protect. Multinationals, while being outsiders, can bring a certain level of impartiality, but local communities and parties may view them and their intervention with suspicion.

Types of business participation in Track 1 peace processes

Experience suggests that private-sector participation in peace processes takes many forms: from direct participation in negotiations to indirect activities aimed at influencing negotiators, including lobbying (overt and covert), shuttle diplomacy, supporting off-the-record meetings, disseminating knowledge and participating in multi-sectoral dialogues. Each of these entails different roles, opportunities and challenges for the private sector, as illustrated by the following examples.

³ OECD, Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations, 2007 (available at www.oecd.org/dataoecd/61/45/38368714.pdf).

1 Direct participation⁴

Promoting peace: El Salvador

By the late 1980s, El Salvador had suffered a decade of civil war. Business had opposed former President Jose Napoleon Duarte's attempts to redistribute wealth.⁵ Businesses were subject to extortion and abductions, and companies suspected armed groups. But the Salvadoran business environment was changing: the old elite, dependent on land and agriculture, had begun giving ground to modernising, younger businesspeople. A US-funded think-tank, Fundación Salvadoreña para el Desarrollo (FUSADES, the Salvadoran Foundation for Development), supported younger businesses, providing the new sectors of the economy with credit. FUSADES also produced research on the costs of conflict⁶ to the local business community, highlighting opportunities that globalisation offered to Salvadoran businesses.

Alfredo Cristiani was one of the young businesspeople who recognised that a market-oriented economic model could develop only if armed conflict ended. He ran for office promising to promote peace and integrate El Salvador into the global economy, leading the pro-business Alianza Republicana Nacional (ARENA) party to electoral victory in the 1989 presidential elections. The peace accord he signed in 1992 ended the 12-year civil war.

Business supported Cristiani's negotiations with the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN), and the negotiations were swift, leading to the reform of the police, the military and the judiciary, and demobilisation of armed combatants. Cristiani guaranteed businesses access to government decision-making processes. His advisory team included individuals from FUSADES and business executives. Business was engaged in conflict-related research and dedicated resources to support former FMLN combatants' attendance at graduate schools to improve their managerial and other skills.

In return, FMLN was willing to trade its more contentious economic demands for greater political and judicial change. The private sector strongly supported the political and judicial agenda, pushing for substantial reforms. While criticism of economic inequality persists, FMLN guerrillas have not resumed fighting, and today remain part of the political process.

Resisting peace: Guatemala

In contrast, a decade after the 1996 peace accords signed between the Guatemalan government and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional de Guatemala (URNG) it is clear that the socio-economic commitments underpinning this accord have not been met. Guatemalan democratisation began in the 1980s, with calls to limit the military's role in politics. The private-sector organisation, Comité Coordinador de Asociaciones Agrícolas, Comerciales, Industriales y Financieras (CACIF) persuaded the military to accept economic reforms and democratic transition, leading to the election of a civilian president, Vinicio Cerezo, in November 1985.

⁴ Adapted from Rettberg, op.cit.

⁵ See Dijkstra, G., 'The limits of economic policy in El Salvador' in Pelupessy, W. and Weeks, J. (eds) *Economic Maladjustment in Central America*, St Martin's Press, New York, 1993.

⁶ Ministerio de Planificación y Coordinación del Desarrollo Económico y Social (MIPLAN), *Plan de Reconstrucción Nacional Vol. I*, MIPLAN, San Salvador, 1992.

Founded in 1957, CACIF evolved from representing traditional landed classes to supporting modern businesses keen to link Guatemala with international markets. Younger businesspeople – sensitised by criticism that the private sector had tolerated human-rights abuses in the past – wanted to set up the Comisión Empresarial de Paz (CEPAZ, the Business Peace Commission) in 1994, to lead CACIF's positions in the peace negotiations. CEPAZ would monitor and lobby the peace process, and also, in turn, persuade the private sector to support the process.

