



**GENEVA CENTRE FOR THE DEMOCRATIC CONTROL OF
ARMED FORCES (DCAF)**

United Nations Approaches to Security Sector Reform

Background paper for the workshop on “Developing a SSR Concept for the United Nations” on 7 July 2006 in Bratislava, co-hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence of the Slovak Republic with the assistance of DCAF

This document has been prepared by DCAF to provide background information for participants at the above meeting. It is a preliminary draft based on initial desk research. Readers are invited to consider this document as work in progress and are encouraged to bring any corrections or additions to the attention of Heiner Hänggi at h.haenggi@dcaf.ch and Jonas Hagmann at j.hagmann@dcaf.ch.

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the late 1990s, the concept of security sector reform (SSR) has increasingly shaped international programmes for development assistance, democracy promotion, security cooperation and post-conflict peacebuilding. SSR is driven by the understanding that a poorly governed and unreformed security sector represents a decisive obstacle to the promotion of sustainable development, democracy, peace and security. Thus, SSR is aimed at developing an affordable, effective and efficient security apparatus, i.e., one that is able to provide security to the state and its people within a framework of civilian oversight and democratic accountability. Addressing both capacity and governance dimensions of security provision is the uncontested core of security sector reform though, in practical terms, SSR varies substantially according to the specific reform context.

The international community has gained significant experience in SSR, particularly as an element of its peacebuilding endeavours. Intergovernmental organisations have assumed an increasingly important role in shaping the SSR agenda (for an overview see the separate background paper prepared by DCAF). For many years now, the UN system has also been engaged in a wide range of SSR activities – though not necessarily under the label of “security sector reform”. These include support to police reform; reform of judicial and correction systems; and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants. They also include assistance in the areas of civil management, parliamentary oversight and the civil society empowerment in security sector governance. All of these tasks are necessary elements of an effective SSR assistance strategy. What has been absent to date is a common, comprehensive and coordinated UN approach to SSR cutting across the entire peacebuilding spectrum and including longer-term development, with shared principles, objectives and guidelines for the development and implementation of UN support to SSR and clarity on roles and responsibilities across the UN system.

There is, however, increasing interest within the UN system and strong calls from the field for such an approach, which would serve as a valuable orientation and planning tool to various UN institutions working on SSR and in related areas. UN Member States have also expressed interest in the development of a comprehensive UN policy framework for SSR. In July 2005, the Security Council addressed the question in the context of post-conflict peacebuilding and the subsequent statement by the Presidency acknowledged the need for more coherent approaches by the United Nations and the international community in addressing SSR issues and for adequate attention to be accorded to SSR in the future, drawing on best practices in the area. The annual report of the General Assembly’s Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, adopted in February 2006, acknowledged the significance of SSR in peacekeeping and requested the Secretariat to conduct “a process of joint policymaking on security sector reform best practices”. The UN Secretariat is currently involved in establishing a Peacebuilding Capacity Inventory which, in its first section, covers UN capacities in the area of security sector reform. Finally, the Security Council is scheduled to discuss SSR during the Slovak Presidency in

February 2007. All this demonstrates that SSR is very much on the agenda of the UN system.

The purpose of this paper is to inform the evolving discussion on the UN's role in SSR by taking a broad overview of current UN approaches to security sector reform. Following a brief introduction of the SSR concept, this paper will first touch upon existing UN policy frameworks that are relevant to SSR. It will then review institutional actors within the UN system engaged in SSR activities. This is followed by the development of a tentative profile of UN SSR activities. The paper ends by summarizing key findings and raises a number of questions for further discussion.

II. SECURITY SECTOR REFORM (SSR)

There is no generally accepted definition of what the security sector comprises or what security sector reform entails. Nonetheless, there appears to be a certain convergence on the definitions put forward by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Accordingly, the **security sector** – or the **security system** as it is referred to by the DAC – can be defined as all the state institutions and other entities with a role in ensuring the security of the state *and* its people. These include:

- *Core security actors including law enforcement institutions*: armed forces; police; gendarmeries; paramilitary forces; presidential guards; intelligence and security services; coast guards; border guards; customs authorities; reserve or local security units.
- *Security management and oversight bodies*: parliament/legislature and legislative select committees; government/the executive, including ministries of defence, internal affairs, foreign affairs; national security advisory bodies; customary and traditional authorities; financial management bodies; and civil society actors, including the media, academia and NGOs.
- *Justice institutions*: justice ministries; prisons; criminal investigation and prosecution services; the judiciary (courts and tribunals); implementation justice services (bailiffs and ushers), other customary and traditional justice systems; human rights commissions and ombudsmen; etc.
- *Non-statutory security forces*: liberation armies; guerrilla armies; private body-guard units; private security companies; political party militias.

This definition suggests that the security system shares many of the characteristics of other service delivery systems. As UN Secretary General Kofi Annan noted in 1999, the security sector “should be subject to the same standards of efficiency, equity and accountability as any other [public] service”. While the security sector shares many features with public service more generally, it has unique characteristics as a result of the central role that the use of force plays in this sector.

Security sector/system reform means – again according to the DAC definition – transforming the security sector/system, which includes all these actors, their roles, responsibilities and actions, working together to manage and operate the system in a manner that is consistent with democratic norms and sound principles of good governance and thus contributing to a well functioning security framework.

Thus, the SSR agenda favours a holistic approach in a double sense – firstly, by integrating all those partial reforms such as defence reform, intelligence reform, police reform and justice reform, which in the past were generally seen and conducted as separate efforts; and secondly, by linking measures aimed at increasing efficiency and effectiveness of security forces to overriding concerns of democratic governance. Consequently, reforms aimed solely at modernising and professionalising the security forces and thereby increasing their capacity without ensuring their democratic accountability, are not consistent with the SSR concept. As noted by the DAC in one of its reports on SSR, there is a danger that traditional security-related programmes be simply re-labelled as SSR without a serious review of their contents to ensure that they support a governance-oriented approach to the security sector. By definition, SSR-related activities must be aimed at improving the governance of the security sector. In this respect, civilian control and parliamentary oversight are considered key aspects of SSR.

Given its scope and complexity, the SSR concept spans a wide array of activities from political dialogue, policy and legal advice, training programmes, to technical and financial assistance. Three major categories of reform activities can be distinguished:

- First, activities aimed at restructuring the security apparatus and the development of capability related to its core operational tasks (capacity dimension). These SSR activities include partial reforms such as reform of the armed forces and intelligence, police reform and reform of other law enforcement agencies such as customs, justice reform, prison reform, etc. From a security governance perspective, this category must also include activities aimed at engaging and integrating non-state armed actors into the state security apparatus.
- Second, activities aimed at strengthening civilian management and oversight of the security apparatus (governance dimension). These SSR activities include reforms of the civil management bodies, particularly the relevant ministries, president/prime minister's offices, national security advisory bodies and the like, as well as civil oversight mechanisms such as parliament, parliamentary committees, human rights commissions, ombudsmen, etc. From a security sector governance perspective, this category must include capacity building in favour of civil society groups that seek to contribute to the creation of an informed public that is sensitised to security issues.
- Third, specific SSR-related activities aimed at addressing the legacies of conflict (post-conflict dimension). These include activities in the area of DDR, with particular attention to child soldiers, small arms and light weapons (SALW), mine action, transitional justice, protection of vulnerable groups and women's empowerment in peacebuilding.

