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Towards a better practice framework in security sector reform

Broadening the debate

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Introducing the Clingendael/International Alert/Saferworld Occasional SSR Paper series

As the arguments for including security sector reform (SSR) into the agendas of donors have become increasingly accepted, the time has come for policy analysts, academics and practitioners to take stock of the lessons that have been learned from some five years of engagement. This new Occasional SSR Paper series, published jointly by the Netherlands Institute of International Affairs ('Clingendael'), International Alert and Saferworld, is intended to provide a forum where these lessons can be discussed and disseminated.

Each of our organisations, both separately and in collaboration, has worked on different aspects of security sector reform over the past 5 years. We are therefore keen to extrapolate lessons learned from donor and non-governmental organisation (NGO) experiences in security sector reform.

This first Occasional SSR Paper is based on the discussions and outcomes of a working group held by International Alert and Saferworld on security sector reform at an international conference entitled 'Towards Better Peace Building Practice' organised by the European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation (EPCPT) and Kontakt der Kontinenten (KdK) in Soesterberg, the Netherlands, in October 2001. The purpose of the working group was to see whether it is possible to develop a better practice framework on security sector reform. Three thematic sessions were held on police/community relations, civilian oversight of the military and small arms reduction and control, with case studies presented of experiences in Malawi, Northern Ireland, Guatemala, the former Soviet Union and Albania.

This Occasional SSR Paper attempts to outline some of the key elements of what might constitute a better practice framework, as suggested in the working group discussions. It is appreciated that such a framework cannot be developed over a series of meetings looking at a select number of experiences. Therefore we are hoping that this paper can contribute to a broader discussion amongst experts, policymakers and NGOs, which will assist in the development of such a framework. It is envisaged that the proposed framework would reflect practical experience, indicate existing obstacles and offer appropriate ways forward.

Planned future Occasional SSR Papers include a review of donor policy on security sector reform assistance.

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List of abbreviations

DDR	Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
DfID	Department for International Development (UK)
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FLACSO	Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (Guatemalan NGO)
fSU	Former Soviet Union
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Technical Cooperation)
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRA	Irish Republican Army
MALPOD	Malawi Police Organisational Development project (DfID project)
MASSAJ	Malawi Safety, Security and Access to Justice programme (DfID programme)
MPS	Malawi Police Service
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OAS	Organization of American States
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OECD DAC	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
RUC	Royal Ulster Constabulary
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SALW	Small arms and light weapons
SARPCCO	Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Co-ordination Organisation
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SSR	Security sector reform
UDA	Ulster Defence Association
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UVF	Ulster Volunteer Force

Contents

I	Introduction	1
II	Defining the security sector and security sector reform	1
III	Linking conflict, governance and the security sector	2
IV	Roles for donor support for security sector reform	3
V	The need for a better practice framework for security sector reform: from policy to practice	4
VI	Eight elements of the framework	5
i	Understanding the context	5
ii	Principles of security sector reform	6
iii	Attitudinal changes	6
iv	Local ownership	8
v	Coherence, sequencing and co-ordination	9
vi	Measuring impact	9
vii	Engagement and entry points	10
viii	Resources and sustainability	11
VII	Better practice framework and project cycle	12
	Case study annexes:	18
	A. Northern Ireland	18
	B. Guatemala	19
	C. Former Soviet Union	20
	D. Malawi	21
	E. Kenya and Tanzania	22
	F. Albania	23
VIII	Further reading list	24

I. Introduction

Over the last few years the debate on security sector reform (SSR) has gathered momentum within the donor community. Whilst processes aimed at improving the governance of the security sector (armed forces, police, intelligence services, judiciary, oversight bodies etc.) in developing countries are by no means new, donor involvement in supporting such efforts has increased. In the past, external support directed towards the security sector of developing countries was provided or withheld for strategic and political reasons. However, in recent years there has been increasing recognition by the donor community, including the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the World Bank, the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU), that in the absence of security, key development objectives and structural stability will not be achieved. Although politically sensitive, donors now see the reform of the security sector as necessary for good governance and as a means of promoting sustainable peace and development.

A policy framework on security sector reform has been established by the donor community over the last few years through discussions within the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC)¹ and the publication of a number of documents by donor governments, notably the United Kingdom (UK) and Germany.² To date, however, there has been little significant reflection on the experiences of support given to security sector reform efforts. Few evaluations have been carried out to assess the effectiveness of assistance provided to such activities and little has been done to draw out the lessons learned from the engagements that have taken place. The aim of this Occasional Paper is to suggest a better practice framework for analysing the lessons learned from experience in security sector reform processes. It attempts to develop from this framework a broad methodology by which donors can begin to assess what support they can provide for security sector reform activities in aid recipient countries.

II. Defining the security sector and security sector reform

It is important to first define what we mean by the security sector and security sector reform. The security sector is taken to mean all those organisations which have authority to use, or order the use of force, or threat of force, to protect the state and its citizens, as well as those civil structures that are responsible for their management and oversight. The security sector can therefore be viewed as forming three pillars:

- a) Groups with a mandate to wield the instruments of violence – military, paramilitaries and police forces;
- b) Institutions with a role in managing and monitoring the security sector – civilian ministries, parliaments and NGOs; and
- c) Bodies responsible for guaranteeing the rule of law – the judiciary, the penal system, human rights ombudsmen and, where these bodies are particularly weak, the international community.³

The overall aim of 'Security Sector Reform' is **the transformation of security institutions so that they play an effective, legitimate and democratically accountable role in providing external and internal security for their citizens.** Transformation of the security sector requires broad consultation and includes goals such as strengthening civilian control and oversight of the security sector; professionalisation of the security forces; demilitarisation and peace-building; and strengthening the rule

¹ OECD, *Security Issues and Development Co-operation: A Conceptual Framework for Enhancing Policy Coherence*. DCD(2000)4/REV2, Paris: OECD, December 2000.

² Cf. section VIII, the 'Further reading list' at the end of this paper for some key publications from DfID and GTZ on security sector reform.

³ Hendrickson, Dylan, *A Review of the Security Sector Reform*. London: The Conflict, Security and Development Group funded by DfID, Centre for Defence Studies at King's College London, September 1999, p 29.

of law. In this paper, the focus is on transforming the security sector, but the terms reform and transformation will be used interchangeably.

III. Linking conflict, governance and the security sector

The recent debate on security sector reform has emerged as the result of a growing recognition of the inter-relatedness between security and development — that each is a necessary precondition for the other to occur. Promoting better governance of the security sector is seen as a means of enhancing human security and development. While implicit in this debate is an appreciation that security sector reform can help reduce violent conflict, relatively little analysis has been done on security sector reform as a conflict prevention issue. Yet poor governance of the security sector is often a source of conflict and a key obstacle to peace-building. Of the 44 countries in conflict in the world⁴, many have security forces that reflect and perpetuate societal cleavages (either ethnic or political) that lie at the heart of violence. These forces are also frequently associated with repressive acts against civilians and violations of human rights. The transformation of the security sector is critical to the success of peace agreements and the fostering of structural stability so that societies can live in a safe and secure environment.

The field of 'conflict analysis' provides a methodology for identifying and understanding common factors that are seen as contributing to the risk of violent conflict. These factors are often grouped into three categories: structural, trigger and perpetuating. Within this framework it is possible to explore the significance and the role of the security sector within specific contexts as a key factor in the occurrence of violent conflict.

a) The security sector and structural causes of conflict

Structural causes of conflict refer to factors that cannot easily be changed, but that can lead to cleavages and disparities within societies that undermine social cohesion and that can be a source of tension and possible conflict between or within certain societal groups. These include: the ethnic make-up of society, the distribution of wealth, political representation, etc. The security forces (military and police) often reflect such structural causes and can perpetuate or amplify their impact. For example, military and police forces can be drawn from certain ethnic and social groups in society, which can lead to security institutions serving only certain interests and excluding others, causing antagonism and mistrust among the general public. In many conflict regions, too, it is the security sector, or more precisely the military, that control the real political and economic power in highly authoritarian governments and are at the heart of the culture of exploitation and violence. This signifies a lack of political control and accountability and is symptomatic of poor and undemocratic governance. While such a situation might provide stability in a given situation, it represents a lack of democratic capacity within the state to adequately deal with crises when they occur. Consequently, successful reform of the security sector may be contingent on addressing the broader structural causes of conflict, and vice versa.

b) The security sector and trigger factors

Trigger factors are events that bring underlying tensions to the surface and cause an escalation of violence. In relation to the security sector, this may include military coups or particular offences by state security forces, who are often the agents of state repression and have been associated with major human rights abuses. However, trigger factors, especially with regards to the security sector, can be linked to the structural factors of conflict (outlined above). For instance, security forces may react to political unrest with excessive violence because they are unaccountable or they protect an unrepresentative regime.