But there were profound internal divisions within the business community. Guatemalan conflict was of low intensity, and confined to only certain parts of the country, except during 1979 and 1983. Many businesses believed in a military solution, and considered negotiations unnecessary. Due to these divisions, CEPAZ could not, as a group, become part of the Asamblea de la Sociedad Civil (Assembly of Civil Society), a coalition representing diverse interests in the peace process. CEPAZ could not even prevent the Coordinadora Nacional Agropecuaria (CONAGRO) from withdrawing from CACIF in protest about its involvement in the peace process.⁷

2 Indirect participation

Building trust: Mozambique and Colombia

Getting parties to agree to negotiations in the first place, overcoming mistrust and prejudices, requires a significant effort, often launched from different sides. In Mozambique, executives of Lonrho, the Africa-based mining conglomerate, shuttled between, and socialised with, representatives of the warring RENAMO (South-African supported and anti-communist armed group) and FRELIMO (official, anti-colonial and pro-communist armed group). Lonrho's then chief executive, 'Tiny' Rowland, supplied the company jet to transport RENAMO representatives to the negotiating table in Rome and the company financed RENAMO's participation in the talks.⁸ In Colombia, business leaders held off-the-record meetings of multisectoral groups (including leftist and rightist insurgents, labour and Church leaders, and minority groups such as indigenous and African-Colombian communities) to generate space for developing personal relationships. In South Africa, businesspeople took members of both sides on fishing weekends to facilitate personal encounters and build relations.

Providing good offices: South Africa

Companies that operated in apartheid-era South Africa continue to face calls for reparations for the abuses suffered by the majority community between 1948 and 1991. Intentionally or not, many businesses contributed to the implementation of apartheid and some benefited from it. However, some businesses played an important role in helping to end apartheid. A small group of business leaders initiated a series of meetings with the apartheid government and with a wide range of formal and informal political groupings, including black political leaders who enjoyed popular support.

⁷ Vielman, G. A., *Tiempo Perdido*, private edition, Guatemala City, 1998. CONAGRO even sued the negotiators for treason.

⁸ Vines, A., *The Business of Peace: 'Tiny' Rowland, Financial Incentives and the Mozambican Settlement*, Conciliation Resources. See <http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/mozambique/business-peace.php>.

This group's involvement began with businesses encouraging a debate on the country's economic and political future. The government's repressive environment and the opposition leaders' practical difficulties, many being in hiding, exiled or in jail, made intermediation difficult. In late 1988, business leaders met representatives of the Mass Democratic Movement in Broederstroom, and formed the Consultative Business Movement (CBM).⁹ Initially, this group focused on building relationship with key political players, such as the banned African National Congress (ANC) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP).

The impasse was broken only when the CBM and South African Council of Churches facilitated an inclusive peace process. Its first meeting was hosted by a leading South African conglomerate, Barlow Rand Ltd, and a Barlow executive (John Hall, who also chaired the chamber of commerce) co-chaired the meeting with Archbishop Desmond Tutu. The long negotiations began.¹⁰

Through its impartial conduct and scrupulous transparency, the CBM established credibility and legitimacy among the parties, and as a result was asked to provide the secretariat and administrative support for the path-breaking Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) process. When CODESA was deadlocked in 1992 over the distribution of powers between central and regional governments, the CBM, with the approval of all parties, brought together local academics and international experts to help break the impasse. The report produced by the group helped to influence the parties' thinking and, according to some observers, shaped the final agreement on the issue.¹¹

As elections got closer, political brinkmanship increased. A month before the historic 1994 polls, the IFP threatened to withdraw from the elections. The CBM was asked to manage a process of international mediation.¹² While the high-profile mediators – Henry Kissinger, former US Secretary of State, and Lord Carrington, former British Foreign Secretary – could not secure an agreement, lower-profile mediators continued an informal shuttle diplomacy supported by CBM, leading to an agreement among the three major political parties, and resulting in the elections being finally held as scheduled.

Convening power: Northern Ireland

Business can play an important role in securing popular support for a peace process in a politically charged atmosphere. In 1996, the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) joined six other trade and business organisations¹³ in Northern Ireland to create the Group of Seven (GoS). The Group used its collective authority to advance one message: Northern Ireland must make a 'stark choice between a future of peace and prosperity and a destiny as one of the

⁹ Consultative Business Movement (CBM), *Submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa*, CBM, Johannesburg, 1997.

¹⁰ Eloff, T. and Hall, J., 'NBI note for the record' (informal briefing, Sri Lanka First/IA visit to South Africa, 1–5 May 2004), 2004.

¹¹ Friedman, S. (ed.), *The Long Journey: South Africa's Quest for a Negotiated Settlement*, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1993.

¹² Friedman, S. and Atkinson, D. (eds) 'The small miracle: South Africa's negotiated settlement', *South African Review* 7, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1994.