Extension of Official Development Assistance (ODA) eligibility to the area of security, as agreed by the OECD DAC in 2005, means that a wider spectrum of SSR and SSR-related activities can be financed by development cooperation funds than before. This encompasses the following six items of relevance to SSR programming:

- management of security expenditures through improved civilian oversight and democratic control;
- enhancing civil society's role in the security system;
- supporting legislation for preventing the recruitment of child soldiers;
- security system reform to improve democratic governance and civilian control;
- civilian activities for peacebuilding, conflict prevention and conflict resolution;
- and
- controlling, preventing and reducing the proliferation of SALW.

In practical terms, SSR varies according to the specific reform context. There is general agreement that no common model of SSR exists and that, in principle, each country engaged in SSR constitutes a special case and hence a different reform context. However, for analytical purposes, broad SSR contexts may be distinguished, such as countries in long-term democratisation and development processes; countries in transition; conflict or immediate post-conflict countries; and countries in a post-conflict environment. A comprehensive reform process is most easily achieved where a country has embarked on a process of long-term democratisation and development, as well as in those post-conflict states in which local stakeholders show an interest in engaging in SSR and international peace operations offer a basis for reconstruction and sustainable development. In many other cases, however, it can be considerably more difficult to carry out SSR activities. In particular, this applies to countries in ongoing violent conflict or early post-conflict, as well as to authoritarian regimes and so-called illiberal democracies where the will to reform is lacking.

What all contexts have in common, however, is that SSR tends to be assisted by external actors. International actors are increasingly involved in supporting SSR processes, particularly regional and global intergovernmental organisations (for an overview see separate background paper prepared by DCAF). In most cases, external (development and security) actors tend to initiate SSR programmes, fund them to a large extent and often provide the bulk of expertise needed for implementing these programmes. Where local will for reform is lacking, external actors often facilitate SSR programmes by means of political incentives or even pressure. In all reform contexts, there are tensions between external assistance and local ownership of SSR. Finding a balance between international good practice in this area and domestic political culture of reforming states is a *conditio sine qua non* for successful SSR, though, at the same time, this tension is inherent to the SSR concept itself and thus not amenable to easy solutions. International actors providing support to SSR, including the UN, have to take this into account.

III. UN POLICY FRAMEWORK

The UN's broad and global mandate covers all major policy areas in international relations ranging from peace and security to economic and social development, human rights and rule of law. Security sector reform, which is a broad notion, cuts across most of these policy areas. While policies focusing on maintaining and promoting peace are the activities most obviously related to security sector reform, policies related to the broader development agenda, the protection of human rights and the promotion of the rule of law and democracy are also highly important areas for SSR support. This section briefly introduces the most important current UN policies and strategies that are relevant to SSR.

Peace and Security

The primary purpose of the United Nations is the maintenance of international peace and security. For this purpose the Charter institutes a collective security system and sets out multilateral disarmament and arms limitation agendas. However, the collective security system could not prevent every outbreak of violence, as has been increasingly observed in the post-Cold War period at the sub-state level. As such, the UN has often been called upon to become operationally involved in conflicts across all stages of the conflict continuum from prevention through peacemaking, peacekeeping to post-conflict peacebuilding. The UN's experience since the end of the Cold War, marked by internal rather than inter-state wars, has led it to focus as never before on a broad range of peacebuilding tasks. In this process, SSR has increasingly become recognised as a key component of the various related UN policy frameworks for peace and security. This section will focus on three of them: (1) peacekeeping; (2) post-conflict peacebuilding and (3) disarmament.

Peacekeeping. UN peacekeeping operations are a crucial instrument at the disposal of the international community to advance peace and security. Since the end of the Cold War, the number of peacekeeping operations has dramatically increased, reflecting the end of the East-West blockade of the Security Council and the rise of mostly internal armed conflicts. Peacekeeping operations increased in number and expanded in scope, although this latter evolution was not strictly linear (e.g., the 1960-1964 mission to Congo is considered more complex than e.g., the 1974 mandate for the Cypriot interposition force). If the tasks of classic peacekeeping missions were primarily maintenance of ceasefires and separation of forces, the mandates of complex and multi-dimensional operations, deployed on the basis of comprehensive peace agreements, are characterised by an ever-widening spectrum of tasks which may include – apart from the creation of a secure environment – the provision of humanitarian assistance, DDR of former combatants, mine action, resettlement of refugees, promotion of law and order, monitoring human rights, holding of elections, execution of administrative functions in place of dysfunctional state structures and coordinating support for economic reconstruction. While complex peace operations do not generally have a mandate with regard to SSR,

increasingly such missions have explicit (e.g., MONUC in the DRC since 2003, UNMIL in Liberia and UNAMA in Afghanistan since 2005) or implicit responsibilities in this area. These responsibilities concentrate on the reform, restructuring and rebuilding of national law enforcement agencies. Police components of peace operations have increasingly been engaged in advising, mentoring and training national police, border guards and corrections services. Specialised support to defence reform is almost non-existent in peace operations while governance-related activities such as conducting security sector reviews or setting up civil management institutions are still rather marginal. However, a number of SSR-related activities in post-conflict settings such as DDR, mine action, SALW collection and general rule of law tasks are carried out in the context of complex peace operations.

Post-conflict peacebuilding. Post-conflict peacebuilding has become one of the primary concerns in current world politics. International actors have in recent years begun to prioritise and mainstream peacebuilding in their external policies. This has recently been evidenced by the decision of the UN to reinforce its peacebuilding capacity, namely by creating a Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) – an intergovernmental advisory body whose main purpose is to improve the coordination among relevant actors. Post-conflict peacebuilding is viewed as a multidimensional process of transformation from war to peace comprising three equally important and mutually reinforcing dimensions: the security dimension, the political dimension and the socio-economic dimension. SSR clearly falls into the first category together with SSR-related activities such as DDR, mine action and control of weapons (particularly SALW). However, given the centrality of its governance dimension, security sector reform must also be viewed as being part of the political dimension of peacebuilding, which includes, among others, tasks such as democratic consolidation, human rights protection, rule of law and transitional justice. The centrality of SSR in peacebuilding and its close linkages with SSR-related activities such as DDR, rule of law and transitional justice is increasingly acknowledged within the UN system. UNDP’s “Justice and Security Sector Reform” (JSSR) programmatic approach issued in 2003 is a case in point. More recently, the UN Security Council emphasised that SSR was an essential element of any stabilisation process in post-conflict environments and underlined that SSR was inextricably linked with the promotion of rule of law, transitional justice and DDR, among others.