⁴ From 1990-2000 there have been 56 violent conflicts in 44 countries, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). *SIPRI Yearbook 2001*. Oxford: SIPRI, 2001, p. 7.

c) The security sector and perpetuating factors

Perpetuating factors concern dynamics that contribute to the continuation of violence and make conflict intractable, such as the existence of war economies and the ready availability of small arms and light weapons. In relation to the security sector, security forces may for instance be involved in various types of trafficking and the extraction and manipulation of natural resources at the centre of war economies. Such involvement can often be closely linked with inadequacies within the political system - that is a lack of political control or a lack of funding for the security sector institutions. When security forces become economically independent of the political state structures, their accountability decreases and they may be a perpetuating factor in conflict and in preventing the establishment of democratic structures, as they act in their own interests, instead of those of the state as a whole. The presence of irregular armed groups that are unable to reintegrate back into society and the large availability of small arms may also hinder prospects for seeking non-violent solutions to conflict.

IV. Roles for donor support for security sector reform

In view of the broad definition of the security sector (outlined above), this paper adopts a broad definition of 'donors' as well, namely all donor government institutions involved in security sector reform activities (eg the Ministries of Defence, the Foreign Office and the Department for International Development (DfID), in the case of the UK) as well as multi-lateral institutions (eg the World Bank, the EU and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)). There is a need for discussing the definitions of security sector reform adopted by different donors and how these definitions advance the security sector reform agenda and/or influence the implementation of SSR projects. For instance the European Commission (EC) has until now not prioritised security sector reform, mainly because of the political sensitivities involved. However, even if donors shy away from the term 'security sector reform', they may engage in SSR activities under the umbrella of 'good governance' or 'bilateral military assistance'. On the one hand, this raises the question whether the ultimate goal should be to enhance security sector reform as an issue on the agenda. On the other hand, one could consider encouraging the implementation of SSR activities even if these are implemented under eg 'good governance' engagements.

Donor engagement with security sector institutions has thus far fallen into three broad categories: as local initiatives inviting donor support (eg police reform in Malawi, see Annex D); as part of donor engagement under a good governance agenda; or as part of a specific post-conflict or peace-building agenda, where the security sector reform agenda can be locally initiated or externally driven. In the latter instance, it is important to note that any security sector reform agenda cannot be considered as politically neutral since it represents a normative framework that may to varying degrees be regarded as externally driven. The entry points and priorities for SSR involvement usually vary according to which institution or department within the donor government or multi-lateral agency takes the lead on the reform engagement and can vary from purely military to purely developmental aims, and any combination in between. Some of the possible ways in which donors can support security sector reform, are the following:

a) Strengthening civilian control and oversight of the security sector

This implies the reform of the relevant governmental and non-governmental civilian institutions to enhance their capacity for the oversight, management and control of the security sector to make sure security institutions exist and function in accordance with their role in a democratic society. This includes:

- Reforming and professionalising ministries of defence and internal affairs; independent ombudsmen offices; civilian review boards; legislatures; budget offices; audit units; and finance ministries.
- Capacity-building of NGOs, professional associations, research and advocacy institutes, and universities.
- Supporting efforts at building trust within the military that civilian institutions are able to successfully and efficiently evaluate security requirements or take responsibility for security-related decisions.

b) Professionalisation of the security forces

This aims at increasing the capacity and skills of the armed forces and consists of:

- Military assistance programmes designed to train soldiers to understand the appropriate roles and behaviour of security forces in democratic societies (training on democratic accountability, human rights, international humanitarian law, ethnic sensitivity and gender issues);
- Technical skills training;
- Sometimes the upgrading of military or police equipment;
- Strengthening the capacity of the police to ensure that they are capable of providing and guaranteeing public security and law and order.

c) Demilitarisation and peace-building

This includes activities to help reduce the availability of excess arms and retrain excess military professionals for peacetime jobs. An integrated approach to demilitarisation involves programmes on:

- *Disarmament* - the reduction in the availability of small arms and light weapons in post-conflict societies;
- *Demobilisation* - the disbanding of armed groups and the process of reconciliation and peace-building; and
- *Re-integration* - the re-insertion of armed combatants into civilian activities.

d) Strengthening the rule of law

This implies establishing a strong, independent legal framework that provides critical civil-democratic control of the security forces and involves:

- Establishing a better functioning penal system through support to law reforms and capacity-building for the judiciary and the parliament;
- Establishing an independent judiciary, free from political influence.

V. The need for a better practice framework for security sector reform: from policy to practice

Many countries have to date undertaken security sector reform activities, often supported by external actors. However, the security sector reform concept that has been used in current donor discourse represents the bringing together of a broad range of activities under one umbrella term. This calls for greater co-ordination and co-operation between different actors that hitherto have not recognised the need to work together in such areas. While there is conventional wisdom about the application, for instance, of demobilisation and civil-military relations programmes by external actors, there is no collective framework for how different donor agencies and military actors should implement these activities together and, moreover, ensure that these are part of a comprehensive approach to security sector reform.

As already pointed out, a policy framework on security sector reform has been established by the donor community over the last few years through discussions within the OECD DAC and the publication of a number of policy documents by donor governments, notably the UK and Germany. Despite this broad policy framework on security sector reform, however, there is as yet no clear strategic approach for how such efforts should be carried out. There are furthermore no methodologies or tools that enable donors to incorporate support to the security sector into broader country assistance strategies. An examination of particular practice and examples can however, provide generic lessons that can be further developed into guidelines and adapted to different types of security sector engagements. Of course, the specific approaches to engagement will be determined by the context, the types of security sector reform activities envisaged and the projects. The following elements however, are thought common to most security sector reform processes.

VI. Eight elements of a better practice framework for security sector reform

This section seeks to highlight the issues that should be considered when engaging in security sector reform and that could be used as benchmarks to extract lessons learned.

i) Understanding the context

There are no blueprints for carrying out security sector reform, since this is specific to the context of individual countries. There is also no one model of which areas should be targeted by security sector reform activities. It is vital therefore that donors conduct a thorough country assessment prior to any engagement in order to understand the context and local realities. Any country assessment should not only include a survey of the local circumstances, security actors and institutional capacities, but also identify the human security needs and change agents in the proposed area of operation. For example, in a post-conflict scenario where the security forces have a bad reputation for human rights abuses, it may be more productive to start anew with a freshly created organisation. Inappropriate reform activities attempted at the wrong time can be potentially catastrophic, which is the reason for the importance of understanding the context before engaging.

It is vital when engaging in security sector reform that the stage (eg post-conflict, transitional phase or preventing violent conflict) and the type of conflict (eg ideological, ethnic or resource based) are well understood. Similarly, it is important to understand the impact of security sector reform on conflict dynamics. In the case of unresolved conflicts, where donors must remain neutral, engagement with the security sector will not be very likely or will be extremely limited and largely restricted to aiding civil society and working on human rights issues. In a few extreme cases donors have directly aided conflict actors, eg the case of the British Government in Sierra Leone. However, in this case the British first concentrated on military and combat training and only started broader post-conflict security sector reform work once a cease-fire had been agreed.

Another factor that needs to be acknowledged is the form of state one engages in. The former Soviet Union is a case in point. Firstly, the extreme geographical and political contrasts contained within this region have meant that different forms of reform are relevant to different countries and it would be highly inappropriate to adopt a 'one size fits all' approach. Further, in the period following the end of the Cold War, donors focused on eliminating weapons of mass destruction. This often created a situation where the security sector became increasingly unaccountable, whereas in the Soviet period the Communist Party ensured civilian, though authoritarian, control. Therefore in many regions, especially in the Caucasus, working in the area of accountability (both to parliamentarians and wider society) would be an important part of security sector reform. This however, would be less pertinent in Russia where the media and civil society have successfully ensured some transparency.

The broader regional and international context is another important facet of understanding the security context of a reform process. Since security institutions are responsible for both internal and external security, regional security dynamics can impact on national perceptions of security threats and security institutional needs. Similarly, the international context (as eg the Cold War or the current 'war on terrorism') can have a major impact on national perceptions of security threats as well as on donors' willingness to engage in security sector reform activities in specific countries.

<p style="text-align: center;">Key issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thorough country assessments are essential to security sector reform engagements, including a survey of the local, regional and international context, human security needs, institutional capacities, security actors and change agents.• The stage and nature of the conflict are central to formulating an effective engagement strategy in security sector reform.
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- **Any engagement in security sector reform carries a degree of risk due to the sensitive political nature of security issues.**

ii) Principles of security sector reform

The principles of good governance, effective security forces and institutions and respect for human rights and international humanitarian law are some of the key elements of security sector reform programmes. Donors often consider as a prerequisite that these principles appear on the reform agenda of the partner countries.

The Netherlands security sector reform engagement in Rwanda in the period following the genocide and in South Africa after the end of apartheid enhanced the local good governance agenda. In both cases, the Netherlands financed capacity-building within the criminal justice sector, as this sector was seen as vital to democratisation. Aid included the training of the police and, in Rwanda, the construction of prisons following an assessment of the needs of the security sectors in both countries. However, good governance also requires effective civil democratic oversight of the security sector by actors such as legislatures. In each case the principle of good governance and public sector management can be applied to the security sector.

