Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF)

Policy Paper – №22

From Policy to Practice: the OECD's Evolving Role in Security System Reform

Alan Bryden

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

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About the Author

Alan Bryden is Deputy Head of Research at the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF). This paper draws on the author's experience as part of the Critical Review Panel (CRP) for the development and implementation of the OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform.

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Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF)

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Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF):
rue de Chantepoulet 11, PO Box 1360, CH-1211 Geneva 1, Switzerland
Tel: + 41 22 741 77 00; fax: + 41 22 741 77 05; e-mail: info@dcaf.ch

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From Policy to Practice: the OECD's Evolving Role in Security System Reform[1]

Alan Bryden

I. Introduction

Concepts count. This is certainly true in the field of security sector reform (SSR) – security 'system' reform in the language of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC) – where the importance of policy development and its relationship to effective implementation is receiving growing international recognition. The European Union has recently developed a new policy framework for SSR[2] while Slovakia's initiative as a non-permanent Security Council Member to launch a debate on the role of the United Nations (UN) in post-conflict SSR, culminating in an Open Debate in the Security Council on 20 February 2007, has cast a spotlight on the UN's role in this field.[3] Coupled with these and other multilateral initiatives is an increased interest among bilateral donors to support SSR, in particular through developing 'whole of government' approaches that seek to align the contributions of defence, diplomatic, development and security actors. Yet the policy literature on SSR is not firmly grounded in experience from SSR interventions which can contextualise and reality-check policy prescriptions and emerging good practices. Moreover, the SSR concept remains contested on two levels. On the one hand, there is no generally accepted definition of the security sector or what SSR entails, with different actors embracing broader or narrower understandings of the concept. On the other, in part as a result of its Anglo-Saxon roots, SSR is viewed with suspicion by some states. In the developing world SSR is welcomed in some quarters whereas in others it resonates with the imposition of Western values, methods and approaches in an area that lies at the heart of national security concerns.

Through its Network on Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation (CPDC),[4] the OECD DAC seeks to better coordinate development cooperation with conflict-prone and conflict-affected countries. The central mechanism for this coordination has been the development of a series of guidelines, first issued in 1997,[5] designed to guide donors in their aid policies. As these guidelines have developed, increased prominence has been given to SSR as its relevance as a means to operationalise the

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1 This paper is based on a chapter by the author in DCAF's 2007 Yearly Book *Intergovernmental Organisations and Security Sector Reform* (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2007). Grateful thanks go to DCAF colleagues Fairlie Jensen and Heiner Hänggi as well as Mark Downes (DAC Secretariat) and Mark White (DfID) for their insightful comments on earlier drafts of this chapter.

2 European Commission, *a Concept for European Community Support for Security Sector Reform,* COM (2006)253 Final, (Brussels, 24 May 2006).

3 Security Council, 5632nd meeting, 'The Maintenance of International Peace and Security: The Role of the Security Council in Supporting Security Sector Reform'; S/PV.5632 (20 February 2007).

4 See www.oecd.org/dac/conflict.

5 OECD DAC, 'Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation on the Threshold of the 21st Century' in OECD DAC, *The DAC Guidelines: Helping Prevent Violent Conflict* (Paris: OECD DAC, 2001).

security-development nexus became increasingly apparent. At least as significant as the guidelines themselves is the CPDC network, comprising the major bilateral donors, the European Commission, UNDP, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank.[6] The convening role of the CPDC has proved critical to ensuring the broader dissemination and application of the DAC Guidelines. It also provides a vehicle for improving the coherence and coordination of SSR interventions, two key preconditions for effective SSR implementation according to the OECD DAC. This evident strength also represents a challenge since the 'Western' profile of the organisation poses actual and perceived dilemmas in terms of balancing external support with the need for local ownership of SSR processes – another core principle of the DAC Guidelines.

The OECD DAC has recently sought to address an acknowledged gap between SSR policy and practice through the development of a Handbook on Security System Reform.[7] Yet the OECD is not an implementing agency and will need to find creative ways to support SSR if it is to achieve its goals. Given its long association with the development of policy guidelines for SSR and this more recent commitment to supporting the implementation of SSR good practice, the OECD DAC has a challenging but potentially pivotal role to play in bringing SSR stakeholders closer together and bridging gaps between policy-making and programming.

This paper traces the evolution of the OECD DAC's approach to SSR, reflected in the development of its policy guidelines and a major shift towards assisting DAC member states in their SSR implementation. It considers the orientation and membership of the organisation and how these factors affect adherence to and dissemination of OECD DAC policy provisions in this area. In order to better understand the strengths and limitations of the OECD DAC and thus to address the challenges for the organisation in the SSR field, this paper focuses on two interrelated issues: the opportunities and constraints faced by the OECD DAC in promoting a holistic SSR agenda and process-based and substantive issues relating to how the organisation tries to achieve its objectives. The paper concludes with a number of policy recommendations that are intended to reinforce the evolving role of the OECD DAC in SSR.

II. The Development of the OECD DAC Policy Approach to SSR

The CPDC was formed in 1995 and thus pre-dated the emergence of the SSR concept. The development of guidelines to help shape policies towards conflict-affected states by OECD DAC member states was identified as a central objective of this body. The first set of guidelines, issued in 1997 – Conflict, Peace and

[6] CPDC members are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxemburg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States, European Commission, International Monetary Fund, United Nations and World Bank.

[7] OECD DAC, *OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform, Supporting Security and Justice* (Paris: OECD DAC, 2007).

Development Cooperation on the Threshold of the 21st Century[8] – sketch out broad goals fostering peace and stability, preventing and managing violent conflict, and assisting crisis relief and reconstruction. Key principles include emphasis on the strong linkages between security and development, the need for donor coordination and, above all, the importance of shifting from an ethos of response to conflicts towards a policy of prevention. The 1997 Guidelines highlight the importance of democratic governance and a fair and effective justice system as a means of empowering institutions and individuals. Strengthening civil society is recognised as a means to further democratic governance in ways that prevent conflict or its recurrence.