Disarmament. Under the title of disarmament, the UN has traditionally given highest priority to reducing and eventually eliminating nuclear weapons, destroying chemical weapons and strengthening the prohibition against biological weapons – all of which are considered as weapons of mass destruction (WMD). With the proliferation of “new wars”, however, the international community has begun to consider more closely the issue of “small” conventional weapons such as SALW and antipersonnel landmines. While the mine ban treaty of 1997 (Ottawa Convention) was drawn up outside the UN system, a number of UN agencies are heavily engaged in mine-related activities such as mine clearance, mine awareness and risk-reduction education, victim assistance, advocacy and stockpile destruction. Since the uncontrolled spread of illicit small arms impacts many aspects of the UN’s work – from children to health to refugees to development – a mechanism called “Coordinating Action on Small Arms” (CASA) was

put into place in 1998 to guarantee that the UN system addressed the many facets of small arms control in a coordinated manner. International efforts to address the small arms issue are carried out within the UN system as evidenced by the negotiations on the international instrument on tracking illicit SALW. Apart from the small arms and landmines issues, DDR also has a disarmament dimension. As noted by the UNSC, all three issues together are closely related to SSR, particularly in post-conflict settings. While a UN SSR concept is still lacking, there are quite elaborate policy frameworks that guide UN action in the areas of SALW, landmines and DDR.

Economic and Social Development

At the foundation of the work of the UN lies a broad concept of peace that includes not only the desire to hinder the occurrence of war, but also to improve human rights and foster long-term development. This broad concept of peace recognises expressly that particular conditions must be created under which peace and international security can be better and more permanently maintained. Therefore, next to the promotion of peace and security and human rights protection, activities in the socio-economic and development areas constitute a third major complex of duties for the UN. The UN and its specialised agencies are an important pillar of multilateral development cooperation. Since the 1990s, the UN has provided a platform for formulating and promoting key new developmental objectives on the international agenda through a series of global conferences. It has articulated the need to incorporate issues such as the advancement of women, rights of children and good governance into the development paradigm. At their Millenium Summit in 2000, member states adopted a set of wide-ranging Millenium Development Goals (MDGs), supported by a series of specific, attainable targets, including the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

There is a growing consensus throughout the UN system and beyond that security is a precondition for development and that security is not sustainable without development. It is in the context of this increasingly accepted “security-development nexus” that SSR has entered the development agenda. Within the UN, the Development Programme is the most active body engaged in support to SSR across the broad peacebuilding spectrum – from conflict prevention to post-conflict recovery. UNDP’s Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) has developed the most explicit programmatic approach to SSR in the UN system to date with an emphasis on the non-military aspects of SSR (“Justice and Security Sector Reform”), while its Bureau for Development Policy (BDP) approaches SSR from a democratic governance perspective focusing on parliamentary development and access to justice and human rights. Furthermore, SSR is increasingly seen as an important issue from a gender perspective, particularly concerning the protection and participation of women in security sector institutions and policies. There is a clear interest in linking activities related to the implementation of the UNSC Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security with ongoing efforts to conceptualise SSR in a UN context.

Human Rights, Rule of Law and Democratisation

Human Rights and Rule of Law. One of the great achievements of the United Nations is the creation of a comprehensive body of human rights law, including political and civil rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights. A number of international special protection agreements have arisen from this core human rights focus, including (beyond the Civil and Social Pacts of 1966) agreements against torture, on the rights of children and on the elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women. It has also established mechanisms to promote and protect these rights and to assist governments in carrying out their responsibilities. The creation of the Human Rights Council in the context of the recent UN reforms is the latest achievement in the UN's policy of human rights protection. So far, SSR has not been a component part of the UN's human rights protection policy although there are strong linkages particularly in the areas of judicial process and rule of law after conflict. Concerning judicial process, the UN has developed standards and codes that serve as models for national legislation on issues such as the treatment of prisoners, the use of firearms by police, the conduct of law enforcement officials and the independence of the judiciary. The OHCHR provides technical assistance for human rights training for various actors of the security sector including law enforcement officers, prison officials and the military. Concerning the restoration of the rule of law, there has been a strong demand from UN transitional administrations and field missions for policy guidance, particularly on transitional justice issues. In response to this demand, the OHCHR has developed policy tools that address prosecution of perpetrators, the establishment of truth commissions and the vetting and monitoring of legal systems. On the policy level, in 2005, the UNSC emphasised that SSR is inextricably linked with the promotion of the rule of law and transitional justice.

Democratisation. The word "democracy" does not appear in the UN Charter, nor is democracy a precondition for UN membership. Yet, since the end of the Cold War the UN has increasingly become involved in democracy promotion, particularly in the context of post-conflict peacebuilding. Numerous UN documents now explicitly make reference to "democracy". Although the UN recognises the difficulty of authoritatively defining democracy in detail, electoral democracy is propagated as the basic governance template for all nations to follow. Democratic governance has become a component part of the UN development agenda. The creation of the UN Democracy Fund (UNDEF) in the context of the recent UN reforms is only the latest testimony of the increasing appreciation that promoting democracy is a key purpose of the United Nations. Within the UN system, DPA (with its Electoral Assistance Unit), UNDP and UNDEF are the key actors in democracy promotion. There are important conceptual linkages between democracy promotion and SSR given the latter's inherent governance dimension. However, on the policy level, SSR has not been part of the UN's democracy promotion agenda. On the ground, the engagement of some multidimensional peacekeeping missions in assisting in strengthening executive oversight of the security sector may be considered a contribution to democratic governance. Most relevant in this context are contributions by UNDP through BCPR's JSSR programme which stresses the role of civilian oversight and democratic accountability of security institutions and BDP's legislative oversight programme which increasingly covers the security sector as well.

IV. UN ACTORS INVOLVED IN SSR

The UN's broad and global mandate is implemented by a substantive number of organs, agencies and associated organisations including six principal organs, fourteen departments of the Secretariat, fourteen programmes and funds, fifteen specialised agencies, five research and training entities, three major regional offices and numerous related organisations and commissions. This section looks at those bodies of the UN system which are involved in SSR in the areas of policy planning, agenda setting and operational implementation. In so doing it (1) reviews the principal organs which provide strategic guidance to SSR activities, (2) maps the Secretariat's contribution to SSR and (3) discusses the inputs provided by specialised and associated programmes, funds and agencies.

