



# 2011 ANNUAL MEETING

September 19 - 22, 2011 ★ Sheraton New York Hotel and Towers

## Keynote Lunch: Scalable Development in Post-conflict Zones

Tuesday, September 20, 2011: 12:00 – 1:15 PM

### I. Session Objective:

At this keynote lunch, speakers will present diverse stories of action on the theme of scalable development in post-conflict zones.

### II. Summary of Discussion:

#### MODERATOR:

**Riz Khan**, international journalist, *Al Jazeera English*

#### SPEAKERS:

**Valentino Achak Deng**, founder and director, *The Valentino Achak Deng Foundation*

**Dave Eggers**, author and co-founder, *The Valentino Achak Deng Foundation; The Voice of Witness*

**António Guterres**, former prime minister of the Portuguese Republic, *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*

#### Mr. Eggers:

- Learned about humility and that you cannot push a Western agenda. His original ideas for building the school in Sudan would never have worked outside of the West. The best thing he can do is to raise awareness, support, and fundraise.
- Nimble, adaptable organizations like Mr. Deng's are needed. These are what can change South Sudan. There are lots of similar organizations. Because of the organization's small size in South Sudan, they often go unnoticed. People must make the effort to find them and support them.
- The people of Sudan have a strong desire to be educated. It is the way out and up for them.

#### Mr. Deng:

- Stresses the importance of networks. Many success stories would not have been possible without them.
- Many challenges lie ahead, such as increasing access to quality education for girls.
- South Sudan has one of the lowest literacy rates in the world. Illiteracy is estimated at 92 percent. Only one percent attends secondary school, and there is a very high dropout rate. Girls are responsible for household duties. They come to school in the morning and go home in the afternoon to fetch water, make food, and care for kids. Then they go to bed late. It does not make for a conducive learning environment
- Building dorms and enrolling them as boarding students makes their education possible. Over 60 girls are in the secondary school. After-school clubs help to build confidence and develop a strong student body.
- Helping girls stay enrolled at the school is another challenge. They cannot charge fees, since no one can pay them. Providing scholarships is a challenge.

**Audience Member:** What should multinational corporations (MNCs) do or not do if they want to help?

- **Mr. Deng:** Technology is more effective in remote places. It makes a big difference. There are no computers and no Internet in the school. The school does not have the infrastructure. He wants to teach his students computer skills and office management.

*Turning ideas into action.*



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**Audience Member:** How did Mr. Deng get out of the camp?

- **Mr. Deng:** I lived there for nine years altogether. UNHCR supported education in these camps, as well as offering refugee resettlement programs.

**Audience Member:** What mechanisms are there to address the gaps in education, people who drop out of the school, becoming mothers early, etc.?

- **Mr. Deng:** The school opened at a time when there were only 10 secondary schools in South Sudan. Now there are plans to open a college, kindergarten, and primary school. Students from the U.S. and Australia have come over and studied in the school. Realizing that there are opportunities beyond their own country motivates students.

**Mr. Guterres:**

- Not everything needs to be scaled up. Some projects may not be big, but they make a difference.
- Scaling up is difficult in these environments due to poor governments.
- Solutions include:
  - Giving absolute priority to investing in people. Solar lamps can be given to a camp, but they need to be able to repair them.
  - Looking for bottlenecks and addressing them. They can be found in infrastructure or energy, and investments will be necessary to overcome them.
  - Whenever possible, use market-like instruments, such as food vouchers in Mogadishu, instead of just distributing food.
  - Use technology as an instrument to do things that cannot be done without it. A powerful example is Kenya and the use of mobile phones in its financial sector.
- The system is dysfunctional. A special visa program to help displaced people would be a good idea. Resettlement opportunities can be both a strategic instrument and an emergency tool, but this is currently limited.
- The ability of people to cope in these situations is amazing. People are able to find energy to endure and rebuild. Ensure that they use that energy and don't preempt it with humanitarian efforts.

**Audience member:** What about the importance of water and how it could enable girls get an education?

- **Mr. Guterres:** Water is an absolute priority. Sudan faces many other pressures, including conflict, but creating minimally acceptable living conditions is key.

**Audience member:** It is illegal for refugees to work, which causes a major problem. What can we do to change this?

- **Mr. Guterres:** Raise this issue in a forceful way to those who are in a position to put pressure on a country; it should be a right of the refugees.

### III. Opportunities for Action:

- Raise nationwide enrollment with a concentration on girls.
- Expand schools across the region.
- Increase the amount of resettlement opportunities.
- Fight for the right of refugees to work.
- Use market-based solutions rather than hand-outs.
- Focus on people: equipment is only useful if it can be maintained or repaired.

*Turning ideas into action.*