¹³ The Hotel Federation, the Institute of Directors, the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Northern Ireland Growth Challenge, the Northern Ireland Economic Council and the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

world's most irredeemable trouble spots'.¹⁴ In October 1996, the GoS invited representatives of all nine political parties involved in the peace talks to a meeting in Belfast. Collective meetings, rather than individual ones, mirrored the Group's strategy of political cooperation and impartiality. At the meeting, the Group presented the economic rationale for peace, discussing its importance for economic growth and prosperity, and urged political parties to work towards peace. The GoS emphasised that the collapse of peace talks would be catastrophic and asked all parties to seek new solutions.¹⁵

While the Belfast meeting was criticised by some, it compelled politicians to address peace and economic growth together. Over the next 21 months, the GoS held five more meetings, contributing to the debate. In April 1998, David Trimble, leader of the Ulster Unionist Party, and John Hume, head of the Social Democratic and Labour Party, announced the Good Friday Agreement, supported by eight political parties and the Irish and UK governments. It remains a landmark towards ending the conflict, and has guided the peace process since.

Overt lobbying: Sri Lanka

By the late 1990s, the Sri Lankan economy was growing despite the decades-long conflict. As in Guatemala, a large section of the business community felt little motivation to support peace initiatives because the conflict was confined to certain parts of the country. The mood changed in 2001, with the bombing of the Colombo International Airport, exposing the vulnerability of the business sector. Sri Lanka's large corporations are concentrated in the Colombo area and the local chamber of commerce represents the country's biggest companies, accounting for some 40% of national output. It has some influence at government level and lobbies donors to fund development activities. The corporate community came together and formed an initiative for peace, called Sri Lanka First.

Sri Lanka First (SLF) launched a high-profile campaign to mobilise citizens' support for a call for immediate negotiations leading to a peaceful end to the conflict. The campaign highlighted the economic costs of the war, and the socio-economic benefits of the peace dividend. SLF held public demonstrations backing peace, and ran a media campaign calling on businesses to adopt practices that support peace, but did not take a political position on the conflict. This campaign coincided with the run-up to the December 2001 elections, with pro-peace advertisements and posters aimed at influencing voters to support peace-oriented parties and candidates. A pro-peace government came to power. Subsequently, the Colombo-based business community has been criticised by some for not building on this momentum and continuing with high-profile peace initiatives throughout the negotiations and ceasefire. Instead, Colombo's business community seemed to have gone back to 'business as usual' during the ceasefire period.

¹⁴*Ulster Business*, August 1997.

¹⁵Confederation of British Industry statement, 7 October 1996.

Mobilising collective business support: Colombia

The mid-1990s was a time of profound crisis in Colombia. The economy was on the brink of major recession, the government faced charges of corruption, and violence had escalated. In such an environment, hundreds of civil-society initiatives were launched to promote dialogue and support productive development projects, aimed at raising consciousness about peace.

A series of extortions and abductions convinced business to take the situation seriously, and by the mid-1990s businesses had supported No Mas (No More) marches across the country. By early 1997, other civil-society groups joined businesses to form the Citizens' Mandate for Peace, Life and Freedom (CMPLF). On 26 October 1997 CMPLF mobilised 10 million votes in an informal nationwide poll, to protest violence. This union, which brought together groups often opposed politically, sent a powerful message across Colombian society.

The National Business Council, consisting of Colombia's largest business associations, was a key organiser of the Mandate movement. Members of the Council played prominent roles in mobilising popular support. Business leaders went on television, advocating the need to vote for the peace ballot and presenting their communities with arguments supporting the peace initiative. Analysts credit that vote with creating the environment that permitted peace talks between the government and Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) in January 1999. The government passed a law – 434 of 1998 – legalising civil-society (including business) participation in the peace process. Business also supported Pais Libre,¹⁶ an NGO formed in 1999 to assist victims of abductions to recover.

After the Mandate poll, business association leaders made direct contact with guerrilla groups. Several preparatory meetings in Germany led to the first large convention of Colombian civil society and representatives of Ejército de Liberación Nacional de Colombia (ELN) in Mainz in June 1998, which ended with a signed commitment to seek a solution to the conflict. Business representatives, large and small, also signed the accord. The talks with ELN and FARC were not ultimately successful, and there has been criticism of the Mandate for 'wasting' political capital. Even so, it became an important part of the learning process to help improve and increase business involvement to search for peaceful solutions to armed conflict.

Providing knowledge and research: Northern Ireland and Colombia

In 1994, the Northern Ireland CBI produced a landmark publication, *Peace – A Challenging New Era*. Better known as the 'peace dividend paper', the document spelled out the economic rationale for peace and soon became the reference point for the peace process. The media¹⁷ used the term extensively, giving a new momentum to the peace process. The CBI paper identified several inhibitors to economic development, including increased security costs for the private sector, damage to the tourism industry, and emigration.

¹⁶ www.paislibre.org.