Principal Organs (I): Overview

Security Council

The Security Council consists of fifteen UN member states, five of which are permanent veto powers and ten of which are elected for two-year terms by the General Assembly. Decisions are made by the affirmative vote of nine members, which in the case of substantive matters must include the five permanent members. Under the UN Charter, the Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It has the authority to qualify situations as threats to peace and to decide on the nature and duration of measures taken in response. Among others, these measures include active mediation of conflicts, setting-up of standing and ad hoc committees and expert panels, imposition of sanctions and deployments of civilian and/or military missions. All measures are decided by Security Council resolutions, yet only binding resolutions based on Chapter VII of the UN Charter can authorise coercive responses. Committees, field missions and also the newly established Peacebuilding Commission are subsidiary organs of the Security Council, although the latter is under joint control with the General Assembly and also works closely with ECOSOC. Committees are generally established to monitor or study specific sanctions regimes. Ulterior sub-organs include the UN Verification and Inspection Commission, the Compensation Commission, the ICTY and the ICTR. There is a direct reporting line with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Understanding of SSR

The Council emphasises in *Presidential Statement S/PRST/2005/30 (12 July 2005)* that SSR is an essential element of any stabilisation process in post-conflict environments, and underlines that it is inextricably linked with promotion of the rule of law, transitional justice, DDR and the protection of civilians. In so doing, the Security Council acknowledges a need for more preparation, more resources and better coordinated approaches to SSR both within the UN and among the wider international community. In the same document, the Security Council also stresses the need to seriously consider the

promotion of the rule of law and transitional justice, DDR and SSR but also their inter-linkages and resource requirements when the mandates for UN field operations are laid down. As in this statement, the Security Council often calls for SSR in its resolutions but generally abstains from defining SSR in detail. For instance, Resolution 1623 (13 September 2005) merely stresses the importance of “security sector reform including the reconstitution of the National Army and Police” in the case of Afghanistan. Resolution 1565 (2 October 2004) on the UN mission in DR Congo (MONUC) does not define SSR in detail, either, although it explicitly addresses the democratic governance component of SSR. This resolution defines the mandate of MONUC as “to take forward security sector reform...including the integration of national defence and internal security forces together with disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration and the training and monitoring of the police, while ensuring that they are democratic and fully respect human rights and fundamental freedoms”. In contrast and as an exception to the Security Council’s usual practice, Resolution 1509 (19 September 2003) on UNMIL in Liberia outlines an SSR mandate in particular detail, calling for “Support for Security Reform:...to assist the transitional government in monitoring and restructuring the police force, consistent with democratic policing,...in the formation of a new and restructured Liberian military in cooperation with ECOWAS, international organizations and interested States.”

SSR activities

The Security Council defines the SSR components of its field missions. Practical SSR activities are then operationalised by those field missions, which are subordinate organs of the Security Council. In recent years SSR components have been increasingly regularly introduced into mission mandates. What is more, the Security Council’s Peacebuilding Commission has an implicit SSR agenda. One of the resolutions establishing its mandate, Security Council Resolution 1645 (20 December 2005), declares that its main purposes should include proposing integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery, focusing attention on the reconstruction and institution-building efforts necessary for recovery from conflict and supporting the development of integrated strategies in order to lay the foundation for sustainable development.

SSR-related documents

- Security Council Resolution 1645 (20 December 2005) on the Peacebuilding Commission
- Security Council Resolution 1623 (13 September 2005) on UNAMA (Afghanistan)
- Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2005/30 (12 July 2005)
- Security Council Resolution 1565 (1 October 2004) on MONUC (DRC)
- Security Council Resolution 1509 (19 September 2003) on UNMIL (Liberia)

General Assembly

The General Assembly is the UN’s main deliberative organ. It is composed of all member states, each of which has one vote. Decisions require a simple majority except for new admissions and issues of peace and security. Its tasks are to discuss questions relating to

peace and security, to develop international law and to promote human rights and international collaboration in the economic, social, cultural, educational and health fields. The Assembly also elects non-permanent Security Council members, proposes a candidate Secretary-General to the Security Council and elects, together with the Council, judges to the International Court of Justice. The Assembly meets annually or upon request of the Security Council. It features six committees which support the Assembly's work and a host of special and advisory committees. It also has direct reporting lines with a series of important organisations and agencies such as UNDP, UNCTAD, UNDCP, UNICEF, UNHCR, WFP, the Disarmament Commission and the International Law Commission.

Understanding of SSR and SSR activities

The General Assembly does not define SSR but establishes its centrality to UN operations. A first use of SSR language is found in the *Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations Report A57 767* (28 March 2003), which sees SSR as interrelated with DDR and the strengthening of the rule of law, and in addition encourages DPKO's Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit to develop recommendations for the application of SSR best practices in ongoing and future field missions. *Report A59 19* (1 March 2005) describes SSR as "an essential element of any country stabilization process", stating that SSR must go beyond issues of the armed forces and the security and stability of the State, but must also address wider security issues relating to policing and rule of law, among others. The latest *Report A60 19* (22 March 2006) requests the Secretariat "to conduct a process of joint policymaking on security sector reform best practices" similar to the one undertaken on DDR.

SSR-related documents

- Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations Report A60 19 (22 March 2006)
- Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations Report A59 19 (1 March 2005)
- Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations Report A57 767 (28 March 2003)

Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

ECOSOC is the principal forum and coordinating organ for the economic and social work of the UN's fourteen specialised agencies, ten functional commissions (statistics, population and development, social development, human rights, status of women, narcotic drugs, crime prevention and criminal justice, science and technology, sustainable development, forum on forests) and five regional commissions. It has reporting lines to eleven UN funds and programmes and works closely with the Peacebuilding Commission to ensure the international community and donors maintain interest in a post-conflict country even after it has dropped from the headlines. ECOSOC has the authority to make or initiate studies and reports on all issues of economic, social or cultural life. With this broad mandate, ECOSOC absorbs over 70% of the UN budget.

Understanding of SSR and SSR-related activities

ECOSOC has no direct mandate on SSR, yet it does take up SSR via the country reports of its *Ad Hoc Group on African Countries Emerging From Conflict* and the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW). The Ad Hoc Group was established by ECOSOC Resolution 2002/12 (12 April 2002). The Group's mandate includes assessing humanitarian and economic needs and preparing long-term support programmes that aim at the integration of relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development into a comprehensive approach to peace and stability. Currently, the group features advisory sub-groups on Guinea-Bissau and Burundi. The *2005 Report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi* qualifies SSR as critical, putting it into context with DDR and the reduction of small arms and light weaponry. INSTRAW was established by ECOSOC in 1976 as a follow-up to the 1975 World Conference of the International Women's Year held in Mexico City. Its executive board is elected by and reports to ECOSOC. INSTRAW features a "gender and security sector reform program" which aims at "ensuring the right to security for women, marginalised men, girls and boys as well as to create a just, democratic and effective security sector". To this end, INSTRAW conducts research, provides training, disseminates information and distils best practices on this particular linkage in cooperation with specialised agencies such as UNIFEM.

SSR-related documents

- INSTRAW Gender and Security Sector Reform Factsheet (2006)
- Report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi (2005)

Secretariat

The Secretariat – consisting of 8,900 international staff working in fourteen departments and offices, as well as three major regional offices – carries out the diverse day-to-day work of the organisation. It services the other principal organs of the United Nations and administers the programmes and policies laid down by them. At its head is the Secretary-General, who is appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council for a five-year, renewable term. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has discussed SSR in different press announcements, stating that "[t]rue reform of the security sector requires...a broad approach. The end-result must be a viable army and police force, as well as judicial institutions that serve the interest of the people and international standards." He also repeatedly characterised SSR as a central element of post-conflict peacebuilding. Other high UN officials have also underlined the centrality of SSR on various recent occasions. The Special Advisors for West Africa for instance explicitly called on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) to democratise security sectors, and the Under-Secretary General for Peacekeeping called for increased SSR coherence and capabilities. The following section discusses the approaches of those departments most closely involved in SSR.