The 1997 Guidelines have a small sub-section including explicit SSR measures as part of the chapter on governance and civil society. These include training for civilian and military personnel in human rights as well as the need for democratic oversight and civilian control. Support for the institutions of security sector governance is also encouraged. More broadly, security and justice sector reform are regarded as parallel, mutually reinforcing processes.[9]

If the 1997 Guidelines present a vision of conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction centred on security as a pre-condition for sustainable development, the 2001 supplement to these guidelines – The DAC Guidelines: Helping Prevent Violent Conflict[10] – identifies more explicitly the political nature of security issues and the need for democratic oversight and accountability of the security sector. Human rights, security and development concerns are brought together under the overarching concept of human security.

Instead of situating SSR as a contributing factor to broader democratisation and good governance agendas, the 2001 Guidelines point to a central role for SSR in delivering security and justice. From a human security perspective, the range of actors involved in SSR is recognised as extending beyond the security forces, judicial and penal systems to include an array of stakeholders in government, the legislature, civil society, the media and the business community.[11] A holistic definition of SSR is set out that stresses the need for an effective, well-managed and democratically accountable security sector. The importance of limiting and controlling security spending also becomes an explicit rationale for reform.[12] Finally, the need for developing countries to apply principles of sound public sector management to the security sector is recognised while the problems faced by development donors in supporting security-related activities are acknowledged.[13]

The gap between the demand for SSR assistance and the capacity of donors to provide such support was confirmed in a survey on SSR implementation

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8 OECD DAC, *Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation on the Threshold of the 21st Century* (Paris: OECD DAC, 1997).

9 OECD DAC, *Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation* in *The DAC Guidelines: Helping Prevent Violent Conflict*, 119 (Paris: OECD DAC, 2001).

10 OECD DAC, *The DAC Guidelines*.

11 Ibid., 38.

12 Ibid., 15.

13 Ibid., 19.

commissioned by the CPDC in 2002-2003.[14] In particular, a lack of conceptual clarity and coherence in programming was apparent in what tended to be an ad hoc approach to SSR implementation on the part of the donor community. At the same time, the 2004 DAC Issues Paper The Security and Development Nexus: Challenges for Aid proved influential in demonstrating to donors the importance of the link between security and development for aid effectiveness.[15] These findings generated a review of the 2001 Guidelines that resulted in a policy statement and paper endorsed by a ministerial meeting in late 2004 entitled Security System Reform and Governance: Policy and Good Practice.[16]

The 2004 Guidelines draw on donor countries' SSR experience to date by emphasising the importance of partner country participation in order to situate SSR within a broader national policy framework as well as to ensure buy-in across different levels of society. The need to understand the specific contexts – the political, economic and security framing conditions – that shape the opportunities and entry points for SSR is recognised. In particular, the inherently political and thus sensitive nature of these activities for local stakeholders is flagged. The principles contained in these guidelines reflect an emerging donor consensus around a holistic definition of SSR that underlines the need to integrate partial reforms such as defence, intelligence, police and judicial reform that in the past were generally conducted as separate efforts. It also links measures aimed at increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of security forces to overriding concerns of democratic governance. Finally, this broad understanding of SSR recognises the reality that non-state actors, whether non-statutory security forces or civil society actors, are highly relevant for SSR. The importance of their role in delivering security and justice was further elaborated in a 2007 paper on Enhancing Security and Justice Service Delivery.[17]

The DAC is responsible for determining what constitutes official development assistance (ODA), that is, donor funding for 'the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries'. An 18-month process ending in 2005 clarified the definition of ODA to include programmes focusing on security expenditure management, the role of civil society in the security sector, legislation on child soldiers, SSR, civilian peacebuilding, conflict prevention and conflict resolution, and control of small arms and light weapons.[18] An agreement reached at the DAC to the effect that SSR 'to improve democratic governance and civilian control'[19] was ODA-eligible proved a key step in convincing donors that supporting such activities was a legitimate development activity.

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14 OECD DAC, *A Survey of SSR and Donor Policy: Views from non-OECD Countries*, DCD/DAC/CPDC(2004)4 (OECD DAC, 31 August 2004).

15 OECD DAC, *The Security and Development Nexus: Challenges for Aid*, DAC Issues Paper, DCD/DAC/(2004)9/REV2 (OECD DAC, 26 March 2004).

16 OECD DAC, *Security System Reform and Governance*, DAC Guidelines and Reference Series (OECD DAC, 2004).

17 OECD DAC, *Enhancing Security and Justice Service Delivery* (Paris: OECD DAC, 2007).

18 OECD DAC, 'Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding: What Counts as ODA?' OECD DAC, http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/32/32/34535173.pdf.

19 Ibid.

These new developments and their implications for the design, implementation and evaluation of SSR programmes provide the rationale for the development of the 2007 OECD DAC Handbook. From the start, this process has been intended to support SSR implementation by operationalising the guidelines and insights developed to date. The evolution of OECD DAC norms and principles for SSR is summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: **The Evolution of OECD DAC Norms and Principles for SSR**

DAC publication	Norms	Operating principles
1997: Conflict, Peace and Development Co-Operation on the Threshold of the 21st Century	Nascent SSR concept based on good governance Strong democratic accountability component Security as precondition for development	Understand security as element of justice reform Emphasise training Take a whole of government approach
2001: Helping Prevent Violent Conflict: Orientations for External Partners	SSR anchored in broad concept of human security Key importance of security-development nexus Emphasis on accountability and legitimacy more explicit	Increase dialogue among broad range of stakeholders Apply public sector management principles Address SSR supply-demand gap Improve ad hoc approaches to implementation Link SSR to broader peacebuilding agenda
2004: Security System Reform and Governance	People-centred security Security-aid effectiveness link Increased importance of non-state actors SSR grounded in democracy/human rights Effectiveness, management and democratic governance concerns intertwined	Set partner-country participation within coherent framework Understand local contexts and framing conditions Be flexible in implementation Coordinate through whole of government approaches Undertake multi-sectoral programming
2007: Handbook on Security System Reform	Local ownership as imperative Non-state actors key to security and justice provision Sustainability/long-termism essential	Close supply-demand gap Address political nature of SSR See SSR implementation as multi-layered service delivery Coordinate donor support Focus on outcomes, not outputs

