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Theme Area: New Solutions to Human (In)Security

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Title: Creating Sustainable Relations Among the Three Sectors to Prevent Human Tragedy: The Global Road Safety Initiative

The world focus on unusual natural and manmade disasters that have taken such a toll on human physical and psychological security in so many countries over the past five years, has deflected attention from more prosaic daily causes of loss of life, health and psychological security. Yet many of these more “normal” causes of insecurity and carnage can be prevented through proactive alliances among the third, government and corporate sectors. These trisectoral alliances forged to deal with more regular occurrences can then provide a basis for understanding the nature of alliances required to face large scale, exceptional disasters. The role of civil society and commercial partners is particularly important in developing countries, where the governmental infrastructure and capacity is often quite weak or limited.

One model of a trisectoral alliance being created in an attempt to avoid what is currently projected to be the third leading cause of death globally by 2020 is the Global Road Safety Initiative (GRSI) (WHO/World Bank 2004; Kopits and Cropper 2003). Formed in response to the 2004 UN Resolution calling for Road Safety, the GRSI engages NGOs, governments, and seven corporations. The GRSI objective is to tailor the knowledge and standards of road safety gleaned through experience in high income nations to the conditions and cultures of developing nations in order to prevent unnecessary loss of life, limb and psychological security caused by the rise in collisions associated with more mobile societies.

This paper studies the GRSI as a model of a proactive alliance among the three sectors aiming to provide citizens with more security in their daily lives. The GRSI will be contrasted with the US railroad safety issue to demonstrate the pivotal role of third sector organizations in these alliances. The paper argues that in an increasingly complex and interconnected world, alliances among the three sectors and across state lines are necessary to address new conditions and protect human life. While the state and private sector often possess tools to address disasters, the third sector is a critical mediating partner in these relationships—a role it is positioned to play effectively in the GRSI but assumed dubiously in the railroad safety issue. The third sector is ideally placed to ensure

that corporate and state self-interest are harnessed to serve the best interests of civil society and local community needs.

Multistakeholder partnerships are difficult to forge, regulate and sustain. The GRSI provides an ideal basis for understanding: when intersectoral collaboration is possible and desirable under a framework of sustainable governance (Webb 2005); effective state facilitation of third sector corporate partnerships (Brock 2004); testing speculations on critical ingredients for relations between the state and sector (Boris and Steuerle 1999; Harris and Rochester 2001) and among the three sectors (Taylor 2003; Phillip 2001; Klickert 1997) including mutual self-interest (Sagawa and Segal 1999); and identifying the timing of relationships as similar to policy windows and streams (Kingdon 1984; Sabatier 1999; John 2003).

Thus, the paper will have three objectives: it will provide an understanding of the ingredients and conditions for sustainable relationships among the sectors when dealing with regular occurrences; it will provide insight into the pivotal and necessary role (and limits) for third sector organizations in multistakeholder partnerships addressing human security and safety; and it will use the GRSI as a relationship forged to deal with a regular occurrence to provide insights into the basis for cooperative state-third sector-private sector relations when confronting unexpected natural or manmade disasters.

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