¹⁷ *Financial Times*, 28 July 1998.

Andrés Pastrana was elected as Colombian President (1998–2002) with widespread business support, and during his tenure there were renewed efforts to initiate negotiations with the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC). The business community participated in early discussions. FARC agreed to the appointment of high-ranking businesspeople in the negotiating team, interpreting their presence as an indicator of serious intent, and regarding them as having perhaps a better understanding of the economic issues of concern to FARC. The presidential commissioner appointed to conduct negotiations, however, decided to limit the role of business, effectively sidelining it by keeping businesspeople out of key negotiations and restricting their involvement to the provision of technical information.

Access to armed groups: DRC¹⁸

The provinces of North and South Kivu in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) face intertwined problems of local power rivalries, economic competition and community cleavages that are complicated by shifting alliances, as well as religious, commercial and personal connections that cut across the main lines of opposition. These problems led to numerous crises in 2002–04 involving the opposing armies of Rwanda and Uganda, and several rebel groups active in the area. It was in the wake of these recurrent crises that Mission des Nations Unies en République Démocratique du Congo (MONUC) encountered the business communities of Kivu. Initially limited to northern Kivu, MONUC's interactions with local businesspeople gradually extended to the provinces' other main business communities.

The entrepreneurial culture in Kivu blends community dimensions and resilience to a changing economic environment. Companies belong to members of a single family, or to families linked by marriage, and the capital to start new companies is usually provided by a prominent member of the same extended family. While this does not prevent entrepreneurs from competing with one another, it has contributed to the maintenance of strong links within a community and area of origin, or terroir. In spite of their wealth, the bigger entrepreneurs continue to live in their native areas where they sponsor social activities, including health clinics, schools and a university.

MONUC's first interaction with the business community was over political matters. While entrepreneurs feared looting in the wake of military offensives in 2002 and 2003, they agreed to use their influence to pressure local armed groups into supporting a political settlement. This did not, however, prevent several of them from contacting the attacking forces with a view to securing their own assets should the Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie – Mouvement de Libération (RCD–ML) be defeated.

The focus of MONUC's engagement was on crisis management, not development issues, but it provided an indication of the role that entrepreneurs could play in decision-making. Some also

¹⁸Based on Braud, P.-A. (2006): 'Bringing Entrepreneurs into the Peace Process in the Democratic Republic of Congo', in Banfield, Gündüz and Killick, op.cit.

proved valuable sources of information on the trade routes used for smuggling raw materials and military equipment. Thus security and political issues led MONUC to take account of local economic players and their influence, either as a lobby or as individuals connected to civilian and military decision makers.

Factors influencing business participation

The experiences of the DRC, Sri Lanka, Colombia and El Salvador show that when direct costs of conflict to business rise to a level that can no longer be sustained, business acts, in its own interest, to assist peace processes. The mode it chooses varies, depending on local conditions, the willingness of the business sector, and the context of local political dynamics. The recognition that an end to conflict and prospects of future stability will offer economic opportunities is another driver.

But these two drivers are not sufficient to explain the form of business participation in a peace process, or what impact it will have. Four key factors influence the success of business engagement.

1 ***The private sector's credibility and legitimacy.*** The private sector cannot walk into a peace negotiation; it has to earn its place. It can do so if its activities are credible and legitimate, and the negotiating parties understand the value of the private sector in developing understanding of the conflict context. In El Salvador, both sides welcomed business participation. In Mozambique, FMLN realised the importance of the business sector's role. In South Africa, pragmatic elements on both sides saw the role business could play in getting the more recalcitrant elements on both sides to come to the negotiating table.

2 ***The private sector's ability to act collectively.*** The Guatemalan case shows that when the private sector does not see peace as in the interests of the entire sector, the sector's peacebuilding attempts falter. In South Africa, on the other hand, a few companies provided the lead, which convinced others of the benefits of participating in collective action.

3 ***The private sector's experience of social engagement.*** If the private sector has experience of engaging with a range of actors, it makes discussions and negotiations more productive. Philanthropic tradition helped Colombian and South African companies to take on the task of intervening in negotiations.

4 ***The understanding and acceptance of the notion of peace dividend.*** While armed conflict imposes collective costs on society, few companies can systematically calculate the costs of conflict on their own operations, unless they are specifically attacked, or the benefits that an end to the conflict might bring. Effective dissemination of information, in a format familiar to the business community, goes a long way in building intra-sector consensus, as

experience from El Salvador, Northern Ireland, and South Africa shows. In Colombia, however, peace talks faltered, and a new government showed tangible military results in the fight against insurgents, weakening the argument for the peace dividend.