SSR-related documents

- United Nations Secretary General Press Release “Secretary-General’s statement to the Sudan Donors’ Conference” (11 April 2005)
- United Nations Secretary General Press Release “Need to strengthen SSR in West Africa” (12 January 2005)
- Special Advisor on West Africa ‘A New Dawn for Africa’ (14 January 2003)

Principal organs (II): Secretariat

Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)

DPKO – directed by an Under-Secretary General (USG) – prepares and manages UN peacekeeping operations. It maintains contact with the Security Council, troop contributors, financial donors and warring factions and integrates the UN system’s contributions to peacekeeping. DPKO also provides support on military, police, mine action, logistical and administrative issues to other UN political and peacebuilding missions.

Understanding of SSR

DPKO does not define SSR. However, its head affirmed the concept’s centrality in a 2005 speech to the Security Council. In this speech, SSR is established as central to post-conflict peacebuilding and linked to DDR as well as to the rule of law and transitional justice. SSR approaches are qualified as often being disjointed and requiring coordination and increased capabilities at the UN. An internal DPKO study of 2005 requested by the USG discusses the role of the UN in defence reform in the broader context of SSR, drawing on the OECD DAC concept.

SSR activities

The Peacekeeping Best Practices Section (PBPS) has primary responsibility for strategic policy issues in DPKO and is a lead advisor on SSR-related activities such as DDR and criminal justice (Criminal Law and Judiciary Advisory Unit). PBPS assists in the planning, conduct and management of UN peacekeeping operations by learning from past experiences and problems, developing operational policy material and transferring best practices back to ongoing and upcoming missions. PBPS has recently commissioned an external study on “SSR and peace operations” drawing on field missions, particularly those in Timor Leste and Kosovo. The Military Division assists in military contingency planning, as well as determining and generating the kind of force necessary for the fulfilment of the mandate. Thus, the Military Division is responsible for generating the forces necessary for eventual DDR and SSR mandates. There have been only very few missions to date with an explicit or implicit mandate in defence reform (e.g., DRC, Liberia, Timor Leste), while specialised defence reform capacity is almost non-existent. Discussions within DPKO on the creation of a UN Defence Reform Advisory Capability have not produced tangible results to date. The Police Division is the only DPKO entity directly involved in SSR, since its mandate is to provide strategic guidance to the police component of peace operations, which perform law enforcement functions in host

countries or provide direct or indirect support to the reform, restructuring and rebuilding of national law enforcement agencies (police, border guards and corrections services) as part of capacity-building mandates (e.g., DRC, Haiti, Kosovo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Timor Leste). The initial operating capability of the Standing Police Capacity (SPC), which will be launched in early 2007, may also include SSR-related tasks in which peace missions are involved.

SSR-related documents

- Under-Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Remarks to the Open Meeting of the Security Council on “Maintenance of International Peace and Security – The Role of the Security Council in Humanitarian Crises: Challenges; Lessons Learned; the Way Ahead”, United Nations Security Council document S/PV.5225 (12 July 2005)
- Mandates of peace missions mentioned above

Department for Disarmament Affairs (DDA)

DDA promotes disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons such as land mines and small arms. DDA engages in norm-setting through the General Assembly’s First Committee, the Disarmament Commission, the Conference on Disarmament and other bodies, fostering preventive disarmament measures such as confidence building on military matters. DDA also supports DDR programmes in post-conflict contexts. DDA is headed by an Under-Secretary General and operates a Regional Disarmament Branch with three regional offices.

Understanding of SSR and SSR-related activities

DDA itself does not define SSR explicitly although it makes the case, via the bias of General Assembly Resolution A59 119 (23 June 2004) on the relationship between disarmament and development, that security sectors “must be accountable, affordable, appropriate and transparent”. However, DDA has a strong agenda on SSR-related activities such as DDR, mine action and small arms. DDR activities are carried out by the Regional Disarmament Branch. This branch and its regional offices in Togo (UNREC), Nepal (RCPD) and Peru (UNLiREC) advise and promote the implementation of disarmament and arms control norms at regional and sub-regional levels, monitoring and analysing disarmament developments and trends and assisting a number of regional and sub-regional operational implementation programmes. On mine action, DDA works closely with the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS), which is the focal point for mine action within the United Nations to consolidate existing legal norms, mine clearance and victim assistance. DDA is the UN focal point for two important conventions on landmines, the 1997 Mine-Ban Convention and 1996 Amended Protocol II to the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons, which focuses specifically on landmines and booby-traps. DDA is also responsible for the collection and circulation of small arms-relevant information such as national reports and national legislation on small arms, and for planning and supporting practical UN disarmament measures. In particular, DDA supports the implementation of the

Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (July 2001), a multilateral small arms programme of action, by studying the potential of international instruments to mark and trace small arms. Two of the three regional disarmament centres are carrying out core SSR tasks apart from the engagement in SSR-related activities such as DDR, small arms and landmines. The Lomé-based UNREC played a key role in developing the draft Code of Conduct for Armed and Security Forces in Africa which is currently under consideration by the African Union (AU) and has inspired ECOWAS to draw up a similar code for West Africa. Jointly with the Department for Political Affairs (DPA) and other UN entities, the Lima-based UNLiREC was involved in a series of initiatives aimed at improving security sector governance in Latin America.

SSR-related documents

- General Assembly Resolution A60 97 (8 December 2005): Assistance to Mine Action
- Mine Action and Effective Coordination: the United Nations Inter-Agency Policy (2005)
- General Assembly Resolution A59 119 (23 June 2004): The relationship between disarmament and development in the current international context
- Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (July 2001)

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has been established as a department of the Secretariat by General Assembly Resolution 48/141 (7 January 1994). OHCHR is mandated to promote and protect all rights established in the *Charter of the United Nations* and in the various international human rights laws and treaties. The mandate includes preventing human rights violations, securing respect for all human rights, promoting international cooperation to protect human rights, coordinating related activities throughout the United Nations, and strengthening and streamlining the United Nations system as regards human rights.

SSR-related activities

As the central UN human rights body, OHCHR plays a vital role in keeping security actors accountable to international human rights law. To do so, OHCHR works with governments, national institutions, civil society, regional and international organizations but also the wider United Nations system to develop and strengthen capacities for the promotion and protection of human rights, particularly at the national level. The OHCHR has a programme of technical assistance that focuses on human rights training for legislators, judges, lawyers, law enforcement officers, prison officials and the military. Furthermore, OHCHR provides expert advice and training on human rights standards to all personnel in peace operations, including the military and police components. In the context of post-conflict peacebuilding, the OHCHR has developed a series of policy tools on the rule of law and transitional justice that address prosecution of perpetrators for

crimes such as genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, the establishment of truce commissions and the vetting and monitoring of legal systems established after the end of hostilities.