The principle of effective and efficient security forces is often emphasised in reform processes because improved performance of security functions can have a substantial impact on a country's stability. However, improved performance as such is not sufficient, as the danger also exists that such a focus may make security forces more efficient at repressing the population and therefore this objective of reform has to be carefully integrated with efforts to ensure responsible security provision (eg respect for human rights, effective civilian oversight etc).

Promoting respect for human rights is also central to any security sector reform process and can contribute substantially to developing better practice. Despite the desirability to ostracise governments who do not respect human rights, the greatest need for security sector reform is often found in situations where security forces have regularly breached human rights. An example of this is the case of Malawi, where the successful implementation of community policing and the identification of key change agents have engendered a transformation process of the police from being a force to being a service (see Annex D). In Northern Ireland the creation of the position of an independent police ombudsman and the establishment of a Human Rights Commission has started to foster a new culture of openness and respect for human rights within the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

Equally central to security sector reform is promoting respect for and implementation of international humanitarian law. Training in international humanitarian law is already a frequent feature of military assistance programmes. In this way, security sector reform activities build knowledge within military forces about the international rules and norms that govern the conduct of military operations. The Netherlands also promoted international humanitarian law in the Balkans by supporting a training centre in Sarajevo where Dutch military officers have taught on this subject. The use of military officers to do such training has generally been more effective than for instance using human rights lawyers. The professional to professional training approach is based on a shared understanding of the working conditions while a lawyer may be more familiar with the theory, but less familiar with its practical application within the specific military context.

Key issues

- **The key principles of any security sector reform activity are good governance, effective security provision and respect for human rights and international humanitarian law.**

iii) Attitudinal changes

Political will for reform is a key element of any reform process and it is important to understand the factors that strengthen or weaken political will on reform issues. One possible way of strengthening local political will for reform is if the reform programme and external engagement is able to bring about a durable change in the attitudes of a wide range of stakeholders. Security sector reform often requires dramatic changes of mindsets to enable for instance, the subordination of military actors to civil management. The need for changes in local attitudes is also a key element of the local ownership of the reform process that would enhance the sustainability of the reforms. If the change objectives of the reform programme are identified clearly in consultation with local governmental and non-governmental actors, change agents can be identified and reform programmes formulated to support them and the change objectives. Both within and outside the security sector, participative processes and assessments may enable a better understanding of who supports and opposes reform and why, thus facilitating the formulation of strategies for attitudinal change.

A participatory institutional appraisal and needs assessment of the recipient country's security sector, including a threat assessment and overview of the size, make-up and professionalism of the security forces, can create a positive perception within the security sector about the realistic nature of reforms. If reforms are seen as acceptable, longer-term strategies for co-operation and reform can be devised. However, institutional culture can have a great impact on the way security sector personnel see their responsibilities and duties, including issues such as corruption being accepted as normal as well as unwillingness to accept civilian oversight. Although it is very difficult, external engagement can contribute to changing the institutional culture by institutionalising ways of promoting reform objectives and accountability and rewarding achievers. Especially since reform initiatives may be painful for individuals in the system, incentives could serve as motivation for change. However, this method can also be counter-productive as it can be abused by adopting superficial reforms in order to obtain the rewards, instead of undertaking a true transformation process.

Conversely, badly implemented security sector reform programmes can also lead to a change of attitudes away from the reform initiatives. For instance if disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programmes experience problems providing envisaged support to reintegrate former combatants, these people may return to conflict or turn to crime to make a living.

Outside the security sector, a great deal of distrust and suspicion often exists towards some sections of the security sector. This however, depends on the context and there have for instance been cases where the military have been trusted more than the civilian government and military coups have actually been welcomed. The involvement of civil society and communities in reform can substantially change public attitudes. Experience in Malawi has shown that, although changing the attitudes of the police service towards community policing is vital, it is equally important to change the public attitude to identify their own potential role in co-operating with the police. In this way, the community changes from being a victim of insecurity to becoming change agents in improving security. Public attitudes towards the security forces can be very divisive in a conflict such as in Northern Ireland, where identity conflict has dominated police behaviour as well as public perception of the police. Civil society in such a situation actually constitutes an element of a broader peace-building process. Identifying and engaging champions of reform and change agents can therefore be a key condition for enhancing peace.

A more transparent and accountable security sector can positively influence public attitudes and heighten the likelihood of societal co-operation in reforms. Similarly, people may be less inclined to resort to violent solutions to socio-political problems if they are presented with better ways of achieving security and justice. The Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) found from its experience in Central America that the involvement of neutral NGOs and international organisations (eg the Organization of American States (OAS) and the UN), were very successful in effecting positive change of public attitude in reform programmes.

Key issues

- **Attitudinal changes and confidence-building are needed within and outside security sector institutions for successful and sustainable reform.**

- **A participatory approach and ongoing consultations enable closer analysis of change agents (including the differences between various security forces) and attitudinal change processes.**
- **Corruption (especially within a culture that accepts it) can have a very negative impact on efforts to reform the security sector.**

iv) Local ownership

External support has the capacity to catalyse and support reform, but cannot substitute for local ownership, which is essential for initiating and sustaining legitimate reform processes that match the realities of the key stakeholders in a given situation. However, local ownership can be particularly difficult to ensure when supporting reform of the security sector as part of post-conflict agreements, since external involvement in the peace process often translates into a strong external influence on the reform agenda. Externally driven approaches can even jeopardise nascent reform projects and hinder reform processes. On the other hand, when local ownership for reform is very strong, there may be an unwillingness to involve external actors, as for instance in Russia, where reform of the security sector is very much regarded as an internal affair. In such circumstances, opportunities for external involvement may be minimal or non-existent.

If a partnership for security sector reform is established between internal and external actors, one possible way for the external actors to encourage local ownership is to employ strategies for engagement that are iterative and participatory, and seek to shape the engagement around local needs and priorities. If participatory processes can be sustained throughout the engagement processes, feedback and adjustment throughout implementation can be greatly enhanced. A good example of a participatory approach is FLACSO's experience in Guatemala (see Annex B) in which all key stakeholders were convened in the process of developing approaches to specific security sector reform challenges. In Malawi too, community consultation has enabled the identification of key change actors and objectives and the implementation of the project from the community's perspective (see Annex D). These efforts have created a sound base for local ownership as the community have felt that they have a stake in the reform and have been mobilised and empowered by their participation.

Experience has shown that a careful evaluation of the extent of local political will for reform is useful. This may enable the identification of entry points to coincide with where local political will for reform is strongest. Dialogue and engagement between external actors, governments and other security actors can help to generate momentum for reform and strengthen pro-reform elements within a country that may have been lacking the opportunity or skills to actively promote a reform agenda. The will for reform within the higher echelons of government is vital to ensure reforms are implemented.

Including civil society organisations working on security issues into national debates can represent an important signal for change. In countries where security issues are not open to public debate or media scrutiny, civil society may face many obstacles. External support can provide them with the necessary knowledge about security issues and the skills for engaging with the government. In this way, local constituencies can be generated that can cultivate a climate for change by making demands for and providing input into reform processes. However, a more 'top down' approach may be required in identity conflicts such as the one in Northern Ireland, where the security sector is situated at the core of the peace process and co-operation with civil society may reinforce existing social divisions.

Additionally, confidence-building activities may be required between civil society and the various security forces. This may however, differ between various security forces, for instance the police may be seen as more corrupt and a greater immediate threat to communities' security as they have greater access to the local population and may for example make use of blackmail or bribery. Alternatively, the military may be perceived to be more dangerous in a context where violent military coups have created a climate of suppression. These perceptions and the lack of confidence in various sections of the security apparatus would greatly influence the needs for confidence-building and can prove vital to enhancing and strengthening local ownership.

Key issues

- **Local ownership and will for reform can greatly enhance the sustainability and legitimacy of reform processes, but can be difficult to achieve.**
- **Thorough and sustained use of participatory approaches and confidence-building can enhance local ownership and catalyse local will for reform.**
- **Capacity-building within government and civil society can also enhance local ownership.**

v) Coherence, sequencing and co-ordination

The success and long-term sustainability of interventions relating to security sector reform can often be contingent on the scope and coherence of the interventions being made. Because the security sector reform agenda is very broad, many donors may already be involved in various aspects of reform, possibly without labelling it as security sector reform. Engagement may occur under the umbrella of democracy, good governance, legal assistance or peace-building programmes. Achieving coherence between various donors is a challenge, but one that is vital to ensure the efficient use of resources and the complementarity of external involvement in the security sector. A coherent approach to security sector reform can be enhanced by:

- a) Identifying what is already being done in the envisaged recipient country and with what aim(s);
- b) Identifying a donor's own competencies and evaluating how these could best be utilised to achieve the overall aim(s);
- c) Consulting with other engaged donors and stakeholders on how, where and when to become involved.

