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The International Security Sector Advisory Team (ISSAT)

HIGH LEVEL PANEL REPORT

A COMMON APPROACH FOR BUILDING INTERNATIONAL CAPACITY TO SUPPORT SECURITY AND JUSTICE SECTOR REFORM

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM 19 MAY, 2011

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABOUT THE GENEVA CENTRE FOR THE DEMOCRATIC CONTROL OF ARMED FORCES

Established in 2000, the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) is one of the world's leading institutions in the area of Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Security Sector Governance (SSG).

DCAF provides in-country advisory support and practical assistance to states and international organisations to reinforce and strengthen their efforts to improve security and justice, primarily in conflict-affected and fragile states. Additionally, DCAF develops and promotes appropriate democratic norms at both international and national levels, advocates good practices and conducts policy-related research to make recommendations to ensure effective democratic governance of the security sector.

DCAF's partners include governments, parliaments, civil society, international organisations and the range of security sector actors such as police, judiciary, intelligence agencies, border security services and the military.

ISSAT was established as an integral part of DCAF in 2008. Its current membership includes fourteen countries and six multilateral actors. ISSAT aims to increase the capacity of the international community to support Security Sector Reform (SSR) processes, to enhance the effectiveness and quality of SSR programming, and to facilitate the coordination and coherence of international assistance for nationally-driven SSR processes. ISSAT supports its members through the provision of four key services: Advisory Field Support, Operational Guidance Tools, Knowledge Services and Training Support.

For more information on DCAF and ISSAT, please visit http://www.dcaf.ch, http://issat.dcaf.ch.

OVERVIEW

On May 19th, 2011 ISSAT hosted its second High Level Panel (HLP) discussion with the focus on a common approach to building international capacity in Security Sector Reform (SSR).

The basis for the HLP topic was the recognition that the number of SSR mandates within Peace Support Operations (PSO) and crisis management operations has increased over the past years. In parallel, the demand for SSR and rule of law advisors who combine specialist knowledge with a solid understanding of the politics involved in reform processes has increased.

With multilateral organisations (such as the UN, and regional organisations, such as the AU, EU and OSCE) becoming more involved in SSR activities, for example by mainstreaming of SSR into some of their operations in areas such as police reform, the need to build a pool of SSR experts is clear. At present, many bilateral and multilateral donors face serious capacity gaps when it comes to having readily-available and deployable personnel with SSR experience and expertise. Security and justice reform requires a multi-disciplinary response: it requires personnel with an understanding of the political nature of SSR and the importance of accountability to a legitimate authority, coupled with those who have a technical understanding of how, for example, a police service, the military, the courts system and the various ministries function. This includes not only appropriate sector expertise, but also knowledge on how budgets are developed, how personnel are managed and how organisations are administered and monitored for accountability. Finally, it must be understood that such international assistance often takes place in a development and post-conflict context, which provides an added challenge when it comes to issues such as local ownership and sustainability.

All too often, individual personnel are sent to SSR field missions without the necessary training or understanding of international good practice and principles. In addition, international community teams are deployed without access to the right type of skills and capacity. To redress these shortcomings, various donors have begun to establish "expert rosters" in order to have senior experts on stand-by for short or long-term missions. Many have established training programmes on SSR or rule of law, targeting a cross-government audience. Other donors have recognised that there will always be a limit to the amount of capacity available within a national government, so they have sought to pool some of their resources and mandate organisations such as the Geneva Centre for Democratic Control's (DCAF) International Security Sector Advisory Team (ISSAT). Others still have turned to the private sector to support programme design and implementation. While all of these initiatives are commendable, they have not been sufficient in mitigating the evident capacity shortcomings, nor have they developed a pool of expertise and experience that can consistently work in line with international principles and good practice.

The panel who addressed these issues were:

- **Mr. Richard Wright,** Director Conflict Prevention & Security Policy, European External Action Service (EEAS)

- **Mr. Cedric de Coning,** Advisor to ACCORD and NUPI and Author of the Study on Civilian Capacities within the Non-governmental Civilian Roster Community

- **Mr Mika-Markus Leinonen,** Director, Civcom Chair, European External Action Service (EEAS)

- **General Juan Estaban** (by video)**,** Former Head of the EU SSR Mission in Guinea Bissau

KEY ISSUES

There was general agreement amongst speakers and participants alike that the issue of capacity was a key challenge for the international community.

