

Conference on “Strengthening OSCE-UN Co-operation on Security Sector Reform” (7 July 2014)

Panel 3, 09.45-11.15: Developing Organization-wide Approaches to SRR: Sharing Experiences between the OSCE and the UN

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1. Security sector governance (SSG) and security sector reform (SSR) are relatively new concepts which have emerged over the past two decades in response to new challenges presented by the changing global security environment. When examining how international organizations have developed their approaches to SSG and SSR it is important to clarify what is meant by SSG and SSR. The former stands for the principle that the military, police and other security forces provide comprehensive security for the state and its people, effectively and efficiently, and within a framework of democratic civilian control, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. The latter is a political and technical process through which a country seeks to enhance the effectiveness and accountability of its security forces – in other words: to strengthen security sector governance. Thus, SSR is based on the concept of good security sector governance.

2. Many countries engaged in SSR processes draw on external support provided by international actors such as donor states, intergovernmental organizations and international non-governmental organizations. External actors bring to the table financial resources, technical expertise, and experiences of security sector governance from their own national contexts and other reform contexts in which they have been involved. Such assistance can be invaluable in making reforms more cost-efficient, effective and faster to implement. However, where external actors are involved in SSR processes, there is always the possibility of tension between the need for national ownership and the risk of external imposition. Striking a balance between ensuring national leadership of reform and making good use of external assistance is a delicate task for both domestic and external actors, including intergovernmental organizations such as the UN and the OSCE.

3. Over the past decade, intergovernmental organizations have assumed increasingly important responsibilities in shaping the SSR agenda – in other words: externally-assisted SSR has become more multilateral. When discussing the role of intergovernmental organizations in SSR three levels of analysis must be distinguished. First, the level of the individual intergovernmental organization itself: What is its policy approach to SSR? What types of operational activities are being carried out in the field? What are the comparative advantages (and disadvantages) of these organizations in supporting SSR? – Second, the level of interaction between intergovernmental organizations: To what extent are intergovernmental organizations already collaborating in supporting SSR in member and partner countries? How could collaboration and coordination be strengthened? How could these organizations learn from each other? – Third, the level of interaction between intergovernmental organizations and

the beneficiary state: What is the nature of the relationship (e.g. member states, potential member states, developing, transition or post-conflict countries in other world regions, etc.)? What kind of SSR processes are being supported by the intergovernmental organization? By what means, and with what effect?

4. The topic of this panel – developing organization-wide approaches to SSR – clearly falls into the first category, the level of the individual intergovernmental organization itself. The experience of the past ten years shows that intergovernmental organizations typically face a number of challenges in shaping and implementing their SSR agendas: the development of an overarching policy concept; the elaboration of robust implementation guidelines; internal capacity in terms of human, material and financial resources; and the ability to engage in partnership with other international actors.

5. The first challenge is to elaborate a SSR policy concept that effectively provides an overarching framework and orientation to a range of SSR activities supported by the organization in question. As evidenced by a recently adopted UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution, two reports by the Secretary-General and three UNSC Presidential Statements, the UN has clearly met this challenge. After initial reluctance, since 2007 the UN has successfully developed an overarching policy framework for its SSR support activities, although this process has not always been an easy one. Key factors of success were the creation of institutional capacity at headquarters and in the field, the inclusion of all relevant stakeholders and, last but not least, political will within the UN and among its member states. Indeed, what should not be underestimated is the importance of agency, the role of individuals as champions of change within an organization. Although support to SSR has been a widely established practice within the OSCE, the organization is still lacking such an overarching policy framework. Given the nature of the organization, this is a difficult issue for the OSCE. However, in the wake of the Mapping Study on the role of the OSCE executive structures in SSG/R, prepared by the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) at the request of Switzerland and with the support of the OSCE Secretary General, different options are currently being explored on how to develop a more coherent OSCE approach to SSR below the consensus threshold.

6. If such SSR policy frameworks are to be effective, the second challenge is that they need to be supported by robust implementation guidelines. As evidenced by the first set of so-called Integrated Technical Guidance Notes on SSR, developed over a period of three years, the UN has successfully embarked on this process. What may look like a modest step though, because the first set comprises guidance notes on five SSR topics only, is actually a quantum leap forward, an embodiment of a common UN approach to SSR, jointly developed and agreed upon by all 14 members of the inter-agency SSR task force. The first set of guidance notes provides the UN staff in the field and at HQ with coherent system-wide guidance on SSR. The key challenge now is to ensure their systematic use in the field, linked with sound monitoring and evaluation practices, and the continuous development of additional guidance notes. As recommended by the DCAF Mapping Study, the OSCE is currently considering the development of internal guidelines on SSG/R. This will be an important step towards rationalizing the

existing OSCE approach to SSR. Despite all differences in institutional culture, the UN may have quite a number of lessons to share with the OSCE regarding guidance development, including the importance of inclusiveness within the organization, the engagement of external expertise and the need for patience.