The timing and sequencing of reform activities can also contribute substantially to achieving coherence. This includes ensuring, as far as possible, the complementarity of reform activities such as combining police, judicial and penal reform so that benefits gained in one of the areas are sustained and expanded upon throughout the system. This is particularly important since reforms in one area of the security sector can also have negative effects in other security areas or outside the security sector. While there is no one model for reform, experience has demonstrated the importance of carefully planning and sequencing reform activities. Reform activities in other areas can also undermine security sector reform, as for instance when DDR processes take place at the same time as market and economic reforms: if the reintegration process already suffers because of insufficient employment opportunities for demobilised combatants, an economic reform programme that reduces public sector employment may aggravate the situation.

Coherent approaches in security sector reform can also be strengthened by promoting high levels of co-ordination between a variety of institutions on local, national, regional and international levels. In the case of Malawi for instance, it was important that regional police/community schemes were co-ordinated with national approaches to policing to avoid the danger that progress in one area might be undermined in another. The coherence of the reform can also be greatly enhanced if external actors co-ordinate their assistance, for example, by the EU as a multilateral donor and its individual member states as bilateral donors. The same applies to regional organisations such as the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the international financial institutions and the UN. Internal institutional coherence between development departments, defence ministries and police or military forces is also paramount, both within donor and partner countries.

Key issues

- **Lack of coherence in reform engagements between local and external actors and across the security sector can scupper reform efforts and waste resources.**

- **Donors can maximise their contribution by identifying their relative strengths in comparison with other donors.**
- **Timing, sequencing and transparent co-operation between actors can greatly contribute to the success of reform assistance through enhanced coherence.**

vi) Measuring impact

In recent years there has been a growing debate within the donor community on the impact of aid on conflict dynamics, recognising that this can be both negative and positive. This is especially true in relation to the potential impact of aid on the security sector due to the political sensitivities associated with it. Donors have developed conflict impact mechanisms to monitor the effect of assistance provided in conflict situations and incorporating such tools into security sector engagements is an important part of a better practice framework. In monitoring the effectiveness of security sector reform, it is vital to have suitable tools to measure the likely impact of engagement before initiating the project. It is also important to have realistic expectations about the outcomes of the project, as unrealistic expectations can result in a project's long-term failure. Furthermore, most security sector reform programmes require a long-term commitment well in excess of normal funding cycles and may initially be relatively low yield. It is therefore important that the established monitoring criteria can allow for adequate monitoring throughout the duration of the project.

Given the long-term nature of most security sector reform assistance, it is important to avoid 'quick fix' solutions. However, a few 'quick wins' in a long-term project can contribute substantially to maintaining confidence in the process. DfID in its ten year Security and Access to Justice Programme in Malawi developed a set of indicators through which the success of the programme could be assessed. These criteria included reducing serious crime, increasing the level of co-ordination within the wider criminal justice sector and improving the capacity of the sector to deliver justice. However, such indicators should be viewed with a degree of caution. For example, increased respect for human rights may lead to discontent of the communities affected by crime so that information flows to the police are reduced, in turn affecting crime statistics negatively. A successful human rights programme assessed on the basis of reducing crime could be seen as a success without crime actually being reduced. On the other hand, if public confidence in the police increases, the level of reported crime may well increase, creating a false impression that the programme has been unsuccessful. When outlining the long-term success criteria of a project, simple measures that can hide or obscure the real result of the project have to be avoided.

Key issues

- **The impact of donor assistance in security sector reform can be both positive and negative and impact assessment strategies are therefore paramount.**
- **By continuously monitoring both short- and long-term goals and achievements, the momentum of the engagement can be maintained and a running assessment of the project is possible.**
- **Monitoring indicators can be counter-productive if they are not designed carefully so as to avoid simplistic measures that can obscure the true result of the project.**

vii) Engagement and entry points

The activities and actors through which donor engagement in security sector reform is implemented can have an important impact on the long-term success or failure of a project. Given that the role of the security sector includes protecting the state, any process of reform which is seen as weakening the security of the state or its control over the means of coercion can be greeted with hostility. In such a

politically sensitive environment, the form of the security sector assistance can have significant implications for the future strategy of further donor engagement.

Security sector reform should also be considered within the broader context of engagements already being undertaken under the military agenda, eg through military assistance programmes, or under the political agenda, eg the political dialogue processes with states working towards accession to the EU. In this regard there are still many unanswered questions about mechanisms for enhancing coherence between such initiatives and a security sector reform agenda, especially in countries that are more willing to accept military assistance than security sector reform assistance. The UK's engagement in Sierra Leone may provide some useful examples of military and development co-operation in reforming the security sector.

When security sector reform is approached within a broad development agenda, security sector priorities are often linked to institutional capacity-building and supporting public sector management processes. Another common entry point for security sector reform assistance is in the area of fiscal management of military and defence budgets. This is an area of interest to many donor governments, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank and is often seen as a justified point of entry into security sector engagement since there are clear pay-offs for partner countries in terms of promoting economic growth. The approach is that becoming involved in financial oversight and military spending often makes it possible to then move on to promoting general oversight functions and the concept of civilian democratic control of the military. Financial oversight can become a tool to increase local civil society capacity to act in an oversight role and can also increase the capability of legislatures to hold the security sector accountable. This approach may be especially useful in parts of the former Soviet Union where the military may not receive all their funds through government channels, but rather from commercial concessions. In such an approach however, the problem of limited government funding should also be borne in mind, as this may be a primary cause for different security forces to engage in legal or illegal commercial pursuits to supplement their resources. Another case in point is Indonesia, where the government funds only approximately 30% of military expenditure. The rest is financed by the military themselves through a wide variety of (often illicit) economic activities. This raises the question of what the government's responsibility is for funding the security sector, as failure in this respect can encourage security sector actors to fend for themselves. This issue should be included in discussions on reform strategies, security sector expenditure and the appropriate size of the security sector.

In Guatemala, FLACSO used a participatory-action-research methodology to conduct a consensus-building academic project on security sector reform policy (see Annex B). This approach allowed researchers to engage with institutional actors and to create space for a growing dialogue between the different actors involved both civilian and from the security sector. A key aim of the project was achieved by conducting a joint research exercise, even though it appeared to be a by-product of a process of engagement.

Another good entry point for engagement is when reform of the security sector becomes a necessary peace-building tool by being included as a provision in peace agreements, as occurred in Northern Ireland and Guatemala. This means that all parties have, at least in theory, agreed to a framework of reform. However, even if reform is part of an agreement, the differing interpretations of the text can still cause significant problems, as the case of Sinn Féin's refusal to engage with the police authority and local policing bodies in Northern Ireland demonstrated. Nevertheless, transitional periods are probably some of the most productive periods for engagement with security sector reform.

Key issues

- **Entry points for engagement should be identified carefully as security sector reform is politically sensitive.**
- **The potential linkages between military assistance, broader political dialogue and 'developmental' security sector engagements need further exploration.**
- **The most frequently used 'developmental' entry points are financial oversight, institutional capacity-building and public sector management processes.**

- **Integrating security sector reform into peace agreements provides a useful entry point for reform in post-conflict societies.**

viii) Resources and sustainability

The final key issue for security sector reform is the availability of adequate resources and the efficient allocation of these resources to different project activities. As security sector reform usually requires a long-term commitment and a high level of resources, efficient resource management is central to a project's sustainability. The partner government may find that it has to shift financial or human resources within or between sectors, which again requires a strong political will for reform and coherence between different sectors. External actors can contribute towards the necessary resources for sustainable reform by either contributing financially or through capacity-building or technical assistance to enhance human resources within the security sector.

A lack of adequate resources within the security sector is often a major cause of insecurity that can encourage underpaid soldiers or border guards to extort resources from the population, cause corruption within the security forces to thrive or encourage the security forces to engage in other legal or illegal commercial activities. Supplementing resources within the security sector could avoid the danger that such abuses may occur and contribute to improving the relationship between the armed forces and the population. Such a strategy could be efficient in relatively strong states where the key issue is the reform of already-existing security structures. However, it may be less efficient in post-conflict states where security institutions have been virtually destroyed and need to be entirely rebuilt. Furthermore, insufficient resources can destroy even the best programmes. For example, during the DDR programme in Sierra Leone, the money in the multi-donor trust fund of the World Bank for Sierra Leone had run out and international NGOs engaged in the programme also suffered funding problems. The Sierra Leone government had to carry the process through financially. Given the immense shortages of government resources, this was clearly an untenable situation that could have jeopardised the entire programme and increased the risk of a return to armed conflict.