The challenge was summarised by one speaker as the issue of both 'quantity' and 'quality' of personnel available to be deployed in support of security and justice reform activities.

Quantity is an issue given that SSR is increasingly viewed as a conflict prevention and peacebuilding tool. This is evident not only from the increase in SSR mandates within UN and EU peacekeeping/peacebuilding/conflict management missions, but also through the proliferation of bilateral programmes in support of security and justice reform. Quality is an issue because SSR requires a mix of skills, knowledge and competencies. It is not just a technical issue but equally it is about supporting a political process of change. To support SSR you need a multi-disciplinary team that brings together development, diplomatic, police, military, justice and governance personnel. In addition, within each of these categories there are different skills required, including human resource management and financial management - skills that are not normally thought of when it comes to the reform of security and justice institutions.

Countries, it was felt, had not done enough to identified, prepare and deploy personnel with the right set of skills. There needed to be a system whereby civilian personnel could not only be identified and trained, but also deployed under contracts that provided some level of employment certainty. Ensuring access to personnel is critical given the significant increase in demand. Often, personnel with civilian capacities are required and are not easily accessed, particularly through the secondment system.

ADDITIONAL CHALLENGES:

Other challenges that require a specific response include concerns around: i) the secondment system of staffing; ii) mobilisation of personnel; iii) local ownership and needs based support; and iv) training.

Secondment System:

The secondment system has been a particular challenge for the EU. Three issues were highlighted which have led to problems with this system. First, the general commitment by each EU member state to supplying high calibre personnel for SSR support is not uniform. While some member states have been especially committed to identifying and training high calibre personnel, the majority of member states still do not see this as a high priority.

Second, even for those member states who do invest resources into developing a ready pool of staff with SSR related skills, there are structural hurdles in supplying personnel for the secondment system. When supplying personnel for an extensive period, in many cases ministries in member states are neither compensated with replacement personnel to fill in their own capacity gaps, nor are they financially compensated. An example was given, however, of Norway where the national police service had a normal capacity of 101 percent, allowing 1 percent of officers to be available at all time for international deployments. There was also the need to engage with professional organisations, such as the police, to highlight the positive return and experience gained through sending personnel abroad.

The secondment system however only covers some of the technical capacity required to support SSR, and has not been successful in accessing civilian capacity or those who can manage the political process of reforms. The reason being that this capacity often exists outside of member states' government structures and unless there is a specific system to contract such personnel, or an effect to create a standing capacity, then the goal of having multi-disciplinary teams capable of supporting complex processes such as SSR will fail.

The challenges of managing the consequences of the secondment system from a field perspective were also highlighted. These challenges include both political pressures in choosing personnel, coupled with the lack of choice provided with seconded personnel. If a country puts forward just one or two personnel, the Head Mission on the ground may not have much option but to accept personnel without the required skills. Seconded personnel are also usually available only for short term deployments, more often than not between six months to one year. This undoubtedly impacts upon the ability to take a longer term perspective, fully understand the context in which one is working, build relations with national counterparts and follow through initiatives. Recent developments have seen direct contracting of some posts where the secondment process could not fill these gaps. In conclusion it was proposed that a review of the secondment system be undertaken, to ensure that a balance of capacity is available for both short and long term deployments.

Mobilising Personnel:

The challenge of getting the right people deployed at the right time was noted as a structural challenge faced by the EU, the UN and bilateral donors. The UN, for example, has to undergo an extremely lengthy process before sending staff out to postings. This means, that even though the UN may have an oversupply of qualified candidates for an SSR posting, it is not uncommon for an individual to have already moved on to something else, due to the time delay between the time of application and being offered the position. This then has a knock-on effect and further extends the time for UN missions seeking to fill posts.

A point was made from the audience for the need to provide more certainty and potential career paths for civilian staff, so that experience is not lost and staff retention can be improved.

The need to have flexibility when it comes to human resources was also underlined. Given that SSR requires a diverse set of skills, it is neither possible nor is it necessary to have all of these available throughout a mission. For example, if support is being provided to a police reform process, at some point support will be required to review human resources procedures, including recruitment and promotion policies; however, such support may only be needed for a month or two. There needs to be a certain level of flexibility to be able to source and deploy such capacity for a shorter period of time.