Other departments and offices of the secretariat

A series of other UN departments and offices work on SSR-related issues. Among those, the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) features an explicit SSR agenda in the context of its role as lead agency in peacebuilding and democracy promotion. DPA plays a central role in coordinating the UN Executive Committee on Peace and Security, a high-level body for interagency and interdepartmental coordination. It provides guidance to DPA-led peacebuilding operations some of which are mandated to perform specific tasks relating to SSR particularly in the area of law enforcement institutions (e.g., Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Tajikistan, Somalia, UNOWA). DPA has also been involved in a series of initiatives aimed at improving security sector governance in Latin America. As one part of its multi-faceted support for building democracy, DPA has been supporting and participating in the process of holding International Conferences of New or Restored Democracies (ICNRD) – an intergovernmental process which aims to share experiences in democratization and to promote good governance. Some of these conferences also addressed issues related to SSR. Furthermore, through ICNRD, DPA established a link between SSR and the collection of small arms in its Palestine programme report.

Also, Security Council Resolution 1645 (20 December 2005) requested the Secretary-General to establish a Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) within his Executive Office. This latter Office would assist and support the Peacebuilding Commission by gathering and processing information on peacebuilding-related UN in-country planning activities by analysing the progress made by UN field missions towards short and medium-term recovery goals, and by developing and disseminating best practices with respect to cross-cutting peacebuilding issues, which could potentially include SSR. In this context it is noteworthy that the broad SSR agenda is covered by the first eight (out of 25) sectors of the UN Peacebuilding Capacity Inventory prepared by the Executive Office of the Secretary General.

Finally, the Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) also works on SSR-related activities through its mandate to fight illicit drugs, international crime and terrorism. Established in 1997, UNODC has 500 staff members operating at headquarters in Vienna and in 21 field offices. This office assists states in the ratification and implementation of related international treaties and the development of national legislation, and conducts field-based technical cooperation projects that enhance the technical capacity of national law enforcement agencies to counteract illicit drugs trafficking, cross-border organised crime and terrorism.

SSR-related documents

- Security Council Resolution 1645 (20 December 2005)

- Briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Security Council Opening Meeting, 20 October 2005
- Office on Drugs and Crime Activities Report (20 January 2003)

Programmes and Funds, Specialised Agencies

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

UNDP is the coordinating development agency within the UN. It is devoted to sustainable human development as an essential component of poverty reduction. UNDP is the primary distributor of UN funds for development. It is headed by an Administrator and has 166 country offices. A major current activity of UNDP is to monitor and coordinate the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted at the UN Millennium Summit in 2000.

Understanding of SSR

UNDP holds that human development, conflict prevention, peacebuilding, security sector reform and justice are interdependent. The UNDP, through its Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR), was the first international organisation to implement the SSR concept in its field activities. In the document entitled *Justice and Security Sector Reform: BCPR's Programmatic Approach* (2002), BCPR introduced the "Justice and Security Sector Reform" (JSSR) concept, the objective of which is to strengthen the ability of the sector as a whole and each of its individual parts to provide an accountable, equitable and rights-respecting public service. The work of the Bureau for Development Policy (BDP), in the framework of its democratic governance approach, concentrates on two issues relevant to SSR: parliamentary development and access to justice and human rights. Furthermore, the UNDP-sponsored *2002 Human Development Report* identifies effective civilian control over the military and other security forces as one of six key norms of democratic governance, makes a strong connection between efforts to democratise security, the prevention of conflict and peacebuilding, and underlines the importance of democratic control of the military, police and other security forces for human development and security.

SSR-related activities

UNDP runs significant SSR-related programmes in the areas of police reform, community policing, judicial reform, transitional justice and parliamentary oversight of the security sector with a strong emphasis on justice-related programmes. Traditionally, UNDP has not been involved in defence-related matters. However, in some rare cases, UNDP has been engaged in military reform (e.g., Argentina, Bosnia, Nicaragua, Peru). Its experiences in military restructuring are rather marginal and include, among others, policy dialogues on national defence reform and developing white books on defence matters. In contrast, UNDP's extensive experience in the area of police reform includes building up national administrative bodies or advising the national senior police management (e.g., Kosovo, Haiti, Timor Leste, Mozambique, Guatemala). It also conducts some activities related to strengthening civilian management and oversight

mechanisms including internal security reviews (e.g., Kosovo), institutional reforms of the ministry of defence (e.g., Serbia and Montenegro), parliamentary capacity-building (e.g., regional programme for CIS countries) and civil society empowerment (e.g., Guatemala). However, the majority of UNDP engagement in SSR falls into the category of SSR-related activities in post-conflict contexts, ranging from DDR and combating the proliferation of illicit small arms and mine action to the reestablishment of rule of law and transitional justice.

SSR-related documents

- JSSR Programmatic Approach for Crisis and Post-Conflict Situations (2003)
- Security Sector Reform and Transitional Justice. A Crisis Post-Conflict Programmatic Approach (March 2003)
- UNDP Human Development Report: Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World (2002)
- BCPR Justice and Security Sector Reform: BCPR's Programmatic Approach (2002)

United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

The United Nations Development Fund for Women is a specialised sub-unit of UNDP that provides financial and technical assistance to projects aimed at improving gender equality. General Assembly Resolution 31/133 (16 December 1976) set up UNIFEM with the aim of reducing women's poverty and exclusion, ending violence against women, reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS among women and girls, and supporting women's leadership in governance and post-conflict reconstruction. In parallel, UNIFEM derives its mandate from a series of international agreements such as the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (1979) and the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action or the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals* (1995).

SSR-related activities

Security Council Resolution 1325 (31 October 2000) in particular recognises not only that war impacts women differently, but also reaffirms the need to increase the role of women in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution in particular. As such, women are understood to play a key leadership role in the political governance of a country. UNIFEM provides support to SSR-related activities, including mechanisms of justice and national reconciliation which train women to adequately respond to crimes against women, the development of common indicators for early warning taking into account women and gender issues, the design of strategies to ensure women's participation in DDR and support to women's participation in post-conflict elections and reconstruction.

SSR-related documents

- Security Council Resolution 1325 (31 October 2000) on women, peace and security

United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)

UNICEF’s mandate is “to advocate for the protection of children’s rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential”. The Fund’s commitment to protecting children from violence, exploitation and abuse is an integral component of protecting their rights to survival, growth and development. UNICEF’s responses draw on the *1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)* and numerous international human rights agreements. The CRC is the most widely ratified human rights treaty, setting out a range of provisions that encompass civil rights and freedoms, family environment, basic health and welfare, education, leisure and cultural activities, and special protection measures.