Sustainable reform also requires successfully identifying and building existing local capacities and constituencies for reform, such as traditional institutions and processes and civil society groups, rather than creating parallel structures. There may already be ample resources in terms of, for instance, community initiatives or training and educational facilities that could contribute to the reform process. Especially for civil society groups, capacity-building on advocacy and analysis skills would enable them to acquire more knowledge on security issues so that, once they are motivated about reform, they could maintain the momentum for change. Such processes of local capacity-building and attitudinal change need time to become sustainable and reform assistance should therefore bear this in mind.

The central element of enhancing the sustainability of reform assistance is that this cannot be contingent solely on external engagement. However, donors can ensure that the security sector remains on the political agenda in their dialogue with partner states and that the security sector reform activities complement other programmes in other sectors. By being involved in security sector reform issues on local, national and regional levels, donors may also heighten the awareness of reform processes and thus contribute to maintaining the local momentum.

Key issues

- **Sustainable security sector reform assistance usually requires a longer-term and expensive engagement.**
- **The success of local ownership and attitudinal change enhances the sustainability of reforms.**
- **Resources can be used more efficiently if applied in a way that is coherent with other initiatives.**

VII. Institutionalising better practice in security sector reform into the project cycle

Recent years have seen an increasing awareness of the importance of extracting lessons learned from donor engagements in security sector reform with a view to improving future projects. However, the awareness has not always translated into efficient practice. This can be ascribed to two main problems. The first is the question of timing: when and how does one extract lessons learned? Should this happen only in the evaluation and monitoring phases or throughout the planning and implementation as well? And how does one ensure and institutionalise throughout the process the local input in the lessons learned? Secondly, when institutions have managed to extract lessons learned, how are these incorporated into institutional structures and working methods?

These questions lie at the heart of working towards better practice in the different areas of security sector reform. The question of timing for extracting lessons learned is similar to the issues surrounding entry points for engagement in that it requires an analysis of the project as a series of dynamic and changing processes, in which certain events, actors or initiatives present opportunities for initiating engagement or for formulating lessons learned.

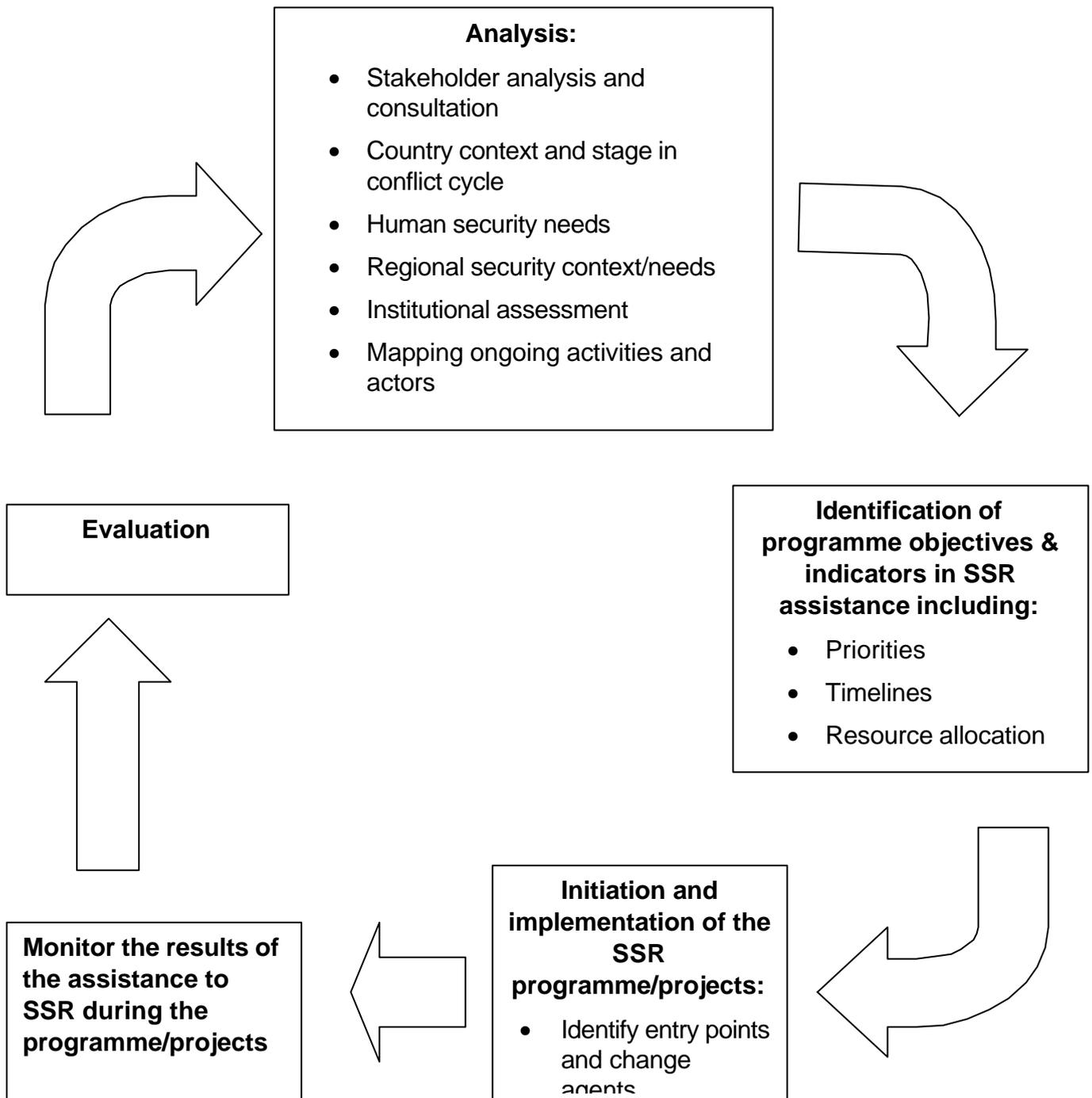
Much still needs to be done to crystallise efficient methods for institutionalising better practice in security sector reform. The point of departure for doing this is to consider the type of organisation. In the case of development co-operation, for example, security sector reform issues have only recently gained prominence on the agenda, resulting in a lack of sustained background knowledge in this field. With regards to ministries of defence and foreign affairs, there is some knowledge of working in and on the security sector, but mainly from a 'high politics' and technical point of view. Judicial reforms and promoting the rule of law are usually regarded as a separate field of engagement. Finally, activities relating to improving civilian and democratic oversight are usually included in the good governance agenda. The key challenge is therefore to link these various security sector reform issues and to establish mechanisms for co-operation and co-ordination between the different institutions working on them.

A possible strategy for overcoming the institutional blockages that may hinder such co-ordination is to establish new structures that can sustain the knowledge and expertise that is being acquired across the board. However, such a strategy requires a common point of reference on security sector reform to be successful. Another approach may be to learn lessons from other donors and actors working in the field of security sector reform. Especially where a donor organisation is new to the area of security sector reform, it may be useful to extract lessons learned from past activities such as the demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants (as part of peace-building programmes).

One way of extrapolating lessons learned would be to use external experts to evaluate projects and make recommendations on better practice. This method has the advantage that the objectivity and detachment brought to the task by the external expert usually benefits the analysis. However, on the negative side, the knowledge may pass out of institutional memory with the expert's departure. Within the organisation, better practice recommendations emerging from the level of project co-ordinators or field teams seldom seem to find their way into decision-making and management practices. The further challenge therefore is how to effectively remove these managerial and decision-making institutional blockages to implementing lessons learned.

The diagram below suggests a framework for mapping key issues of better practice in security sector reform (as outlined in Section VI) on a basic programme cycle in order to address the questions of when and how lessons learned could be drawn into and implemented in security sector reform engagements. However, engagement is not a linear process and therefore no programme cycle can effectively portray the complexity of an actual engagement.

Project management cycle



i) Analysis and project design

A key lesson that has emerged from discussions is the importance of accurate and participatory analysis, on which the project design can be based, at the inception of the engagement. In this regard, it is vital that security sector reform interventions build on better practice emerging from other development interventions. The initial analysis needs to identify the possibilities for reform of the security sector and the extent of the need for assistance, including the available local and donor resources. At the same time, the initial analysis and project design must identify potential obstacles to the reform assistance, including key actors opposing reform, in order to identify strategies for overcoming such obstacles. In addition, a clear understanding is required of the context of the security sector in the partner country, including the country's position in the conflict cycle, its security problems and an institutional and sectoral assessment of the security sector.

A good indication of the state of security in a partner country is to analyse the human security situation in terms of criteria such as whether the security forces perpetrate human rights abuses, whether all groups in society have access to the police and the judiciary and whether a mutual relationship of respect and trust exists between the security sector and the people it serves. Such an analysis may help determine which specific issues should be prioritised in the reform assistance. Local consultation in a participatory approach has been identified as key to improving practice in security sector reform, although strategies for institutionalising ongoing local consultation are still mostly lacking.