III. From Policy to Practice: the OECD Handbook

The OECD DAC Handbook builds on over a decade of policy work by the OECD but also marks a clear shift from promoting guidelines to developing tools to facilitate better SSR implementation. Thus, while the 2004 Guidelines provide a key reference point in the conceptualisation of SSR, this more nuanced understanding only served to further highlight among bi- and multilateral actors the critical gap recognised as early as 2001 between the supply of SSR policy and the gap in programming terms of capacity to meet the demand for SSR. Under strong leadership from the UK CPDC Chair and the DAC Secretariat, a process was initiated by the CPDC beginning in 2005 with the objective of distilling SSR good practices and lessons learned into a 'state of the art' guide that would provide practical guidance 'to ensure that donor support to SSR programmes is both effective and sustainable'.[20] The OECD DAC Handbook that emerged from this process marks a clear shift from promoting guidelines to developing tools to facilitate better SSR implementation.

The IF-SSR process

The OECD DAC Handbook was developed as part of a process known as the Implementation Framework for Security System Reform (IF-SSR). Following a competitive tender, a consortium of policy research institutions was contracted to assist the CPDC in developing the IF-SSR.[21] The consortium produced an initial draft study report that was distributed to members of the CPDC Task team on SSR and provided the basis for discussion at an SSR practitioners' workshop held in Ghana in December 2005 that brought together security, development and diplomatic personnel from DAC members as well as partner countries. The draft was subsequently revised to take into account comments provided by CPDC members as well as feedback from the Ghana workshop.

At this stage, a change of approach was adopted. Acknowledging that the initial draft report was both lengthy and more theoretical than practical, a critical review panel (CRP) of SSR experts was convened to provide advice, review drafts and identify ways to develop a handbook that would provide a useful tool for practitioners.[22] The CRP emphasised that developing a handbook required a different methodology, structure and approach from a mapping document.[23] It also highlighted a need for clarity concerning the intended audience of the IF- SSR process, making explicit that the IF-SSR was primarily a tool for donors, not for development partners pursuing

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[20] *Key Policy and Operational Commitments from the Implementation Framework for Security System Reform (IF-SSR)*; Ministerial Statement signed in Paris by OECD DAC Ministers and Heads of Agency, 4 April 2007.

[21] The consortium consisted of the Centre for International Cooperation and Security (CICS), Clingendael and Saferworld.

[22] The Critical Review Panel comprises: Paul Eavis, Owen Greene, Dylan Hendrickson, Eboe Hutchful, Laurie Nathan, the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces and the International Center for Transitional Justice.

[23] For example, the DCAF-IPU Handbook on Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector (currently published in 31 languages and over 100,000 copies) took nearly two years to develop and issue in the first English-language edition. A significant amount of time was taken up in participative consultation exercises with a wide range of stakeholders from its earliest stages of conceptualization through the subsequent drafting process.

national SSR programmes. The CRP also deemed it essential to address head-on the tension between external imposition and local ownership of SSR, and the consequent need to find a balance between international good practice and the domestic political culture of reforming states. In most contexts, external security and development actors tend to initiate SSR programmes, fund them and provide the bulk of implementation expertise, often promoting their own (i.e., 'Western') reform models. The shortcomings of such an approach called for a clear statement that local ownership was not a 'tick in the box' but a – admittedly difficult to achieve – conditio sine qua non for successful SSR. A final point was the need to acknowledge the highly context-specific, politically sensitive nature of SSR processes in very different settings and for corresponding donor flexibility in SSR programme design, implementation and evaluation.

Having addressed major issues of audience, approach and objectives, SSR subject experts were mandated to draft specific inputs in the style of a field-level manual, using the draft IF-SSR study report as a point of departure. Aspects of the draft Handbook were tested through regional and national-level consultations.[24] Thematic workshops were also held on specific topics such as 'security and justice service delivery' and 'SSR monitoring and evaluation'. The editorial board guiding this process interweaved these diverse contributions from CPDC member states, academics, policy experts and practitioners, multilateral actors and development partners.[25] Key policy and operational commitments emerging from the handbook were endorsed by DAC Ministers and Heads of Agency at the DAC High Level Meeting in April 2007. The Handbook was subsequently acknowledged at the June 2007 Heiligendamm Summit of the G8 as an important instrument for tackling security and development challenges in Africa.[26]

The IF-SSR process as output

By any standards, the IF-SSR process is a major achievement. Completed in less than two years, the OECD DAC Handbook is the state of the art in terms of understanding SSR and laying down the key elements for the assessment, design and implementation of SSR programmes within a framework of security and justice service delivery. This section takes stock of key findings of the Handbook and then considers the intended outcomes of the IF-SSR process.

Section 1 of the Handbook sets out the key principles of SSR and traces the concept's emergence on the international agenda. It defines the central purpose of the Handbook – to narrow gaps between policy and practice – and identifies its core audience as SSR policy makers and practitioners.

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[24] Consultations were held in Latin America and Africa as well as with Canada, Sweden, the United Kingdom, United Nations and United States.

[25] Further substantive input to different parts of the draft was also provided by the DAC Network on Gender Equality, the UK Department for International Development (DfID), NATO, the OSCE and the United Nations Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO).

[26] G8 Summit 2007, 'Growth and Responsibility in Africa', in *Summit Declaration* (8 June 2007), 14, para 43.