The idea of having a standing capacity for SSR was mooted, mentioned being made of both the ISSAT but also the UN's Standing Police capacity as a model that could be looked at for both the UN and EU. A strong argument was made to ensure expertise from the global south was included as part of programmes to support SSR. The example of the deployment of personnel to Guinea Bissau as part of the EU's Instrument for Stability was given, highlighting the fact that one member of that team was a military reform expert from Burundi, and as such was able to bring a different perspective to the team and build far more concrete relationships with national counterparts. Not being confined by narrow views on capacity, seeking to diversify sources of capacity and being flexible in their deployment was a key message from the discussion.

Technical, Political, and Process Knowledge:

The predominant gap identified by the panel came in finding personnel who could address both the technical and political components of SSR. Most often personnel can be found with a technical knowledge of the sector which they are meant to support (e.g. a police officer to support police

reform); however, many personnel are lacking the skills set to transfer this knowledge or advice on the reform process and manage its politics. There are a number of factors leading to this gap including, once again, the secondment system and even the types of people who are drawn to SSR as a line of work, but a major deficiency is in training on 'soft skills'.

Training:

Adequate SSR training was identified as one of key conditions leading to the imbalance between technical and political skills for personnel. There were three issues surrounding this gap including i) the will to provide training; ii) the overly technical nature of most training; and iii) the timing of training. First, the focus of most training offered was largely deemed to be too technical and too 'siloed' in approach. Far more needs to be done to train personnel to be able to advise and transfer technical knowledge to support a reform process and change management. Moreover, the 'process' should not be considered as a series of technical steps but rather part of a far bigger undertaking, and some thought should be put into training on macro-level state transformation. The intention of such an approach would be to sensitise personnel to a holistic approach to the reform process and the complexity and long term thinking that reform requires. Although this level of training might be targeted at only a select number of personnel, it strikes at the underlying point that a critical review of what is being offered in SSR training needs to take place and that there are gaps that need to be filled.

Re-developing and even expanding SSR training may either be a hurdle or a solution to the second issue of willingness to provide SSR training. The reduction in training provided, and the supply of institutions capable of providing adequate SSR training, is a continuing trend, and while the demand for personnel to support SSR expands this only compounds the problem of staffing personnel of a high caliber.

Finally, not only is expanded training required, but also more targeted training needs to be considered. Pre-deployment trainings have been regarded as exceptionally useful, but they cannot address all the issues which personnel need to know. Often, practitioners will only really find out what they need to know in the first few months of an operation, when targeted 'in-service' training would be highly valuable. Refresher training is also required, as the knowledge learned prior to joining a mission may be forgotten several months down the line.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Although a number of the challenges and gaps identified were largely structural issues, that went beyond the realm of what the SSR community can influence there were some positive trends on how to look forward to improve the situation of collectively addressing international capacity for SSR.

Secondment System:

To start, although the secondment system is a larger EU structural issue, the general acknowledgement of its flaws is forcing a critical review on how to work around it in order to use both private contractors and more local actors. A particular emphasis should be made on investigating how to increase the number of civilians who are being seconded. As the secondment system will continue to be used, compensation for line ministries also needs to be explored as an incentive to release high quality personnel.

Local Capacity:

On accessing local capacity, it was noted that the UN is exploring new mechanisms to do a better job of tapping into various national and NGO rosters, a practice which should not only be considered by the UN. A recommendation even went so far as to suggest that local or regional expertise be utilised as a first option, and that the international community's capacity only be used as a last resort. Likewise, the EU should consider where best to access the capacity required to support security and justice reform. Having the ability to bring in capacity from outside the EU, can add both critical credibility and contextual knowledge.

Mentoring Training:

The common agreement of the need to infuse more 'soft skills' into training was seen as a positive indicator. As all members of the panel acknowledged that the international community's role is to support and not do SSR, this requires mentoring and advising skills, the ability to build partnerships and manage political change, which all need to be initially sought out more during the selection process of personnel and then emphasised further in training.

Personnel Deployment:

This acknowledgement of the skill sets required to support SSR was also discussed in terms of personnel deployment. Various recommendations were made for allowing SSR programmes to be able to deploy technical expertise in a more flexble manner, based on loosening budgeting regulations as well as allowing senior field staff to exercise more authority on making decisions about staffing. It was suggested that missions should have at least a core group of long term staff members who understand processes and have time to build up local knowledge and networks, and that these people can identify when specific technical expertise is needed.

Standing Capacity

The EU and UN should consider establishing a standing capacity to support security and justice reform. Such a capacity could help build national capacity on SSR, help fill short term gaps within missions, monitor progress, gather lessons and help develop the EU and UN approach to SSR.

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