**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC**

Expert Workshop on

Developing a Security Sector Reform (SSR) Concept for the United Nations

**Congress Hall of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Bratislava, Slovakia**

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REPORT

The international community has gained significant experience in security sector reform (SSR), particularly as an element of its peacebuilding endeavours. Intergovernmental organisations have assumed an increasingly important role in shaping the SSR agenda. For many years now, the United Nations (UN) system has also been engaged in a wide range of SSR activities – though not necessarily under the label of SSR. What has been absent to date is a common, comprehensive, and coordinated UN approach to SSR cutting across the entire peacebuilding spectrum and including longer-term social and economic development, with shared principles, objectives and guidelines for the development and implementation of UN support to SSR, and clarity on roles and responsibilities across the UN system. There is, however, increasing interest within the UN system, and strong calls from the field, for such an approach which would serve as a valuable orientation and planning tool to various UN institutions working on SSR and in related areas. UN Member States have also expressed interest in the development of a UN policy framework for SSR. In July 2005, for example, the Security Council addressed the question in the context of post-conflict peacebuilding and the subsequent statement by the Presidency acknowledged the need for more coherent approaches by the UN in addressing SSR issues.

It is against this background that Slovakia has decided to actively promote a debate on the UN's role in SSR in its capacity as non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in 2006-2007. In this context, the Slovak Ministries of Foreign Affairs and

Defence, with the support of the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), organised an expert workshop on 7 July 2006 in Bratislava. The meeting was attended by over one hundred delegates representing several national governments, UN institutions and regional organisations as well as nongovernmental organisations involved in SSR. It marked the beginning of a series of discussions on the UN's approach to SSR with a view of preparing the basis for the ministerial meeting of the Security Council on this topic to be held in the course of Slovakia's presidency in early 2007. The key objective of the expert workshop was therefore to launch a broad discussion on the role of SSR within the UN system in order to increase understanding of the issue as such and to explore options for developing a UN policy framework for SSR while drawing on experiences of other intergovernmental organisations as applicable.

There was widespread consensus among participants that the UN should develop a comprehensive approach to SSR, including general principles and guidelines which, however, must be tailored to specific country and regional contexts. Given its global mandate, universal reach and international legitimacy, the UN was also seen as the preferred strategic coordinator of international efforts aimed at supporting SSR, though taking into account the rather limited capacity of the UN system to support SSR. Furthermore, participants emphasised the importance of a comprehensive UN approach to SSR being based on the experiences of SSR implementing countries as well as regional organisations, and the conceptual work already carried out by other international actors. It was suggested that follow-on discussions should concentrate on these issues which are briefly discussed in the final section of this report.

This report provides a summary of the main points of presentations and discussion at the workshop, which concentrated on three broad topics: (1) approaches of intergovernmental organisations to SSR, (2) UN approaches to SSR, and (3) the development of a UN SSR concept.

1. INTERGOVERNMENTAL APPROACHES TO SSR[1]

Intergovernmental organisations are playing an ever increasing role in designing and implementing SSR programs. The approaches of intergovernmental organisations to SSR tend to vary broadly, as a function of whether they bring a development, security, or governance perspective to SSR; whether their geographical focus is global, regional, or sub-regional; whether they concentrate on field activities or norm development; and, the specific country context that they focus on. Most intergovernmental organisations are focused on only a part of the entire security sector and are not active in addressing SSR in all the contexts where it can be required. Despite the varied origins and applications of the SSR activities of intergovernmental organisations, they face a number of common challenges: for example, the need to have an overarching SSR concept and robust implementation guidelines, the need to insure that their human and material resources are organised in such a way as to support the cross-cutting nature of SSR programmes; the need for effective and synergistic cooperation among the various actors sponsoring SSR; and

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[1] For an overview see background paper on "Intergovernmental Approaches to Security Sector Reform (SSR)", prepared by DCAF for the workshop.

the need to insure that SSR activities are carried out in a transparent and accountable manner. To date, two intergovernmental organisations – the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD DAC) and the European Union (EU) – have developed, or are in the process of developing, comprehensive policy frameworks to guide their various SSR activities. Other intergovernmental organisations, such as the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), have a long record of assisting member and partner states in certain dimensions of SSR.

For the **OECD DAC**, SSR represents an effective framework for understanding the linkages among the various actors involved in delivering security, and for ensuring that the security sector is accountable and efficient. It is also seen as a tool for conflict prevention and peacebuilding requiring a developmental approach. For this reason, the OECD DAC was involved in developing guidelines for SSR in 2004, which are now being followed-up by an effort to develop a necessary implementation framework on SSR (IF SSR). Some of the key issues in the implementation guidelines are the following: SSR is not just a technical, but a highly political process; local ownership has to be seen as the point of departure for SSR; context is everything; and, the needs for a post-conflict environment can be radically different from other contexts. The IF SSR recognises that it is important to translate these and other principles into usable advice for those working in the field.