Section 2, fostering a supportive political environment, underscores that local actors have conflicting interests that are not necessarily aligned with those underpinning an SSR process. Spoilers may be opposed to reform for political reasons or out of personal interest, resisting measures that may jeopardise their influence and positions. In-depth knowledge of a given reform context is therefore vital if international actors are to avoid exacerbating domestic divisions and to capitalise on opportunities to put SSR on the domestic agenda. The Handbook provides a strong message that while deeply engrained security, political and economic framing conditions can only be influenced to a certain extent by external actors, taking them into account is essential if appropriate entry points for SSR are to be identified.

Sections 3 and 4 focus on the assessment process and subsequent design of SSR programmes. In order to address the inadequacies of SSR programmes driven by external expertise and approaches, both sections again reinforce the need for an appreciation of context that is based on solid research and consultation among a wide selection of local stakeholders. Local ownership, resting on a high level of meaningful participation by domestic stakeholders, is acknowledged as the bedrock of successful SSR. It also implies that resources provided to support SSR must be tailored to the capacities and budget limitations of national authorities. Section 4 acknowledges that in contexts where security and justice institutions are weak, a long-term approach is vital. A significant culture change in donor behaviour that moves away from narrow timeframes, tight budget cycles and the demand for short term, output-driven results is therefore necessary. This section points to the importance of an 'inception phase' in which donors assess the local circumstances, build credibility through initial 'quick impact' projects but set this within the framework of a long-term commitment. As elaborated in more detail in Section 5, building national capacities to manage and oversee security and justice provision must therefore be a major component of sustainable SSR programming.

A central goal of the IF-SSR process is to achieve greater coherence and coordination across the SSR donor community. Section 6 on developing an integrated approach to SSR in post-conflict situations provides guidance on the need to integrate SSR within the broader framework of post-conflict peacebuilding. This point was also highlighted by the Presidential Statement emerging from the 20 February 2007 Open Debate in the UN Security Council, which stresses the importance of the Security Council recognising 'the inter-linkages between security sector reform and other important factors of stabilisation and reconstruction, such as transitional justice, disarmament, demobilisation, repatriation, reintegration and rehabilitation of former combatants, small arms and light weapons control, as well as gender equality, children and armed conflict and human rights issues'.[27] This argues for the development of synergies between related, if disconnected issues. It also makes clear that deficiencies in one area, for example unsuccessful reintegration of former combatants, can have wider impacts that put additional pressure on police, courts and prisons while adversely affecting the human security of individuals and communities.

[27] *Statement by the President of the Security Council* at the 5632nd meeting of the Security Council, 20 February 2007, S/PRST/2007/3.

Section 7 looks at implementing SSR sector by sector. Each sub-section is structured according to a number of key issues: significance of the sector for SSR, linkages to wider SSR, conducting assessments, potential entry points for SSR, programme design issues, sequencing, lessons learned to guide implementation as well as challenges and particular features of post-conflict SSR. By adopting a common approach across different sectors such as defence, police or intelligence reform, these issues are framed in a way that is relevant to policy-makers and practitioners involved in project design and implementation while stressing the holistic nature of SSR. Emphasis on linkages not only reinforces the need to integrate reforms at the macro level but points to specific fields that need to be aligned such as justice and prisons reform. This section also recognises the growing profile in SSR of private military and security companies (PMSCs). If these actors are to make a positive contribution as part of wider SSR efforts, then transparency, accountability and a commitment to key principles of security governance must characterise their role. Equally, it is the responsibility of SSR funders to ensure that all service providers live up to the principles and practices enshrined in the DAC Guidelines. As a related point, perhaps the only misleading feature of this section is the inclusion of 'democratic oversight and accountability' as an SSR 'sector'. This is not the case. Oversight and accountability are key principles of democratic security governance and must underpin all elements of SSR. The centrality of democratic governance concerns to the OECD DAC's SSR approach points to this being a structural fault in the Handbook, rather than a reflection of the organisation's policy prescriptions.[28]

Management, monitoring, review and evaluation are critical yet under-explored aspects of SSR programming. The issues involved are inherently complex and little tailored guidance exists that is directly linked to SSR. Section 8 focuses on this challenging topic. Given the potentially vast SSR agenda, the need for multidisciplinary skills sets is strongly emphasised. The growing use of flexible multi-donor trust funds, pooled resources as in the UK and Netherlands, and 'whole of government' approaches represent a positive development that demonstrates a growing awareness of the need to coordinate financing as an essential element of overall coordination. The Handbook emphasises that review and evaluation of SSR programmes is not something that should occur at the end of an SSR process but must be a through-life activity. Reviews and evaluations should not be perceived as parachuted in from the exterior but must involve and build capacity among local stakeholders.

The first copies of the OECD DAC handbook were published by mid 2007. It represents a comprehensive source on SSR policy and its application to programming in this area. In order to serve as a practical tool the handbook now needs to be utilised in order to facilitate SSR implementation within the very different contexts in which SSR takes place.

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[28] The Ministerial Statement on key commitments from the IF-SSR signed by DAC Ministers and Heads of Agency in Paris on 4 April 2007 describes 'the establishment of an effective governance, oversight and accountability system as one of three major overarching objectives of donor engagement in SSR'. See OECD DAC, *Key Policy and Operational Commitments*, 10.

IV. Challenges and Opportunities for Improved SSR Implementation

The international community is faced by a number of challenges in implementing an SSR agenda that realises the good practices identified in the OECD DAC Handbook. The ability of the OECD DAC to shape and influence this agenda is conditioned both by the tools created for this task but also by the nature of the organisation itself. This section explores these issues, addressing the challenges and opportunities of operationalising the work of the DAC in the context of SSR implementation.

