

Latent potential - identifying the channels for private sector peace-building in Somalia

Tim Wilson (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Sub-regional Office for Eastern Africa, Rwanda)

As Somalia emerges from an exceptionally prolonged crisis, the private sector will play an important role in contributing to the consolidation of peace. However, the details and nature of this role have never been comprehensively articulated. This paper seeks to do that by examining primary data, interviews and research. The result of this examination is the identification of three principal channels through which private sector actors can contribute to peace-building in Somalia: (1) by increasing the opportunity cost of conflict, (2) by introducing innovations that are conducive to peace and (3) by assisting other peace-builders. The paper discusses each of these channels and uses international and regional examples to illustrate them. The paper also highlights some of the key boundaries of these channels as well as mapping the conclusions into the broad research agenda.

Key words: Somalia, peace-building, businesses