Over the past year, the **EU** has been involved in conceptualising its approach to SSR. Both the European Council and the European Commission have elaborated their respective SSR concepts and have, just recently, jointly drafted an EU wide over-arching SSR document. This reflects the realisation that security and development are interdependent, and that every effort needs to be made to ensure that this is reflected in the practical work carried out by the Council and the Commission. The EU intends to be pragmatic in its approach, relying in large part on the norm-setting work of the OECD. It also intends to be flexible. SSR activities will be either carried out by the Council, or the Commission, or by both acting in unison. As the EU turns to the implementation of its new concept, it will face a number of challenges. There are still relatively few within the EU who are aware of the SSR concept and its implications, in particular, the need to take a holistic approach in programme design and implementation. Finally, the EU will face long-term training requirements in the area of SSR.

The **OSCE** is an ideal partner for the UN`s SSR activities. SSR has a strong conflict prevention dimension, which is an important part of what the OSCE is doing. While the OSCE has no SSR concept proper, its 1994 Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security contains a number of key concepts and principles of relevance to SSR. Through the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE, the organisation has access to the parliaments of 56 member states, as well as to their defence committees, and can therefore play an important role in building legislative oversight capacity. Finally, the OSCE has a broad gamut of SSR related activities in the field, including in post-conflict theatres where issues such as disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR), small arms and light weapons (SALW), border management and rule of law

are at a premium. The OSCE should consider launching a stock-taking of its various SSR activities with a view to developing its own SSR approach.

The SSR activities of **NATO** take place under the Partnership Action Program for Defence Institution Building (PAP-DIB). This is the latest in a series of outreach activities that NATO has been involved with in the post-Communist part of the Euro-Atlantic area for 15 years now. PAP-DIB focuses on such practical questions as building capacity in the defence sector for personnel management and budgeting issues, and addressing the consequences of reform. Through these activities, NATO has learned that development and security are inter-linked, and that it is essential to hold ministries of defence to high standards of transparency and accountability. Another lesson is that there is always a disparity or 'disconnect' between ambitions and resources. NATO should also consider a stock-taking of its SSR activities, such as suggested for the OSCE.

The **AU** and **ECOWAS** are the two intergovernmental organisations in Africa which, while not having yet developed a coherent SSR concept, have adopted mechanisms and instruments which aspire to democratic governance of the security sector and have began to engage in activities which come under the gambit of SSR. The ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security and the its Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance are two cardinal instruments of ECOWAS which are already well-suited for the elaboration of a sub-regional SSR concept. The Common African Defence and Security Policy of the AU provides the overarching framework for a continental African SSR doctrine which would be derived from, and be predicated on, a UN SSR concept.

2. UNITED NATIONS APPROACHES TO SSR[2]

Of the intergovernmental organisations involved in SSR, the UN is best placed to assist states in improving capacity and governance of the security sector through the promotion of a holistic SSR agenda. For this to happen, the UN should develop a common understanding of SSR – including a system-wide SSR policy or concept that would guide future UN SSR programmes and projects in a coherent, consistent and sustainable way. Although the UN has not developed a common SSR policy framework so far, SSR is very much on the agenda of the **UN system**. Given its broad definition and multi-purpose nature, SSR cuts across a wide range of UN policy areas from peace and security, to development, human rights and the rule of law. There is a strong consensus that SSR is central to post-conflict recovery. An increasing number of UN institutions are involved in one or another aspect of SSR. The UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are the two key actors involved in operational SSR activities (see below). Various UN institutions such as the Security Council repeatedly refer to SSR, but rarely define it. The ambiguity that this creates is likely to undermine UN output. In recent years, SSR and related activities supported by the UN system have increased both in number and scope – though without these activities being necessarily

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[2] For an overview see background paper on "UN Approaches to Security Sector Reform (SSR)", prepared by DCAF for the workshop.

attributed to the SSR concept. There is a certain bias in favour of justice and police reform as well as of SSR-related activities in post-conflict settings. In this respect, there is certainly room for improvement in the sense that UN actors should strengthen their support for SSR activities relating to defence capacity-building as well as to the enhancement of civil management and oversight of the security sector.