From outputs to outcomes

Coherence will be greatly facilitated if different actors apply the same understandings and approaches to SSR. A common feature shared by the UN and other multilateral organisations such as NATO, the OSCE and EU is the absence of a specific doctrine to underpin SSR and link it to broader security and development work. Arguably, the DAC Guidelines and Handbook have already had a positive impact by providing a base-line understanding of SSR that has shaped broader processes of policy development. For example, the EU has stated that the work of the DAC 'provides an important basis for EC engagement in this area in terms of norms, principles and operational guidance'.[29]

The UK has significant experience in designing and implementing SSR programmes. The Netherlands has followed the UK example in pooling resources from across different government departments that can be used for SSR while Canada, Germany and Switzerland are at different stages of developing policy frameworks and inter-agency approaches to their SSR commitments.[30] Beyond these examples, the capacity to support SSR among DAC members remains patchy. Yet CPDC member states were closely implicated in the development of the OECD DAC Handbook, and their Ministers signed off on its major findings.[31] This implies both ownership of the product and a political commitment to ensure that it does not become a 'dead letter' in terms of implementation.

The convening power of the OECD DAC can help encourage this lingua franca, as exemplified by its promotion of 'whole of government' approaches to SSR. This underlines the need to build bridges within donor governments across, inter alia, development, security and foreign affairs departments. Even where inter-agency approaches are relatively mature, there are tensions between actors with different approaches and priorities. However, addressing the perspectives and priorities of

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[29] European Commission, *A Concept for European Community Support for Security Sector Reform*, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament (Brussels: European Commission, 2006), 6.

[30] For an analysis of developments among OECD DAC member states see Nicole Ball and Dylan Hendrickson, 'Trends in Security Sector Reform: Policy, Practice and Research' (paper prepared for the workshop 'New Directions in Security Sector Reform', Peace, Conflict and Development Program Initiative, International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, Canada, 3-4 November 2005, revised 27 January 2006).

[31] The Ministerial Statement on key policy and operational commitments from the IF-SSR, signed by OECD DAC Ministers and Heads of Agency in Paris on 4 April 2007, is provided as an annex to this paper.

different national stakeholders provides a starting point for coherent SSR interventions. Common understandings also form the building blocks for coordination across different bi- and multilateral actors engaged in SSR in a given theatre. This will not solve the inherently political problem of actors pursuing policies that reflect their own national interests but it may lower the transaction costs for coordination in SSR implementation. Certainly, arguments for greater coordination in order to support SSR on the basis of comparative advantage rather than pursuing stovepiped or competing activities remain compelling.

Although the OECD DAC Handbook represents the main output of the IF-SSR process to date, there is a clear recognition within the CPDC of the need to implement its good practices if the work is to achieve its potential. Neither the drafting of the handbook nor its dissemination will achieve this without a sustained, dedicated commitment to implementation. To this end, the OECD DAC has developed training modules to accompany the handbook, a potentially important tool to move beyond awareness-raising and to assist members in applying good practices and lessons learned. This is significant since there is a real danger that ignorance or self-interest will lead certain actors to 'cherry-pick' aspects of the Handbook without subscribing to its fundamental principles. In particular, due attention must be paid not just to enhancing the effectiveness of security and justice providers but to national capacities to manage reform processes and to ensure democratic control and oversight of the security sector by parliaments as well as civil society. The Handbook emphasises this point by stressing that failure to ensure democratic governance of the security sector may have serious long term effects on its development.[32]

A wide range of actors contribute to donor support for SSR. States and multilateral organisations often reinforce their capacities or execute specific projects through mandating private sector service providers. A growing number of consultants, research and policy organisations already play a prominent role in SSR while PMSCs are showing an increasing interest in this field. However, donors are frequently loyal to particular institutions – often with a national affiliation – while consultancy capacity for SSR remains confined to a relatively small group of 'usual suspects'. If the emphasis placed on service delivery in the OECD DAC Handbook is to be adequately addressed, then interaction among SSR actors must evolve. As long as there is a clear understanding of what different members of the SSR community have to offer, public and private actors can together round out the wide range of skills sets demanded by the SSR agenda. For example, PMSCs can enhance their role by clearly embracing the OECD DAC guidelines. But donors also need to be proactive in applying robust contracting procedures and effective oversight of all SSR service providers to ensure that their work is implemented in accordance with accepted norms and standards. The OECD DAC must be vigilant in monitoring how different actors identify themselves with the Guidelines and the Handbook. The DAC Peer Review Process is a tool for gauging donor implementation of agreed policy and to assess its effectiveness against agreed criteria.[33] This process

[32] OECD DAC, *OECD DAC Handbook*, 102.
[33] See www.oecd.org/dac/peerreviews.

could provide useful insights with respect to the obligations assumed by DAC members as part of the IF-SSR process.

Clearly, donors are at very different stages in developing their SSR capacities. How support for implementation plays out in practice should therefore be flexible, depending on individual needs. Dissemination of key messages through continuing to present the handbook's main findings in international and regional fora will remain important. Assisting states and other actors in incorporating good practice into institutional frameworks may be a critical area of support. Providing 'train the trainer' activities, assessment, evaluation and practical advice in other areas can also help shape the design, implementation and effectiveness of SSR interventions. In conducting these activities, it is particularly important that the Handbook remains a 'live' document. A mechanism should be developed to ensure that experience gained from using the Handbook to design and implement SSR programmes is fed back into future iterations.

The OECD DAC has neither the mandate nor the capacity to conduct this work itself. But in committing itself to promote SSR implementation, it should provide direction as well as a means of highlighting how far its members meet their obligations. The CRP can provide the nucleus of a bespoke capacity to support implementation. But the IF-SSR process has itself been useful in highlighting the varied cast of individuals and organisations – both public and private – that make up the SSR eco-system. As the Handbook makes clear, the skills required to support SSR go well beyond the sectoral elements of the SSR agenda. They include management, finance, human resources as well as a range of support mechanisms to promote democratic governance of the security sector. The existing resource base should be harnessed, capacity gaps filled and creative solutions found to promote joined-up SSR implementation.