Conclusions

Any role for business can only complement other elements of a peace process, and should not be seen as distinct. While businesspeople can, and often should, be strategic partners in a peace process, they cannot be the sole agents of change. In several instances businesses have been in a position to offer something of value – resources, neutrality, credibility, legitimacy, their good offices – that other actors lacked. In South Africa, hard-line elements of the majority community or of the apartheid regime would not have sat across the table without business intervention. While business intervention was not the only catalyst, it was an important one.

This is because, in view of their outwardly apolitical nature, businesses are, in theory, able to act where others sometimes cannot. At times when the two sides have reached a political deadlock, business, which does not have a direct stake in the outcome, is able to play a crucial role. The private sector may also possess unique knowledge of an economy and can produce politically un-biased information that can lead to more reliable decisions on some issues. However, when business is seen as acting according to self-interest, its intervention can be counter-productive.

Official mediation efforts should be sufficiently aware of business initiatives towards peacebuilding, and interact with them, but with a degree of caution. Businesses may claim to represent the agenda of job creation and economic growth. However, in conflicts where economic factors predominate, and where changing the current power structure, including entrenched economic interests, is a matter high on the agenda of some of the warring parties, the role of business will be viewed with suspicion. Its close involvement, particularly financing of peace initiatives, can easily skew the outcome to favour an economic model that the business community prefers, but which may not have consensus support across the society.

Peace negotiations take time, and businesses tend to have a short time horizon. The vision of the private sector is narrow, which gives businesses sharp focus. But it can also make some businesspeople impatient in dealing with complex, multiform processes, or ‘run out of stamina’ – as noted in connection with Sri Lanka First. Many private-sector companies may find it difficult to sustain interest over the long period, sometimes decades, of some peace processes. At the same time, negotiators and mediators need to bear in mind that the private sector is not a monolithic entity, and different groups within the private sector may have differing agendas. There are regional and sectoral differences, which yield different responses. Larger companies are more able to act, but smaller companies may be more willing to act and are closer to the ground.

Implications for mediators

Given these factors, and the private sector's own priorities, any role businesses can play must be contained within a broader strategy of negotiation and mediation. This can only be achieved if third parties begin to think about and reach out to relevant private-sector actors early in the process. Mediators are offered the following points to consider.

- ***Including private-sector positions, interests and needs in conflict analyses.*** Mediators assess in detail the complex web of relationships and dynamics that surround parties and perpetuate a conflict. Such analysis has to include a good understanding of relationships between private-sector actors and conflict parties, the interests of the sector, and possible entry points for involvement.
- ***Assessing risk.*** At the same time, appreciation is needed of the risks to a peace process from private-sector involvement. How is it likely to impact on the process itself? Is it acceptable to the parties? What is the degree of trust enjoyed by different private-sector actors? How will their involvement affect the eventual outcomes?
- ***Potential impact on a mediator's own legitimacy and ability to work with the parties.*** Is outreach to and the involvement of private-sector actors going to affect perceptions of third-party legitimacy and impartiality?
- ***Balancing values and pragmatism.*** Much peace work, including mediation, is driven by specific values such as concern for the alleviation of human suffering, the progressive realisation of economic and social rights and meeting goals of social justice, and the protection and upholding of human rights. Practitioners in this field are sometimes guided by these values to reject working with the private sector on ideological grounds. Experience suggests that it is possible to balance values-based approaches to peacemaking and peacebuilding, such as 'principled impartiality', with engagement with all sorts of actors, including businesses, if the engagement is carefully analysed, planned and implemented.
- ***Early awareness raising, outreach and involvement.*** If initial analysis suggests that outreach to and involvement of the private sector is a promising avenue for third parties, engagement should happen early on in the process to allow for an exchange on business willingness and capacities. This needs to be based on an honest exchange about the risks and costs involved in supporting peace processes, time commitments and other factors. Businesspeople are not professional peacemakers, and may lack knowledge of peace processes. Engagement may therefore need to be preceded by raising awareness and sharing knowledge.

- **Clarifying ways of working and division of labour.** Experience suggests that businesses are more likely to get involved where interventions play to their strengths, and there is a clear value-added from partnering with others. Ways of working with them, and roles and responsibilities, need to be clarified early on to avoid confusion and duplication of efforts.
- **What role?** As this paper has sought to illustrate, there are multiple ways in which the private sector can engage in peace processes. While lessons can be drawn from experiences elsewhere, each context will require different degrees and modes of engagement with the private sector, as with other stakeholders.

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