DPKO, which prepares and manages UN peacekeeping operations, is faced with strong calls from the field for a "roadmap" concerning SSR activities carried out by integrated missions. Despite the UN being involved in SSR for some time, no standards or guidelines exist, and only few mandates explicitly refer to SSR activities. It remains very much an ad hoc activity for UN missions, though one of increasing importance. SSR has particular relevance for DPKO because it represents an exit strategy for peacekeepers; only once a viable security sector is established can troop withdrawal be considered. Nonetheless, the lifespan of a peacekeeping mission could never hope to undertake long-term, locally owned SSR, but only to initiate a reform process and a framework for vital local ownership. For a UN SSR concept to be relevant for post-conflict environments, it needs to be modest about what can be achieved (and by when) in general and in terms of local ownership in particular. It also needs to focus on short-term security requirements, the engagement of armed non-state actors, the establishment of a framework for DDR (which, in turn, shapes possibilities for SSR), operational capacity-building for security actors and the development of specialised technical expertise which could be used by field missions. Even with a comprehensive UN approach, it is necessary to keep in mind that UN capacity in the area of SSR is very much limited. In terms of international coordination of SSR assistance, the most that the UN could offer is to serve as a small hub with large and strong spokes of regional and bilateral efforts.

UNDP has developed its own programmatic approach to SSR ("Justice and Security Sector Reform" / JSSR) and has done a significant amount of operational work in certain dimensions but not in the entire spectrum of SSR (e.g. community policing, police reform, security reviews, parliamentary oversight of the security sector, etc.). SSR related activities supported by the UNDP are part of a broader, particularly governance, context. From a UNDP perspective, there is a need for strategic coordination of UN SSR efforts, and the development of a comprehensive UN approach to SSR would be an important step in this direction. There are encouraging developments in this regards, including the creation of the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), joint DPKO/UNDP efforts on SSR stock-taking and the fact that the UN system has developed a common approach on DDR, an area of activity which is closely related to SSR in post-conflict environments. There are a number of challenges that a common UN SSR concept must take into consideration: integrating the views and approaches of different epistemic communities (development, security, governance); finding a key actor and developing respective capacity within the UN for defence sector reform; building management capacity across the whole security sector (e.g. procurement, assets, human resources, logistics); developing a strategy for the engagement of armed non-state actors which, in post-conflict environments, are often the key security providers for up to 80 per cent of the population; ensuring sustainability and thus long-term funding of SSR assistance; establishing the UN as a strategic coordinator of international efforts concerning SSR. Finally, it is necessary to bear in mind that concepts do not implement themselves but require skilled and committed people who turn theory into practice.

In **Kosovo**, **UNDP** is currently involved in an Internal Security Sector Review (ISSR). This is a process with extensive international buy-in, with important issues of transparency and legitimacy, and as such may provide valuable lessons for similar initiatives elsewhere. The UNDP is carrying out this program on the basis of voluntary contributions, which has had the effect of facilitating work with the bilateral donors involved. The programme brings together the international community and Kosovo's civil society, and rests on far-reaching cooperation among Kosovo bodies involved in internal security, as well as a range of intergovernmental organisations. The ISSR is proceeding through eight stages, and it is expected a blue-print for the future security institutions of Kosovo will have been produced by the end of the year. The ISSR focuses on such security dimensions as the need for an emergency response capacity, and the ability to defend Kosovo's territory. For its citizens, however, the greatest security threat can be unemployment. The OSCE has played a vital role in support of the ISSR in the area of awareness building, with a very active programme aimed at informing citizens at the municipal level of the stakes involved in the ISSR, and the direction that it is taking.

While neither the United Nations Office for West Africa (**UNOWA**), Dakar, nor the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have articulated a common SSR concept for West Africa, initiatives on SSR have been taken by both organisations which can form the point of departure for the sub-region's contribution to the evolution of an SSR concept for the United Nations. In particular, the conference on "Security Sector Reform; Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in West Africa", which was convened by UNOWA on 22-23 November, 2004, was a crucial step to facilitate a regional debate among key stakeholders on the reform of the security sector as a way of enhancing peace and contributing to the prevention of conflict in West Africa. A UN SSR concept could facilitate generating much needed focus on the issue of SSR by West African States. In this context, it would be useful to hold a joint regional roundtable on the development of a UN SSR concept in West Africa with ECOWAS as most relevant regional actor playing a key role.

3. DEVELOPING A SSR CONCEPT FOR THE UN

Learning from experiences of SSR implementing countries. It is obvious that a UN SSR concept must emerge from more than a donor-to-donor conversation. Because local ownership is so important for SSR to succeed, the relevance and applicability of a UN SSR concept would depend on the extent to which it is based on and accommodates the views and experiences of the SSR implementing countries, mainly in the developing world. As emphasised in the keynote speech by the Slovak Minister of Foreign Affairs, "there is no doubt, that while addressing the topic further, we need to take fully into account the experience of countries that have undergone or are undergoing SSR, otherwise we risk creating artificial models that would ignore realities on the ground and actual needs of recipient countries". Exploring the experiences of SSR implementing countries may be a useful point of departure for the discussion of specific aspects of SSR in the UN context. In doing so, cases should be drawn from different world regions, though with a certain emphasis on Sub-Saharan Africa, and they should represent different reform contexts (e.g. conflict prevention, post-conflict peacebuilding, political and economic transition).