Before initiating the reform assistance, the likely impact of the assistance needs to be determined so that measures can be devised to mitigate any possible negative consequences. Specifically, the possible impact of the reform assistance on conflict risks in the partner country is paramount. This entails analysing the context of the partner country and a judgement on the key sources of tension in the partner society as well as the links between them. The identification of key actors in reform efforts should include an assessment of whether they have agendas for reform and peace or whether they have an interest in fuelling conflict. Further, certain institutions or processes in the partner society can mitigate or aggravate conflict and these have to be identified.

With regard to monitoring the project, indicators of success and the means of identifying these should also be formulated when the project is designed. Ideally, this should be done in consultation with local stakeholders and provide the basis for a continuous monitoring process throughout the implementation of the reform assistance.

ii) Identifying programmes and objectives for SSR

Thorough analysis will enable the identification of key security sector reform goals and programme objectives. This will vary between different contexts and reform activities should be formulated on a case-by-case basis. During the formulation of the project objectives, the timelines for and the principles of the reform assistance can be identified. Local participation in analysis and objective formulation has proven vital to formulating the project objectives in a manner that enhances local ownership and the sustainability of the reforms. It could also enable mutual agreement on indicators and strategies for monitoring and evaluating the reform throughout so that the reform assistance can be modified during implementation if needs be.

Objective formulation includes considering strategies for linking various pillars of the security sector, such as the armed forces, the police and the judiciary, as well as institutions and processes that impact on the security sector, such as the parliament and public sector management policies. In this regard, national defence reviews and parliamentary processes addressing security sector issues can provide vital information on the functioning of the security sector and the possible objectives for the reform project. More information is still needed on which strategies are the most efficient in achieving this coherence and cross-sectoral participation. Importantly, an assessment of reform assistance projects conducted by other donors should also be considered to avoid duplicated or conflicting engagements.

At this stage of engagement, it would be useful for donors to draw on lessons learned from previous engagements in order to determine what their relative strengths are in terms of expertise in security

sector engagements. However, this can only occur if the donor organisation has some institutional mechanism or channel for feeding lessons learned into the programme identification and planning of subsequent engagements. The option of conducting conflict impact assessments at various stages during and at the end of the engagement could also be built into the objectives of the reform assistance.

iii) Implementation of the SSR programme/projects, identifying entry points and change agents

Change agents can act as important allies for the implementation of a reform project. They can be parliamentarians, military or police officers, government officials or representatives from civil society and the media. A key challenge to the implementation of reform assistance is how the relevant stakeholders and change agents can continue to play an active role and how local participation can maintain or strengthen the momentum for change despite actors opposing reform by, for instance, bringing different actors together in confidence-building processes. Earlier processes may already provide entry points for the reform engagement and assist in determining the sequencing of reform activities. For example, while engaging in analysis, project identification and objective formulation, collaborative or participatory research or formal consultation meetings with representatives from government, civil society and other security sector actors may mobilise local initiative and actors for reform. Strategies for engaging and mobilising these change agents during the implementation of the assistance will differ depending on the issues engaged upon and the skills and resources already available. But there is also a need to outline when consultation during implementation should occur and what form it should take, eg monthly monitoring meetings with local stakeholders (from government, civil society, other donors and the private sector) or just a general, unstructured open door policy on the side of the donors.

Various institutional tools can serve as entry points for external assistance to security sector reform, such as country strategy papers, which can offer opportunities for discussing security sector issues. External support can also be allocated directly to security sector reform plans or public sector management processes already implemented in the partner country. The sequencing of the reforms can be addressed in any one of these institutional approaches and is vital to ensure coherent and efficient reform implementation.

iv) Monitor the results of the SSR during the programme/projects

Efficient strategies for consultative implementation and the formulation of clear objectives for the reform project can greatly facilitate monitoring the results and implementation of the reform assistance. In this way, a project can be continuously evaluated on whether it achieves the set objectives or whether adjustments need to be made to these objectives or to the implementation of the project. Members of the security forces, the government (including parliamentarians) and civil society can give their feedback on whether the reform activities are indeed addressing their concerns or whether some issues need to be reprioritised. An efficient monitoring process needs to be well timed within the project implementation and a broad cross-section of actors who ought to be involved in monitoring processes should be identified. It is important that a balanced view is obtained from within the security sector as well as from civil society. Furthermore, the impact of the reforms on the security sector and on the general public's perception thereof can be measured during the implementation of the reform and may help to judge whether the required attitudinal changes are indeed occurring, whether resources are utilised efficiently and whether reform will eventually be sustainable. It may also happen that constant monitoring could make apparent previously unrecognised opportunities or additional change agents as the momentum of the reform process may sweep along key actors. Agents opposing reform may also be identified sooner so that methods can be devised to deal with this negative impact the moment it arises.

Monitoring projects can therefore potentially improve engagements during implementation. It can also build mutual trust between the donor organisations and participants in the reform activities from within the security sector and from civil society. Such a relationship can pave the way for complete, and potentially much more useful, evaluation processes.

In order to turn monitoring processes into practice, mechanisms have to be created to integrate findings emerging from monitoring processes into project implementation. This implies having access to channels

of communication into the host and donor governments. One possible approach is to combine these processes so that consultations on implementation automatically include discussions on monitoring the project. This enables coherent and ongoing discussions with continuous feedback and adjustments in implementation, where needed, as well as nurturing a trusting relationship with key change agents. However, the decision-making and management structures of the donor institution must be able to absorb and act upon recommendations emanating from monitoring and implementation in order to ensure the integration of lessons learned in future practice.

v) Evaluation

Evaluation at the end of a project builds on the monitoring phase to construct an overall assessment of achieved and failed objectives and frame lessons learned from the engagement. Some key issues for evaluation are therefore how and by whom the evaluation is conducted and when and how the lessons learned are extrapolated from the evaluation process. In security sector reform evaluations, it is vital to receive balanced feedback from the implementing partners within the security sector on whether reform has met their expectations. In addition, feedback from civil society groups may contribute to evaluating the broader impact of the reform engagements, such as for instance whether relations between communities and police forces have been improved and whether people have the general perception that they have better access to justice. Especially if the security sector reform project involved a partnership between various donor organisations and/or various implementation partners (eg the ministry of defence, ministry of foreign affairs, the police commissioner's office, parliament, civil society organisations etc), a joint evaluation could be useful to analyse the overall efficiency and identify the weak points of the reform co-operation. It could also provide the opportunity for a concluding consultation, based on previously agreed benchmarks or indicators, and thus pave the way for any further future co-operation.

Especially when engaging in reform of the security sector, qualitative and quantitative evaluation criteria should be formulated carefully and in consultation with local stakeholders. Some indicators of successful reform are: a reduced national defence budget; an improved respect for human rights among the police forces; greater co-operation and trust between the police and the community; more powerful civilian oversight structures for the security sector; a more transparent security policy and expenditure; a more independent judiciary and greater access to the justice system to all people in the society. However, these indicators will vary greatly depending on the context and the needs in the partner country and criteria have to be formulated accordingly. Furthermore, care has to be taken that indicators are interpreted as part of the bigger picture and not in isolation, as this may lead to distorted conclusions. For example, if one indicator for a reform project is to improve the reporting of crime to the police and another is to reduce crime statistics, it has to be borne in mind that if the first aim is met, crime statistics will initially rise. The evaluation could also include criteria that address the broader impact of the reform assistance on, for instance, the government's legitimacy, relations between different groups in the partner country (especially if the security forces were previously unrepresentative) and on the position of women in society. Some agencies are moving from a project-oriented evaluation to theme-, issue- and country-focused evaluations – an approach that may prove useful for lessons learned across the board.

However, the most vital point about evaluation is that efficient strategies are still lacking for turning practice into lessons learned, institutionalising this and feeding it into future programming.

Annex A

Northern Ireland: Police reform in the context of conflict

Background to conflict

The conflict in Northern Ireland is principally (although not exclusively) an ethnic conflict fought between two communities: a minority Catholic and a majority Protestant, aspiring respectively for Northern Ireland to join the Irish Republic (Catholic Nationalists) or remain part of the United Kingdom (Protestant Unionists). In April 1998, the Belfast Agreement (Good Friday Agreement) was agreed with the support of most constitutional political parties, as well as the representatives of Irish Republicanism and Ulster Loyalism. The agreement was intended to end the conflict that has persisted since the late 1960s. The Good Friday Agreement provided for the government of Northern Ireland to be administered by a multi-ethnic coalition. It also prescribed that the status of Northern Ireland could be changed only by popular vote. The representatives of the paramilitaries, including those of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), Ulster Defence Association (UDA) and Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), agreed to disarm and all conflict-related prisoners were to be released. According to the agreement, the British army was also to be withdrawn, subject to the security situation. Northern Ireland was in need of its own police force, equally acceptable to and recognised by both sides. The British Government established an independent commission to assess the future of the troubled police force, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), which at the time consisted mainly of Protestants (90%). Chairing the Commission was the prominent British Catholic politician, Christopher Patten, who had been a Minister of State in the Northern Ireland Office.