7. Third, in order to effectively support SSR processes, intergovernmental organizations may have to review the way the human, material and financial resources at their disposal are organized, as well as their internal procedures to allocate and deploy these resources. This is certainly an experience the UN has made in the recent past. The creation of institutional capacity has been crucial, including the establishment of the inter-agency SSR task force, the SSR Unit within the Department for Peacekeeping Operations, an SSR expert roster, SSR entities within field missions, and, last but not least, the UN Group of Friends of SSR, although an informal and Member States driven entity, but an important factor of support. What remains a big challenge in terms of internal capacity-building is the securing of sustainable funding of this new SSR set-up and the further clarification of SSR-related roles and responsibilities within the Organization. Given the OSCE's institutional nature and limited resources, internal capacity-building in support of SSR activities will be a huge challenge for the Organization. The creation of a temporary SSR position at the Secretariat is a modest, but important first step in this direction, which in the long run may result in the establishment of a small dedicated unit. As recommended by the DCAF Mapping Study, the creation of an inclusive internal task force or working group would constitute a strong step in further institutionalizing SSR within the OSCE, even though such a move might not be feasible at this point in time. In any case, it would be helpful for OSCE staff working on SSR to study the strengths and weaknesses of the UN's inter-agency cooperation process on SSR and identify those lessons which may be relevant for the OSCE.

8. Finally, it is necessary to ensure that intergovernmental organizations are able to collaborate effectively with other international actors engaged in SSR, both in the field and at headquarters. The importance for the UN to collaborate with regional and subregional organizations in supporting SSR has been emphasized in a number of policy documents, including the two SSR reports by the Secretary-General and the recent first-ever stand-alone UNSC resolution on SSR. Furthermore, in building its own approach to SSR, the UN has systematically drawn on the specific experiences of different world regions such as Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia, as evidenced by a series of regional consultations meetings, co-hosted by Slovakia and a member state from the respective region, which took place in the period 2007-2010. Finally, a strategic capacity-building partnership on SSR has been developed with the African Union Commission. There is, however, a need for the UN to strengthen partnerships with other regional and subregional organisations, including the OSCE which, as demonstrated by this conference, is reaching out to the UN in its effort to develop its own approach to SSR.

9. As already mentioned, the UN has embarked on establishing partnerships with other regional and multilateral organizations, starting with the African Union. The conference today is an opportunity to explore the possibilities and constraints of a partnership between the UN and the OSCE in supporting SSR in the geographic area of the OSCE and its partner states. Quite obviously, the UN experience in

developing an organization-wide approach to SSR can offer valuable insights and inspirations for the OSCE in moving forward in strengthening its own comprehensive approach to SSG/R support, particularly regarding guidance development, institutional capacity-building, lessons learned exercises, training and monitoring and evaluation. On the other hand, the OSCE has much to offer as a regional actor engaged in SSR support. As identified in the DCAF Mapping Study, the OSCE has a number of comparative advantages, which, if identified and built upon, could significantly enhance the impact of its support. First, through its field operations and its network of field offices, the OSCE is already involved with many security actors and thus can develop a comprehensive understanding of national needs for SSR and add a regional perspective to international efforts. Second, the OSCE is often appreciated as a coordinator of international efforts as evidenced by the calls from both national and international stakeholders in the field for the OSCE to play a stronger role in enhancing international cooperation in this area. Third, being the world's largest regional security organization, the OSCE could also act as a convenor for regional and other multilateral organizations interested in coordinating their efforts in support of SSR processes in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian areas and in linking these efforts with those of the UN.

10. The challenge is now to build on the momentum created by this conference and make the nascent OSCE-UN partnership on SSR sustainable. Against this backdrop, one could consider a number of potential follow-up measures that the OSCE and the UN could explore jointly, including: to organize a second OSCE-UN meeting on SSR in a year from now to review progress made and explore further possibilities of strengthening the nascent OSCE-UN partnership on SSR; to develop further insights on OSCE-UN collaboration on SSR, such as through a mapping exercise which would provide a clearer picture on how the two organizations already collaborate, on normative and on operational levels, at headquarters and in the field; to appoint points of contact for collaboration on SSR at both organizations, both on 'principals' and working levels; to organize a study visit of OSCE staff to UN headquarters in order to substantiate the sharing of institutional experience in developing SSR policy and guidance; and to invite UN and OSCE staff respectively to each other's SSR trainings, particularly those taking place in the field, which could have an immediate impact on improving collaboration on the ground and could inspire the emerging experience-sharing exercise.