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A Valuable Asset: Value Chains Workshop Paves New Way for DDR



Khartoum 17-1-12: On January 16th, 2012 in Khartoum a bold new initiative in business development for ex-combatants was presented to a rapt audience. Facilitated by UNDP DDR, the Sudan DDR Commission (SDDRC) and local private sector consultant PACT, the workshops aims were to introduce the new concept of value chain analysis to DDR in order to show stakeholders just what a value-chain is and how it can be maximized to empower both ex-combatants and the community at large. The audience, which included representatives from local businesses like DAL group and CAPOS, banks, implementing partners, government and non-government organizations including representatives from various ministries, and the ex-combatants themselves, were keen to understand the perspective benefits of the value chains themselves.

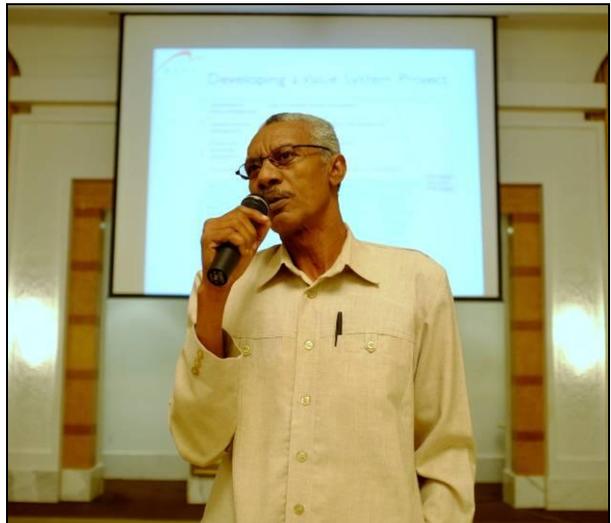
As such, it was explained that DDR is engaged in value chain development for three major reasons: to increase the sustainability of reintegration, broaden the positive economic benefits to the larger community, and to broaden peace building impact. UNDP and the SDDRC are promoting value chain integration in Sudan to further bolster the sustainable support of the socioeconomic reintegration of ex-combatants and economic recovery of localities as a peace building mechanism. Inter and intra-state value chains will be strengthened with ex-combatants and vulnerable youth as links in the chain together with other community members.

A value chain is a string of companies or persons working together to satisfy market demand for a particular product. Generally it involves a sequence of activities that an industry undertakes with each activity adding value to the product and profit. Value Chain interventions are used by the UNDP to integrate the poor into local and global markets in order to facilitate access to fair pay and prices as both wage earners and consumers. On the preventative side, this is particularly relevant for an economy like Sudan, which has been

affected by years of civil war and where inter-communal conflicts still arise. On the reintegration side, Value Chain interventions have the potential to alleviate the poverty of those in war-affected economies and can thus serve as a peace building strategy.

For PACT Director and workshop facilitator Dr Mohamed Yousif, who oversaw the various groups as they analyzed different business opportunities, the answer was simple: “Value chains work when you add to them the concept of franchising. If you look at business failures, the lowest number is franchises because they know what they are doing. So I think for us, today is a chance to learn and as we understand the concepts each person will go home and think about more ideas. We have to be connected, talking to each other, coming up with new ideas and more projects. Anything you can put in a value chain any management process of independent business can be put into franchise. So let us think together and welcome!”

As DDR Programme Director Kumar Venkumahanthi noted at the conclusion of the workshop, “The objective of this workshop was to bring together experts and different stakeholders with the idea of coming to a collective understanding. Yes the value chains approach will work for the DDR programme. This is the first step, now unless we go to the states and work with the stakeholders and partners we will not be able to come up with practical solutions. That is what we expect as an outcome from this workshop.”



Facilitators and keynote speakers, pictured (from left to right): UNDP DDR Programme Director (a) Kumar Venkumahanthi, PACT Director Dr. Mohamed Yousif, UNDP DDR Reintegration Coordinator for Central Sector, Nancy Archer and SDDRC Planning Director, Siddig Mohamed (*photo credits: Ariel Rubin, UNDP DDR*)



For further information, contact:

Ariel Rubin, UNDP, email: ariel.rubin@undp.org

Yusra Salim, UNDP email: yusra.salim@undp.org