The Patten Commission

The Patten Commission embarked on an extensive consultation with politicians, the British and Irish governments, the police and civil society over the course of a year. The submissions demonstrated the extent to which Northern Irish society was polarised and no clear consensus on the future of policing emerged. The report of the Patten Commission recommended reducing the number of police officers, changing the emblem of the RUC and changing its name to the Police Service of Northern Ireland. To symbolise continuity, it was proposed to retain the uniform. It was also recommended to launch a period of phased redundancy and recruitment in order to change the composition of the police force to reflect the wider population with 50/50 representation. Other recommendations were not to allow people from paramilitary organisations to join the new police service, to establish a new police authority with a wider range of members, and to initiate local police/community partnerships in each council area of Northern Ireland. An ombudsman would be appointed to further encourage local accountability. The report of the Patten Commission was widely criticised by both Unionists and Nationalists for failing to satisfy either side's interests and concerns. The government, however, implemented the majority of the Commission's recommendations through the introduction of a new Police Act and the reconstitution of the force to become the Police Service of Northern Ireland. An extremely generous early redundancy package was offered to serving officers as an incentive to assist the change. In recognition of the 302 officers killed since 1969, the entire force was awarded the George Cross Medal for bravery. Sinn Féin, the political party allied to the IRA, has refused, however, to endorse Catholics joining the force. Republicans complained that while Catholics were now joining the force, republicans were not and thus it was not fully representative. The more moderate Catholic party, the Social Democratic and Labour Party, decided, after some vacillation, to support the entry of Catholics into the police and to join the police board.

Lessons learned

The police reform in Northern Ireland was doomed not to be universally accepted as it is exceptionally hard to ensure that all conflict parties feel represented. Extensive dialogue with civil society was essential, but can also prove divisive in identity conflicts like this one. However, the reform was not entirely rejected as it utilised the technique of providing incentives for people affected by the reform to cushion its impact. Preserving some continuity during the police reform also helped those affected to adapt.

Annex B

FLACSO project in Guatemala: Towards a security policy for democracy

Background to conflict

Guatemala emerged from a long internal conflict in 1996 when the Peace Accords were signed and the country is still in transition. Thirty-six years of fighting with guerrilla units meant that the Guatemalan state developed a state-centric security policy aimed at protecting its political regime. After the war, the authoritarian government, in an effort to preserve public order, implemented a number of measures which were regarded as repressive as they exercised control over the entire society. Consequently, reform of the security sector was one of the priorities on the post-conflict agenda to enhance popular trust in the government's ability to manage the country democratically. Indeed, it was specifically identified in the Peace Accords. A pressing need was to redefine the relationship between society, the state and the security sector, engendering a move from authoritarianism to democracy and from military intervention to military subordination. In Guatemala, therefore, security sector reform needed to embrace two pillars: military conversion (the shift in values, structures and functions); and strengthening civilian power (democratic consolidation, transformation of political culture and introduction of democratic control). The current situation in Guatemala, however, shows a lack of political will to initiate changes, little conceptual clarity and low operational ability. For example, since the Peace Accords the government has failed to come up with a military policy. Arguably, drafting and implementing concrete operational recommendations is of great importance, but requires multi-sectoral consensus that is currently lacking.

FLACSO project

The FLACSO project (Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, Sede Guatemala, a Guatemalan NGO involved in the study of security sector reform) aims to bring together the various actors involved or interested in security sector reform to devise researched and politically legitimate recommendations for the government. This does not constitute political negotiations, but rather an academic research project based on a multi-sectoral approach involving members of the security sector, government officials, NGOs and researchers. After the key actors had been identified, five working groups and one sub-group emerged to develop a democratic framework focusing on: conceptual framework; security concept and agenda; military doctrine; democratic controls; civilian intelligence and military roles. The working groups set their own agendas and selected entry points for security sector reform. Their activities were scheduled in phases: action research, during which working documents were produced; capacity-building, which involved educating civilians on issues related to security policy in order to widen the debate; and public events, which involved conferences to raise awareness of the issues.

Lessons learned

The project has been successful and has added to the formulation and awareness of security policy. Firstly, the academic character of the project, its intentionally low public profile, and its medium- to long-term policy focus have overcome the ideological and political bias of key stakeholders and enabled a rational analysis of the issues. Secondly, the neutrality of the project with respect to institutional interests, the balance obtained in the composition of the group, and the gradual consensus-building approach, have contributed to multi-sectoral consensus in sensitive areas like reforming the intelligence services. Thirdly, the use of a participatory-action-research methodology involved several institutional actors and direct training of actors from the civilian and security sectors. This strategy spread technical knowledge, conveyed theoretical foundations, and increased the capacity of groups to propose solutions. The direct participation of government representatives in the working groups has facilitated channelling the practical recommendations into public policy and enhanced the government's interest in the process. The combined effect of gradual trust-building and identifying shared interests contributed to reducing levels of mistrust, polarisation, and resistance among working group members. However, the uncertain political scene in Guatemala has created a changing environment for the project. In particular, the lack of a clear lead from the government and differing policy views within it has made the dialogue more challenging. The existing breach between civil society and the political authorities requires special negotiation and follow-up efforts towards implementation of the results. In view of the importance of local ownership, the FLACSO project, while being internationally funded, was a local initiative with an independent agenda developed specifically for the Guatemalan situation. It was equally important to provide for a coherent sector-wide approach.

Annex C

Former Soviet Union: Security sector reform in transition countries

Background to transition

Examples of security sector reform exist in a number of former Soviet Union (fSU) countries, but the focus here is on Russia and the Caucasus. Although for 70 years the security sector was managed by the same centralised government, the countries that regained independence with the break-up of the Soviet Union are different and have adopted varying approaches to reforms and transition. There are, however, a number of overall contextual factors which have made security sector reform in these countries unique, and only through an understanding of these can donors formulate coherent policies. Initially, the attention of donors in the region was concentrated on weapons of mass destruction, while overlooking other aspects of security sector reform. In the post-Soviet era, however, the security sector has acquired new political identities and roles. Where in the past it was controlled by the Communist Party, now a number of countries have established a military authority and the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Interior have become independent actors with their own specific characteristics. Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and even the breakaway republic of Chechnya have established independent security ministries, whereas before they were controlled by the Soviet Union. The involvement of donors in security sector reform has been undermined by a somewhat one-sided attitude: in conflict situations donors have supported building the security sectors of some countries, but not others, causing suspicion in the latter. NATO's eastward expansion has also created in Russia a culture of suspicion of Western intentions and an atmosphere of secrecy. Specifically in Caucasian republics where the state army lost an ethnic war (eg the Georgian army against Abkhazia or the Azerbaijani army against Armenia in 1992), the population shows little respect towards the military, personnel are badly paid and military budgets are low. On the other hand, police forces in those countries are better off as they have 'direct access' to the population and can extract bribes.

Beginning of democratic reform

There is a need for broader security sector reform but this is often resisted by the military. For example, the development of civilian oversight over the security sector can be viewed as an attempt by the West to weaken security forces rather than improve them. Besides, there is an inherent mistrust towards civilians on the part of the military. However, the number of civilian actors involved in security sector oversight is now far greater. New actors have emerged in the process of wider transformation and reforms. For example, parliamentary committees with oversight powers over the security sector have been established and function effectively in a number of countries in the region. However, they consist mainly of former military personnel and can be abused for 'settling old scores'. An independent and critical media has also emerged that has given insights into issues related to the security sector and has carried out independent investigations – often at great risk to journalists' lives. Civil society organisations in Russia have emerged from, and reflect, wider society. They are partially financed through internal sources and have gained access to various ministries. For example, pressure groups such as the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers have played an important role in establishing civilian oversight over the security sector in Russia. On the other hand, in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia civil society has been largely supported by external donors, has limited access to decision-making bodies and is viewed by many as made up of elitists and outsiders.

Lessons learned

The key lesson emerging from the fSU is the need to study and understand the local context. For example, the definition of corruption in the West and the reality in Russia and the Caucasus can be very different. If, for instance, the president surrounds himself with his family members, it is considered as corruption, but when a policeman takes bribes, it is the only means of survival available to him. Another important aspect to bear in mind is that informal actors operate in Russia and the Caucasus, and it is often impossible to tell whether they operate under the jurisdiction of the state or outside it.

Annex D

Malawi: Police reform in a transition country

Background

Malawi has never experienced civil war, but has an inefficient police force, a high crime rate and an abundance of small arms. Since the democratic government came to power in 1994, the general crime rate has increased, although this may simply indicate an increase in reporting crime. Information about the weapons used in violent crimes is scarce, but the main sources of illicit weapons are: AK47 rifles from the wars in Mozambique, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo; 9 mm pistols made in South Africa; government-issue firearms 'leaking' from Malawi police stocks; and locally manufactured hunting and homemade guns. The inability of the Malawi Police Service (MPS) to deal effectively with these problems stems from inadequate resources, insufficient training, lack of specialist capacity (eg forensic units) and, in some districts, basic resources like transport and communication equipment. A history of participation in oppression and human rights abuses contributed to creating public distrust towards the MPS and a demand for private security.