Fostering regional capacities to support SSR implementation would be a useful way to build and link capacities within the SSR community. The EU, with a policy framework shaped by the work of the DAC and a growing operational commitment to SSR, provides an obvious example. There are also emerging SSR networks in other world regions, most notably Africa,[34] whose expertise could be better used to promote SSR implementation. Facilitating the development of an international capacity to support DAC members through training, the provision of policy advice, assessment and evaluation or operational support could also be an important way to support good practice and harmonise approaches. A common funding mechanism for such an endeavour, along the lines of the World Bank-led Multi-Country Demobilisation and Reintegration Program (MDRP) – with the important factor of being eligible as ODA – may also prove a vehicle for effective coordination. Of course, while it is for its donors to develop and support such initiatives, the OECD DAC should assume a prominent role in identifying, promoting and, where appropriate, accrediting initiatives that will further the goals of the Handbook.

[34] For example, the African Security Sector Network (ASSN) seeks to harmonise the work of policy makers and practitioners from across Africa working in the SSR field. See www. africansecurity.org.

Preaching beyond the converted

A major challenge for the OECD DAC is to extend its influence on norm-setting and programming beyond those states and institutions already signed up to the SSR concept. For example, although sceptical due to the Anglo-Saxon roots of the concept, France as a CPDC member has been part of the IF-SSR process. This has led to some initial discussions on SSR among French policy makers.[35] An enhanced role for France could have a major impact in building bridges to francophone countries, where in large part the SSR concept has not taken root.[36] Moreover, although supporting SSR activities in a number of different contexts, the US policy community has not embraced the SSR discourse. Drawing the US into a comprehensive policy discussion on SSR clearly offers huge potential pay-offs in aligning the US commitment to security, development and democracy promotion with this agenda.

Even among those OECD DAC members that are already committed SSR supporters, it can be questioned whether some have fully digested the radical consequences for national policy and programming of implementing the Handbook. As discussed, implementing approaches where donors facilitate (rather than 'do') SSR through supporting locally-driven processes and building national capacities requires in many cases a sea change in behaviour. It means moving away from short-term projects and funding cycles to supporting longer-term SSR processes in which the involvement of national stakeholders may be more important than any visible 'output'. A further challenge is to align the approaches of development, diplomatic, defence and security actors involved in SSR and to ensure coherence in national approaches.

Building consensus among stakeholders will be of limited use if confined to capitals. If lessons are truly to be learned, policy decisions must reflect the experience of SSR programming staff rather than being imposed on them. Achieving buy-in from across different stakeholder groups will be challenging given that the impetus behind the IF-SSR process is most closely associated at national levels with development departments. Yet progress in this area will be a key litmus test for its implementation. Within the UN system, a draft Report on the UN's approach to SSR by the Secretary General, currently under development, will provide the framework for the UN's future engagement in this field. The OECD DAC Guidelines and Handbook will certainly provide a key source for this work. However, although in substance there is much to be drawn from the DAC work, it has been developed by an organisation regarded suspiciously by some states from the developing world. The Security Council debate on SSR in February 2007 was revealing in that it reflected both a widespread awareness of the need for more holistic approaches that integrate SSR with broader security and development concerns but also a suspicion – which needs to be addressed – that SSR implies the imposition of Western methods and

[35] See Jean-Marc Chataigner, 'La réforme du secteur de sécurité dans les Etats et Sociétés fragiles. Préalable indispensable au développement, ou dernière des illusions néocoloniales?' *Afrique Contemporaine* 2, no. 218 (2006): 101-117.

[36] For an analysis of security sector governance in each of the states in the West African sub-region see Alan Bryden and others, *Challenges of Security Sector Governance in West Africa* (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2007).

approaches.[37] This points to a key challenge for the OECD DAC to encourage member states to live up to policy statements by disproving the argument that 'local ownership is a rhetorical device rather than a guide to donor officials'.[38]

Ensuring due attention to local ownership in practice (as opposed to policy statements) has in many instances proved beyond the international community in its support for SSR. Indeed, the cursory level and nature of consultation in the development of the IF-SSR was criticised by many African participants at the Ghana workshop. The difficulty of applying approaches that facilitate the design, management and implementation of reforms by national actors should not be underestimated since SSR, particularly in post-conflict contexts, generally takes place when national capacities are at their weakest and local actors lack both expertise and legitimacy. Yet this should not mask shortcomings in policy and practice that ignore local actors and demonstrate a lack of flexibility in programming and their financing or political agendas and timeframes which may be inappropriate to local realities, interests and priorities. In this respect, the recent Guide to Local Ownership of Security Sector Reform strongly underlines that 'there is no prospect of sustainable SSR unless domestic actors have the capacity to ensure sustainability'.[39]

It could be argued that a handbook developed by a Western intergovernmental organisation to support the SSR work of Western donors may be inimical to local ownership. If this is not to be the case, then the experience of local, national and regional, actors needs to be central to its implementation. Ideally, work across the programme cycle should be led by national actors with external assistance very much in the background. The Handbook can be useful in encouraging the clustering of SSR competences at national, regional and international levels. As discussed above, developing an independent international capacity to support the implementation of SSR good practice backed by donors (but with national flags kept furled) could play a significant role here. To be successful, it would have to enhance donors' ability to support SSR through applying the skills of SSR practitioners from beyond the donor community. This may also provide a means to dilute sensitivities over local ownership versus external imposition.

Donor support for SSR – and consequently a handbook that advises donors in this regard – will continue to raise tensions on the question of ownership. The tension is inherent to the relationship between external and national actors and can only be magnified in the sensitive area of security and its governance. But this does not diminish the importance of keeping donors accountable as concerns applying good practice in their programming. The Handbook amply demonstrates that local ownership is not a matter of political correctness but is crucial to achieving sustainable results.

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[37] United Nations Security Council, 5632nd meeting, SC/8958, 20 February 2007. See in particular interventions by Egypt and Cuba.

[38] Eric Scheye and Gordon Peake, 'Unknotting Local Ownership', in *After Intervention: Public Sector Management in Post-Conflict Societies: From Intervention to Sustainable Local Ownership*, eds. Anja H. Ebnöther and Philipp Fluri, 240 (Geneva: DCAF, 2005).