SSR-related activities

UNICEF advocates the creation of a protective environment for children in partnership with governmental and non-governmental partners. National child protection systems, protective social practices and children’s own empowerment coupled with good oversight and monitoring are among the elements of a protective environment that enables countries, communities and families to prevent and respond to violence, exploitation and abuse. Security Council Resolution 1612 (26 July 2005) acknowledged the “initiatives taken by UNICEF and other United Nations entities to gather information on the recruitment and use of child soldiers in violation of applicable international law and on other violations and abuses committed against children in situations of armed conflict”. The resolution calls upon the Secretary General to implement a monitoring and reporting mechanism. The first country report was presented to the Security Council and its Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict in June 2006 and concerned the Democratic Republic of Congo. Information used in this report was based on monitoring by MONUC child protection advisers and staff of the UNICEF child protection programme in conjunction with civil society actors. Some of UNICEF’s activities referred to in the report included: assistance to internally displaced persons through a rapid response mechanism co-managed with OCHA; the current operational framework for children’s DDR, developed under the leadership of UNICEF and adopted by the DRC’s Commission Nationale de Désarmement, Démobilisation et Reinsertion in July 2004; emergency educational support to displaced schoolchildren and assistance to schools that had been attacked; and training of police, military and the judiciary.

SSR-related documents

- General Assembly Resolution 44/25 (20 November 1989): Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Security Council Resolution 1612 (26 July 2005)
- Secretary-General Report 2004/251 (25 March 2004) on children and armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo

V. AREAS OF UN SUPPORT TO SSR

Areas of UN support to SSR can be differentiated between capacity-building activities, activities aimed at promoting democratic security sector governance and SSR-related activities, each of which are subject to different rationales. This section tentatively lists types of contributions made by the UN to each of these areas, illustrating these predominantly with reference to field mission activities. To this end, it draws on UN resolutions, policy statements and field mission reports.

Security Sector Capacity-Building Activities

Capacity-building activities aim to improve a country's physical 'security output': its ability to ensure the safety of the state, its citizens and inhabitants against acts of violence and coercion. Examples of such activities include technical assistance to the judiciary and corrections institutions, the restructuring and equipment of the police, border guards and the armed forces, or support to national security policy-making by government branches. In post-conflict situations, capacity-building efforts may serve as quick-impact instruments by rapidly increasing security in strategic locations. Beyond shorter and mid-term peace support operations, long-term projects such as those implemented by UNDP are crucial to address structural capacity-building aspects. The UN is involved in the following capacity-building activities:

Justice sector including corrections

Assistance to the justice sector includes all those programmes that improve the justice sector's output, for instance, via training in case handling, professional training or upgrades of the judiciary's physical infrastructure.

Examples of UN assistance:

- The UNDP Democratic Governance Group features a justice reform policy agenda. It implements corresponding programmes in Brazil.
- UNMIL in Liberia trains legal personnel and corrections staff in, for instance, case flow management. By the same token, UNMIL works to improve the judiciary's physical infrastructure.
- UNAMA in Afghanistan is engaged in capacity building and the enhancement of judiciary communication.
- The UN Transitional Administration in Cambodia conducted justice sector reform.
- As a counter-example, the absence of judicial reform was sorely missed in UN missions to Haiti. Arguably, the focus on the restructuring of the police was too strong in these missions to the detriment of the judiciary. A lesson learned from these missions was that law enforcement needs to be understood as a triad, including not only the police but also the judiciary and correction services.

Law enforcement forces

The restructuring and equipping of law enforcement forces refers to programmes which transfer skills in areas such as administration, human rights, forensics or democratic policing to the police and boarder guards. It also includes programmes to upgrade their equipment.

Examples of UN assistance:

- UNDP has been engaged in setting up police administration capacities, such as the police administration of Kosovo.
- Police recruitment and training in human rights, investigation techniques and democratic policing were conducted through programmes in El Salvador, Haiti, Mozambique and Cambodia.
- In DRC and Liberia, MONUC and UNMIL have assisted in the restructuring and training of police forces; in the case of MONUC, police reform is one of two component parts of an overarching SSR programme.
- UN civilian police units have been deployed to many locations with the aim to provide for the direct safety of citizens from local crime and violence.
- In Liberia, there was a special case of restructuring and reforming border security services. There, the Forestry Services have the twofold mandate of administering and controlling logging while at the same time securing state borders. *Security Council Expert Panel Report 745* (7 December 2005) made the point that Liberian insecurity was particularly linked to the exploitation of primary commodities such as timber. Consequently, the Forestry Services were identified as highly corrupt. The Government was thus asked to reform the Services and improve its accountability. Subsequent to the Expert Panel report, Security Council Resolution 1647 (30 December 2005) called on the UN Mission to Liberia to patrol jointly with the forestry services. The aim of this call was to simultaneously enhance border security and foster the democratic accountability of the border guards.

Armed forces

Capacity-building efforts in the realm of armed forces include the creation of an integrated national force, train-the-trainer programmes, the initiation of a national dialogue on security policy and reviews and updates of national security policy. UN experiences in reforming the military components of the security sector are relatively recent. The restructuring of armed forces is recurrently implemented by individual UN member states on a bilateral basis such as, for example, the United States in the case of Liberia.

Examples of UN assistance:

- In DRC, MONUC supports the creation of a new, integrated national army (FARDC) in conjunction with a DDR programme.
- In Bosnia, UNDP is part of the Defence Reform Commission and the Working Group on the Destruction of Ammunitions and Small Arms.

- Subsequent to a UNDP programme in Honduras, the Honduran Ministry of Defence entered into cooperation with the armed forces of Argentina, establishing cooperation mechanisms in the areas of education, budget management and pension fund system management.

Security Sector Governance Activities

Security sector governance activities include those measures which aim at improving democratic control over the security sector. Such activities focus on governance providers and include measures such as the reinforcement of civil society and the media, the improvement of legislators' competence on security affairs and defence budgeting, and assistance to security sector-related legal drafting. Security sector governance efforts aim at instituting an accountable, representative and thus sustainable security sector. In post-conflict contexts, security sector governance efforts are practical instruments for inclusion and national reconciliation.

Civilian management and oversight

Efforts here include programmes that enhance the capacity of civilian control over the security sector in general.

Examples of UN assistance:

- UNDP launched an initiative to reform the auditing system of the armed forces in Honduras.
- UNDP initiated a financial transparency initiative in Serbia as regards budgeting in the security sector.
- Also in Serbia, UNDP supported building the capacity of civilian officials in the Ministry of Defence with a view to providing proper civilian oversight of the armed forces.
- On a more general level, the promotion and holding of national elections by the UN often – but not always – helped to install civilian leaders in the highest offices.

Legislation and legislative oversight

This includes assistance to parliamentarians for the drafting of laws regulating different components of the security sector.

Examples of UN assistance:

- In his *Report 2004/251* (25 March 2004), the Secretary-General's Special Representative to Congo called on the authorities to draft a new law on the organisation of the armed forces.
- The rule of law programme of UNMIL in Liberia states that its aim is to “pursue legislative reforms related to security agencies”.

- In October 2005 the UNDP Regional Centre for Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) organised, in collaboration with DCAF, a parliamentary roundtable on security sector oversight, which represents UNDP's first initiative on parliamentary oversight of the security sector and constitutes a starting point for regional and national-level programming in the CIS region.

Public oversight

Public oversight refers to those activities aimed at strengthening non-parliamentary civilian oversight over the security sector, such as the media and civil society.