Security sector reform in Malawi

The new democratic government adopted a community-based policing model to reform the MPS and combat crime. Community policing fora were established, supported by crime prevention panels and committees at various local levels. This approach aimed to re-orientate the police from protecting the regime to co-operating with and protecting the community. DfID became involved at the request of the government of Malawi through the MALPOD (Malawi Police Organisational Development) project. The project provides technical assistance to the MPS, including support for existing community policing structures, and involves actors from different sectors of society, including government, business, the criminal justice system and human rights NGOs. Civil society partner organisations have been involved in information-gathering on crime and small arms as well as public awareness-raising on illicit small arms and community policing through radio programmes, seminars, posters and information booklets. Civil society has also conducted advocacy for legal reforms, especially with respect to firearms and police conduct. The MALPOD project has been very successful in building capacity and enhancing the local MPS reform efforts and similar initiatives are envisaged in other security sector areas through sector-wide engagement in the MASSAJ (Malawi Safety, Security and Access to Justice) programme.

Lessons learned

The government-led reform process in Malawi laid down a solid foundation for local ownership and the sustainability of the reform process, enabling DfID to contribute to this momentum. Additionally, the engagement was shaped by local consultation and participation and the identification of change agents that successfully initiated a process of building trust and co-operation between the police and the communities and encouraging attitudinal change on both sides. Public awareness and training campaigns have proven very useful to mobilise and empower communities. The project has also benefited from comparing experiences with similar projects in South Africa, highlighting the potential benefits of regional co-operation, including with other NGOs working on security sector reform issues and with regional institutions such as the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Co-ordination Organisation (SARPCCO).

Annex E

Kenya and Tanzania: Tackling the spread of small arms and light weapons

Background

The Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes Region have been subject to conflicts over the past few decades that have left these regions awash with arms. Although Kenya has not experienced a recent civil war, instability is rife in various parts of the country. Traditional activities like cattle rustling have taken on a violent character as pastoralist communities have acquired arms, and competition for water and grazing therefore easily explodes into violent conflict. Crime in urban areas especially has also become more violent due to the easy availability of arms. All across the Horn and Great Lakes regions there has been a growing realisation that regional efforts are needed to address the problems with small arms and light weapons (SALW). In March 2000, ten governments agreed on the 'Nairobi Declaration on the problem of the proliferation of illicit SALW in the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa'. However, this was only a political statement and much more action is required to implement its aims.

The project

A project was initiated by Saferworld, in co-operation with local NGO partners in the region and IGAD, to implement the aims of the Nairobi declaration. The main focus areas are strengthening and harmonising legislation, strengthening the operational capacity of law enforcement agencies, weapons collection and destruction, demobilisation and reintegration, and public education and awareness-raising. Workshops have been organised on each of these issues with an aim to bring together government officials and civil society representatives and encourage inter-governmental co-operation. An important component of the project is to build the capacity of officials and the police to implement the projects.

In Tanzania, these regionally-oriented activities have been followed up with a specific country programme that conducted a national mapping of the SALW problem, including household surveys to assess people's attitudes to security and weapons. Workshops and meetings with communities and local police units were organised in order to devise a national plan of action. Kenya and Uganda are earmarked for similar mapping exercises.

The NGOs involved in the project have recently drafted a detailed Agenda for Action that the governments agreed on. This agenda details each country's specific obligations for the implementation of the declaration. Senior police officers have also agreed on a draft legal treaty on small arms control that sets common regional standards. Regional co-operation is being planned for cross-border operations by police, local administrators and communities in selected regions where problems with SALW trafficking are particularly acute. Training of law enforcement officers is also envisaged and to this end a regional training curriculum is being developed. NGOs are also working with the relevant governments to establish inter-departmental committees that would constitute national focal points and facilitate the co-ordination of efforts to address SALW proliferation.

In Tanzania, the national action plan will shortly be implemented and will include a legal review, police training, weapons collection programmes and public education campaigns.

Lessons learned

The SALW project in the Horn and Great Lakes regions has found that working directly with the police is extremely useful as they often realise the need for action on the small arms problem because they encounter it in their daily work. The regional Interpol network therefore generally proves to be a more efficient channel than working with diplomats. At the same time, key allies in specific governments have been identified and have played an important part in the success of the projects. The workshop focus of the project enables quick and efficient skills transfer so that local NGOs and officials can be empowered to implement and sustain the projects. In addition, fora like workshops and regional meetings enable governments and NGOs to come together and establish co-operative relationships as well as build mutual trust. Lastly, a mix of creating a good policy framework and then work towards its implementation has been found to be an important working strategy.

Annex F

Albania: Small arms and security

Background

Albania is located in a turbulent region that has seen great upheavals, especially since the fall of communism and the end of the Cold War. In 1997, after the very repressive government fell from power, Albania narrowly avoided civil war. However, the insecurity has meant an influx of weapons and the looting of large arms caches has augmented the supply. The northern parts of Albania remain particularly vulnerable, since this area borders Kosovo and Macedonia, both of which have experienced violent conflicts in the past few years. Local sympathy and support for Albanians fighting on the other side of the border has effectively linked certain areas of Albania to the conflict networks. In the south of Albania there are problems with organised crime that include arms trafficking. Since the central part of the country seems to be the most stable, a pilot weapons collection project was set up there.

The UNDP-supported disarmament for development programme

The UNDP and the Albanian Government initiated a joint disarmament for development programme that adopted a communal approach rather than an individual one by rewarding communities for the weapons they handed over. In order to determine what the rewards would be, surveys were conducted of what the community needed. In Gramsh, the community indicated that roads were a priority for them; hence the UNDP set up a road construction programme as collective incentive, together with a street lighting and telephone system.

The project managed to collect 6 000 weapons and 130 tonnes of ammunition among a population of 55 000. The quantity may not seem very big in relation to the population size, but nevertheless the project was regarded as a success. The reasons why this initiative worked are that the community is quite close-knit and therefore a collective incentive approach was successful. Furthermore, the weapons that were handed in had very little street value since the ones that did have value had already been sold. Importantly, the people were more or less ready to disarm too.

Some criticisms were raised, such as over delays in delivering the promised development projects that undermined local confidence in the programme. Also, although the community was actively involved in the design phase of the project, it was largely excluded from the implementation phase, which led to some hostility and distrust on the part of the community. But principally, there is also a question mark over whether it is acceptable to implement the concept of development for disarmament or whether security should be defined as a gain in itself instead of a price for development.

Lessons learned

This approach was successful in Gramsh because of the timing of the project, the location of Gramsh and the nature of the community dynamics. Also, the need for weapons had largely disappeared and the low market value of the remaining weapons made it easy for the community to hand them over. These circumstances may not exist in other engagements and therefore the context analysis must be done carefully. Despite its apparent success, the project raised the issue of whether development and security should be treated as a trade-off. The disarmament project indicated that SALW programmes can serve as entry point into broader peace-building or conflict prevention initiatives. Reducing the availability of weapons in a society immediately reduces the risk for tensions to become violent and can therefore prove very useful to broader and longer-term security sector reform engagements. It may also provide opportunities for local civil society to engage with the government on security issues, which in turn may benefit future reform processes. The programme also highlighted another delicate issue in disarmament programmes, that of traditional weapons. These can be just as deadly as firearms but are usually present in society at large and therefore difficult to include in a disarmament programme – they were not included in Albania.

VIII. Further reading

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The Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', an independent research and training centre, was formed in 1983 by a merger of various Dutch institutes active in the field of international relations. It devotes special attention to foreign policy, security and conflict issues. The Conflict Research Unit (CRU) of the Clingendael Institute's Research Department focuses on the study of intrastate conflict and on ways of preventing these conflicts. The work of the CRU has a special though not exclusive emphasis on the developing world, and aims at translating theoretical insights into practical policy recommendations, as well as developing tools for decision-makers in national and multilateral governmental and non-governmental organisations.

International Alert is an independent non-governmental organisation which analyses the causes of conflicts within countries, enables mediation and dialogue to take place, sets standards of conduct that avoid violence, helps to develop the skills necessary to resolve conflict non-violently and advocates policy changes to promote sustainable peace. The Security Sector Reform Programme seeks to develop policy and practice which contributes to the effective implementation of security sector reform programmes.

Saferworld is an independent foreign affairs think tank working to identify, develop and publicise more effective approaches to tackling and preventing armed conflicts. Saferworld's activities include work on stemming the proliferation of small arms and arms export controls, developing practical tools for conflict prevention and peace-building and promoting security sector reform in developing countries. Saferworld has produced a range of publications on security sector reform including developing reports for the European Commission and the UK Department for International Development (DfID) to inform their policies on this issue.

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