Learning from regional experiences in and approaches to SSR. More often than not, SSR efforts undertaken by one country are threatened by developments in neighbouring countries. On the other hand, geographical proximity facilitate experience sharing, lessons learned processes and coordination among states. Regional cooperative approaches therefore tend to create a more conducive environment for the implementation of SSR, while regional conflicts tend to weaken them. The relevance of the regional dimension of SSR is clearly illustrated by developments in sub-regions such as the Western Balkans and in West Africa. As already mentioned, intergovernmental organisations – many of them regional and sub-regional organisations – have assumed an increasingly active role in shaping the SSR agenda. Given the important role the UN Charter accords to regional organisations in the maintenance of global peace and security, the development of a comprehensive UN framework for SSR should draw as much as possible on relevant experiences, approaches and mechanisms of these regional actors. At the same time, a comprehensive UN SSR policy could facilitate conceptual guidance and operational capacity of regional actors in SSR. As noted by the Slovak Minister of Foreign Affairs in his keynote speech, "given the irreplaceable role of regional organizations in promoting global peace and security and the need to tackle SSR from a regional angle, it would be worthwhile, if not necessary, to apply their expertise and practical experience in shaping universal understanding of SSR in the UN and *vice versa*". Looking into specific regional approaches to SSR and exploring options for closer interaction between the UN and regional organisations in promoting SSR may be a useful second step in deepening the discussion on specific aspects of SSR in the UN context.

Drawing on and expanding existing SSR concepts. Concerning the conceptualisation of SSR, there is no need to reinvent the wheel. In its own SSR policy development, the UN should therefore draw on the conceptual work already carried out by other international actors, particularly OECD DAC. However, these existing concepts tend to focus on donor coordination and have therefore to be adapted to the specific needs of the UN system taking into account experiences of SSR implementing countries and approaches of regional organisations. Given the UN's eminent role in the maintenance of global peace and security, a UN policy framework for SSR should necessarily be global in scope but, at the same time, give special attention to the distinct features of SSR in post-conflict contexts, including the role of peace agreements (and UNSC mandates based on them) in shaping SSR; the support for SSR provided by peacekeeping operations; the engagement of armed non-state actors in security sector governance; capacity-building in favour of national security institutions; and the relationship between SSR and DDR as well as other SSR-related activities. In this context, the Security Council seems to be in the most favourable position to launch a broad debate on a UN policy framework for SSR, which, however, should include all relevant actors of the UN system involved in one way or another in SSR.

In this process, a number of points identified at the workshop lend themselves to guiding further discussion on the development of a UN policy framework for SSR:

- Importance of ensuring local ownership, whereby it is necessary to keep in mind that not all situations are conducive to making local ownership the point

of departure; in some post-conflict environments it may not be possible, or even counterproductive, for local elites to take early ownership for SSR

- Importance of developing general SSR principles and guidelines, which can be tailored to specific country and regional contexts given that point of departure, reform trajectory and the end point may differ substantively from one SSR implementing country to another
- Need to take a broad human security approach when analysing the security sector in a given environment as a precondition to then setting priorities and developing the narrower range of activities that are necessary
- Need to address the role of armed non-state actors and informal security institutions in post-conflict SSR and, at the same time, the importance of building governmental capacity to provide security to the people in an accountable way
- Importance for the credibility of SSR that mature democracies also embrace the need for review and, as necessary, reform of their security sectors
- Importance of the development of a UN SSR concept covering all policy areas vs. development of SSR concepts that cover specific policy areas such as peacekeeping, post-conflict peacebuilding, development assistance, gender issues, etc.
- Importance of one UN agency taking the lead in developing a policy framework for UN support to SSR (e.g. UNSC, PBC, DPA, DPKO, UNDP) vs. the establishment of an inter-agency coordinating mechanism vs. each UN agency developing its own SSR policy (DPKO on defence and police sector reform in integrated missions, UNDP on SSR in conflict prevention and crisis recovery, DPA and/or PBSO on SSR in the framework of peacebuilding, UNIFEM on gender approaches to SSR, etc.)
- Importance of the development of a comprehensive SSR approach vs. approaches to specific dimensions of SSR such as defence reform, reform of law enforcement bodies, parliamentary oversight of the security sector, etc.
- Importance of the development of a "global" UN SSR policy framework vs. development of concepts for specific regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa
- Importance of coordination among intergovernmental organisations (and other international actors) involved in SSR assistance, which is clearly vital but often remains poor in practice because mandates of international actors often cover SSR only partially or reluctance against coordination by other actors is widespread
- Necessity for the UN to play the role of a strategic coordinator of international SSR assistance vs. the UN's own limited capacity in this area