[39] Laurie Nathan, *No Ownership, No Commitment: A Guide to Local Ownership of Security Sector Reform*, paper commissioned by the Security Sector Reform Strategy of the UK Government's Global Conflict Prevention Pool (Birmingham, UK: University of Birmingham, 2007), 39.

In parallel, the Handbook should be promoted as a tool for development partners to hold international actors accountable. The Handbook could not be more explicit in its requirement for locally-driven SSR processes that place strong emphasis on capacity-building and broad participation. Although in practice this may prove an inconvenient truth, enabling development partners to measure donors' programmes and support for national SSR processes in accordance with the good practices identified in the Handbook may be the most effective way to address concerns about external imposition of SSR. Only through such a dynamic process, requiring political will and practical commitment by donors and reforming states, will real progress be made.

V. Conclusion and Recommendations

The SSR discourse is currently undergoing a much-needed phase of consolidation in terms of policy formulation and programming. Through its policy guidelines, the OECD DAC has influenced this evolution as bilateral and multilateral donors have deepened their understanding of SSR and its relationship to broader security and development concerns. The DAC has promoted a governance-based approach to SSR that offers important opportunities to integrate activities and actors on the basis of common understandings and core principles. Promoting 'whole of government' agendas within DAC member states also promises results in terms of realising at least a degree of consensus across interested ministries and departments.

This evolving understanding of SSR has made plain a number of factors that have contributed to a significant gap between SSR policy and its implementation. Major challenges include: a lack of capacity among donors to design, implement and evaluate SSR programmes; an absence of effective coordination both at headquarters and in the field; and a lack of meaningful local ownership in donor approaches to SSR. Addressing this gap was and remains the rationale behind the IF-SSR process and the development of the OECD DAC Handbook. The Handbook for the first time sets SSR firmly within a framework of security and justice service delivery. The political as well as the technical dimensions of SSR are clearly laid out as is the need for integrating SSR with related security and development concerns. If these practices are to take root and influence donor behaviour, then a sustained, targeted commitment to implementation is required. The DAC cannot and should not do this itself. However, it can enable implementation through exploiting its knowledge of SSR and networks – both of member states and experts – in order to build new expertise and develop creative means to promote SSR implementation.

The following recommendations focus on the positive role that the OECD DAC can play in supporting SSR policy and programming:

- Greater coordination in the SSR field can be realised through the promotion of common understandings and approaches. The OECD DAC has already played a major role in dissemination but must continue efforts to promote SSR

guidelines and good practices across the international community. Multilateral institutions and bilateral actors with a strong commitment to security, development and democracy promotion that have not bought into the SSR agenda represent a key target audience.

- By signing up to the key policy and operational commitments from the IF-SSR, OECD DAC members have a clear obligation to implement them at the national level. The OECD DAC must continue to act both as facilitator and as watchdog to monitor progress.

- The OECD DAC Handbook demonstrates the wide range of skills sets required across the SSR agenda. Significant further efforts should be undertaken to build national capacity and fill expertise gaps with 'train the trainer' and other SSR training activities. Security management, human resources and security budgeting all represent areas where current capacity is particularly weak.

- The OECD DAC Handbook aptly demonstrates the centrality of local ownership to sustainable, legitimate SSR processes. The major challenge remains to influence donor practice in this area. Promoting the Handbook as a tool for development partners to hold donors accountable would provide a powerful dynamic to bring different stakeholders closer together.

- The scope of the SSR agenda means that no single actor can do it all. As capacities for SSR implementation are developed, the OECD DAC should place strong emphasis on complementarity of efforts. The DAC should continue to encourage the development of SSR capacity by bringing together regional SSR communities to support policy discussions as a continuation of the IF-SSR process.

- Harmonising approaches and reinforcing national capacities can be achieved through the development of national, regional and international capacities to assist SSR implementation. With support from the OECD DAC and interested members, expertise from across the SSR spectrum, could be clustered to provide tailor-made policy advice, training, operational support, assessment and evaluation according to the good practices developed in the OECD DAC handbook.

- Progress will only be made if policy makers and practitioners learn from their successes and failures. It is therefore particularly important that the Handbook remains a 'live' document. A mechanism should be developed to ensure that experience gained from using the Handbook to design and implement SSR programmes is fed back into future iterations.

This paper has considered how the OECD DAC has contributed towards shaping the SSR discourse. It has highlighted the evolution of its holistic, governance-based

approach to SSR and a growing recognition of the importance of effective delivery of security and justice to individuals and communities. But the key challenge is to shape behaviour. With the IF-SSR process and publication of the OECD DAC Handbook, important tools are now in place. By bridging gaps between SSR policy and practice the OECD DAC has a major role to play in taking forward this essential work.

ANNEX

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Key Policy and Operational Commitments from the Implementation Framework for Security System Reform (IF-SSR): Signed by OECD DAC Ministers and Heads of Agency, Paris, 4 April 2007

The purpose of the IF-SSR is to ensure that donor support to SSR programmes is both effective and sustainable. The DAC's work has provided a platform from which to reach out to non-development actors and to partner countries. In particular, there is growing acknowledgement that the DAC's governance principles for SSR can help frame the "harder" technical inputs provided by diplomatic and security policy communities. This approach enables countries to address diverse security challenges through integrating development and security policies and practices. The main messages suggest that international support to SSR is most effective when donor programmes adhere to the following good practice:

Building Understanding, Dialogue and Political Will

1. Donors should engage in SSR with three major overarching objectives: i) the improvement of basic security and justice service delivery, ii) the establishment of an effective governance, oversight and accountability system; and iii) the development of local leadership and ownership of a reform process to review the capacity and technical needs of the security system.