Examples of UN assistance:

- UNDP is engaged in launching a national policy dialogue on defence reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- UNDP seeks to improve civil society oversight of the security sector in Peru.
- In Argentina, UNDP was involved in a project aiming at building consensus for a national agenda on defence.

SSR-Related Activities

Various SSR-related activities are supportive of the areas listed above. They include specialised regimes, which aim at limiting the adverse effects of armed conflict on specific groups and the recurrence of armed conflict itself. SSR-related activities include the protection of vulnerable groups such as women or children that are abused as soldiers, the regulation of certain weapons such as small arms and landmines, and broader efforts aimed at post-conflict peacebuilding such as DDR and transitional justice.

Examples of UN assistance:

Small arms and light weapons

- UNDP is engaged in the collection and destruction of small arms in locations such as Bosnia, Brazil and Palestine.
- The Security Council helps to limit the flow of small arms to conflict zones by imposing arms embargoes, for instance in Resolution 1493 (28 July 2003) referring to DRC or Resolution 1267 (12 October 1999) on Afghanistan; by authorizing field missions to collect and destroy small arms, for instance, in Resolution 1533 (12 March 2004) on MONUC; or by establishing Expert Panels which monitor and study the proliferation of small arms.

Mine action

- The UN Mine Action Service develops standards on activities such as mine detection, mine clearance, destroying or disposing of landmines, and providing mine-risk education.

- UNMAS managed a rapid expansion of mine action in Sudan following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in January 2005.
- DPKO is responsible for integrating mine action into peacekeeping and chairs the interagency coordination group on mine action (IACG-MA).
- UNDP supports the development of national and local mine action capacity, and promotes coordination between mine action and the broader development community in its field operations.

DDR

- Setting-up and operation of cantonment sites, demobilisation of ex-combatants (so-called ‘brassage’) by UN missions in Liberia, the Solomon Islands and Cambodia.
- DPKO proposes technical guidelines and best practices for DDR.
- MONUC in Congo provided advice to the Congolese Government on DDR since the passage of Security Council Resolution 1565 (1 October 2004).
- An important role of the UN is also to mobilise international resources for all of the aspects and activities mentioned here. In the case of resource mobilization for DDR in Liberia, see for instance Security Council Resolution 1071 (30 August 1996).

Child soldiers

- The mandate and operations of UNICEF
- The staff of MONUC in Congo includes experts on child soldiers since *Security Council Resolution 1355 (15 June 2002)*.

Protection of women

- Numerous efforts to counter trafficking in human beings, especially the trafficking of women in the Balkans.
- The UN is engaged in gender mainstreaming in its own operations. There is a regulation which criminalises the engagement of UN troops in trafficking and abuses of women, and there is a DPKO policy paper which seeks to enhance the role of women in mine action, DDR and SSR. Furthermore, INSTRAW features a gender and security sector reform programme that conducts research, provides training, disseminates information, and distils best practices on the topic.
- UNIFEM supported women’s participation in peace negotiations through training local women and lobbying in Darfur, Burundi, DRC and Somalia.
- In Rwanda, the UN supported the participation of women in drafting a new constitution and playing an active role in peace-building and reconciliation.
- In Albania, UNIFEM provided assistance to local women in organising weapons collection processes.
- In the Solomon Islands, UNIFEM has used gender-sensitive indicators to assess the perceptions of local women and men of a range of security issues. Surveys collected sex-disaggregated data on perceptions such as “safety for men to walk around the community” or “safety for women to walk around the community” and include security issues likely to particularly affect women, including rape and domestic abuse.

Transitional justice

- UN installed and administers international criminal courts on conflicts in Yugoslavia, Rwanda or Sierra Leone.
- Security Council Resolution 1468 (20 March 2003) called on Congo to set up a Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

VI. CONCLUSION

Although the UN has not developed a common SSR policy framework so far, SSR is very much on the agenda of the UN system. Given its broad definition, SSR cuts across a wide range of UN policy areas from peace and security, to development, human rights and the rule of law. There is a strong consensus that SSR is central to post-conflict recovery. An increasing number of UN institutions is involved in one or other aspect of SSR – often without being aware of this fact. Various actors and agencies repeatedly refer to SSR, but rarely define it. The ambiguity that this creates is likely to undermine UN output. In recent years, SSR-related activities have increased both in number and in scope – though without these activities being necessarily attributed to the SSR concept. UN SSR activities in the framework of peace operations tend to privilege internal security sector capacity-building, particularly in the areas of justice and police reform, over activities aimed at improving security sector governance. In general, UN actors show a certain preference for SSR-related activities such as DDR, tackling the problem of child soldiers, curbing the proliferation of small arms, mine action and the establishment of the rule of law and transitional justice after conflict. Activities aimed at strengthening civil management and oversight mechanisms appear to be so few in number that no conclusive statement can be made except that UN support for parliamentary capacity-building and civil society empowerment is usually general in nature and rarely geared to the security sector.

Of the intergovernmental organisations involved in SSR, the UN is best placed to assist states in improving capacity and governance of the security sector through the promotion of a holistic SSR agenda. However, there is no common understanding, much less a comprehensive policy framework, that would guide UN SSR programmes and projects in a coherent, consistent and sustainable way. In that vein, the topic should be addressed further in order to stimulate a broad discussion on the role of security sector reform in the UN context with a view to increasing the understanding of the issue and suggesting possible options for the development of a holistic and coherent approach – an approach which would accord greater importance to SSR activities relating to military and defence capacity-building as well as to the enhancement of civil management and oversight of the security sector.

The following questions may help to inform the evolving debate and facilitate further discussion:

- What lessons in SSR policy development do other intergovernmental actors supporting SSR offer – particularly those which have developed an overarching SSR policy framework such as the OECD DAC and the EU?
- What can the UN learn from SSR activities of intergovernmental organisations, particularly regional organisations which have not (yet) developed an overarching SSR policy framework, such as is the case of ECOWAS and OSCE?
- To what extent are the experiences to date of bilateral donors, recipient countries and non-governmental organisations (NGO) involved in SSR relevant for the development of a UN SSR policy framework?
- To what extent should the UN base its own SSR policy development on the conceptual work already carried out by other international actors, particularly OECD DAC?
- Should focus be on the development of a system-wide UN SSR concept and/or SSR concepts for specific entities of the UN system such as DPKO, PBC, UNDP, etc.?
- Should focus be on the development of a UN SSR concept covering all policy areas and/or SSR concepts that cover specific policy areas such as peacekeeping, post-conflict peacebuilding, development assistance, gender issues, etc.?
- Should focus be on the development of a comprehensive SSR approach and/or approaches to specific dimensions of SSR such as defence reform, reform of law enforcement bodies, parliamentary oversight of the security sector, etc.?
- Should focus be on the development of a “global” UN SSR policy framework and/or concepts for specific regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa?
- Should one UN entity take the lead on developing a policy framework for UN support to SSR (e.g., UNSC, PBC, DPA, DPKO, UNDP) or should rather an inter-agency coordinating mechanism be established?
- How could and should the UNSC contribute to the development of a UN SSR concept?