2. Technical inputs to SSR should be delivered and co-ordinated with a clear understanding of the political nature of SSR and institutional opportunities and constraints. This is the basis on which different policy communities – development, governance, diplomacy and security – can work effectively and coherently together. Building understanding of SSR amongst non-security actors is essential for building dialogue on issues of security and justice reform and governance.

3. The political terrain needs to be prepared in partner countries and early investments made in appropriate analysis. In the past, programmes have been based on inadequate assessment and have often been too technical in nature. A balance must be struck between support to provide quick wins and confidence building measures, on the one hand, and taking time to understand each particular context with appropriate analysis and assessment, on the other.

Assessment

4. Assessment tools should inform the design of realistic, focused programmes, which can make significant contributions to supporting partner countries in addressing the security and justice needs of all citizens. Undertaking joint assessments, including both different OECD governments and different departments within each government, is the way to ensure effective donor support to SSR processes. Shared analysis is likely to promote common understanding of problems and common objectives. Tools such as Power and Drivers of Change Analysis and Strategic Conflict Analysis can expose root causes of violent conflict and security system problems. The IF-SSR provides an assessment tool that covers: political analysis; the security context; capacity development and governance; and people's security and justice needs. The IF-SSR highlights the need to assess both the capacity constraints (technical competence) and integrity gaps (quality of governance) within security institutions.

Programme Design

5. Programmes need to be designed to help identify local drivers of reform and be flexible in supporting local ownership as it emerges. The process of identifying and fostering ownership requires continuous attention, and it cannot be assumed that ownership will be easily identifiable or coherent at the point at which international actors begin to engage. Flexibility is needed to respond to trajectories and trends of ownership, differentiated across security system organisations and beneficiaries, both state and non-state, and over time. At all costs, donors need to avoid the temptation to support supply driven initiatives. The bottom line is that reforms that are not shaped and driven by local actors are unlikely to be implemented properly and sustained.

6. Donors must support partner countries to lead SSR processes as the starting point for sustainable reforms. But because ownership and leadership are never monolithic and not always easy to determine, opportunities tofoster multi-stakeholder coalitions for change should be prioritised.

7. Donors must work with partners to ensure that initiatives to support the delivery of security and justice are conflict-sensitive and sustainable, financially, institutionally and culturally. Sustainability is a key issue in the design and delivery of support to security and justice service delivery.

8. SSR programmes need to take a multi-layered or multi-stakeholder approach. This helps target donor assistance to those providers, state and non-state actors simultaneously, at the multiple points at which actual day-to-day service delivery occurs. A multi-layered strategy helps respond to the short-term needs of enhanced security and justice service delivery, while also building the medium-term needs of state capacity.

Programme Implementation

9. The international community needs to move from ad hoc, often short-term, projects to more strategic engagement. The governance approach to SSR provides the necessary strategic framework to co-ordinate technical inputs from across donor governments. To be effective and strategic, whole-of government approaches should be built on shared understanding of and respect for the different mandates, skills and competencies of security, development and diplomatic communities. Transparency about objectives, allocations and operations promotes coherent strategies.

10. Donors should strive to develop specific whole-of-government capacity to support SSR. Integrated teams that bring together technical expertise with the necessary political, change management, programme management and communications skills are critical. Cross-government training is required to enable those involved in supporting SSR to have a strategic, political and technical understanding of SSR.

11. SSR objectives need to focus on the ultimate outcomes of basic security and justice services. Evidence suggesting that in sub-Saharan Africa at least 80% of justice services are delivered by non-state providers should guide donors to take a balanced approach to supporting state and non-state security and justice service provision. Programmes that are locked into either state or non-state institutions, one to the exclusion of the other, are unlikely to be effective.

12. The international community should use appropriate instruments and approaches for different contexts, and should build support across the justice and security system to ensure a more strategic approach to SSR.

Options include:

1. A problem-solving approach that means focusing on one security or justice problem (such as crime) as an entry point in order to mobilise system-wide engagement.

2. An institutional approach where there are existing pro-reform initiatives at an institutional level which can be supported (such as government-initiated security system reviews).

3. A phased approach to post-conflict situations that focuses on understanding and, where possible, integrating stabilisation – "securing the peace" – and development-oriented objectives.

4. Multi-stakeholder projects and programmes are core instruments for SSR, but donor budget support programmes provide important opportunities to consider security sector financing issues.

Donor Harmonisation and Joint Planning

13. The international community needs to align support to the dominant incentive frameworks and drivers for change. Despite the key findings of the 2002 World Bank "Voices of the Poor" report which found that safety and security was the number one priority of the poor, these issues are rarely considered in the development of Poverty Reduction Strategies. Inclusions of security and justice into national development plans will reinforce the incentives provided by peace agreements and external incentives such as those provided by NATO, the OSCE and other regional organisations. SSR should be included in other frameworks such as Transitional Results Matrices (TRMs), Post-conflict Needs Assessments (PCNA), and any UN Integrated Mission Planning Framework.

14. SSR should be viewed as an integral part of the planning process for immediate post-conflict situations and peace support operations. This can help to prevent a disjointed approach to post-conflict engagement and lead to more strategic engagement from the outset that includes a comprehensive strategy for sustainable peace. The inclusion of SSR in the strategic planning for peace support operations is crucial.

Choosing the Right Entry-Point Leading to Broader System-wide Reforms

15. The IF-SSR should be used to help place sub-sector reforms in the context of system-wide needs. The sub-sector guidance provided in the IF-SSR covers ways to link reforms to the broader system, how to sequence reforms, potential starting points for reform, particular programme design issues, common challenges and particular features of post-conflict SSR needs. The sub-sectors covered include: i) civilian oversight and accountability; ii) defence reform; iii) intelligence and security services reform; iv) border management; v) policing; vi) justice (judicial and legal) reform; vii) prisons, viii) private security and military companies; and ix) civil society.

Impact and Evaluation

16. The key principles agreed in the 2004 DAC SSR Guidelines need to be translated into evaluation indicators. A focus on programme outcomes requires an evaluation of strategic objectives, impact and not only project outputs.