Security Sector Reform and Gender

There is strong recognition that security sector reform (SSR) should meet the different security needs of men, women, boys and girls. The integration of gender issues is also key to the effectiveness and accountability of the security sector, and to local ownership and legitimacy of SSR processes.

This Practice Note provides a short introduction to the benefits of integrating gender issues into SSR, as well as practical information on doing so.

> This Practice Note is based on a longer Tool, and both are part of the **Gender and SSR Toolkit**. Designed to provide an introduction to gender issues for SSR practitioners and policymakers, the Toolkit includes 12 Tools with corresponding Practice Notes – see *More information*.

Why is gender important to SSR?

> **Security Sector Reform** means transforming the security sector/system, 'which includes all the actors, their roles, responsibilities and actions – working together to manage and operate the system in a manner that is more consistent with democratic norms and sound principles of good governance, and thus contributes to a well-functioning security framework'.[1] The security sector/system includes the armed forces, police, intelligence and border management services, oversight bodies such as parliament and government, justice and penal systems, non-statutory security forces and civil society groups.

> **Gender** refers to the roles and relationships, personality traits, attitudes, behaviours and values that society ascribes to men and women. 'Gender' therefore refers to *learned* differences between men and women, while 'sex' refers to the *biological* differences between males and females. Gender roles vary widely within and across cultures, and can change over time. Gender refers not simply to women or men but also to the relationship between them.

The integration of gender issues into SSR processes and security sector institutions enhances:

Local ownership
Legitimate and sustainable SSR is based on a locally owned and participative process.
- A gender-responsive SSR process takes into consideration different security needs and priorities by consulting with men and women from diverse social groups.
- Women's civil society organisations (CSOs) can serve as a crucial bridge between local communities and security policymakers, strengthening local ownership through communicating security and justice needs to policymakers and raising awareness of SSR in local communities.

Delivery of security and justice
One of the main objectives of SSR is to improve the delivery of security and justice services. Gender-responsive SSR strengthens service delivery through:
- Creating more representative security sector institutions – i.e. institutions with a diversity of personnel that reflects the population it seeks to serve. In particular, increased recruitment, retention and advancement of women in security services and oversight bodies is acknowledged as necessary for institutions to be trusted, responsive and effective.
- Improving the security sector's prevention of and response to gender-based violence (GBV) (see Box 1). GBV is violence related to gender differences, such as domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking and anti-gay violence. Globally, one in every three women is a victim of GBV, making it one of the greatest

Box 1	Post-conflict justice mechanisms in Sierra Leone: effectively addressing crimes of sexual violence [3]

It is estimated that over 250,000 women were raped during Sierra Leone's decade-long civil war. In the aftermath of the war, a combination of justice mechanisms were employed, including the Special Court for Sierra Leone, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and traditional justice mechanisms. Many positive steps have been taken by the Special Court to seek to ensure that crimes of sexual violence are adequately addressed:

- Adopting a broad definition of sexual violence, including 'rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy and any other form of sexual violence'.
- Specifically tasking a trial attorney to develop a prosecution plan for sexual violence crimes.
- Assigning two experienced female investigators (out of a team of 10) to investigate crimes of sexual violence.
- Adopting a gender-sensitive interview method to ensure that victims feel comfortable reporting crimes.
- Emphasising witness preparation, to ensure that witnesses understand the implications of testifying.

Although it is too early to draw definite conclusions regarding the success of the Special Court's handling of sexual violence, the first judgements of the Court (delivered on 20 June 2007) included convictions for rape as a crime against humanity and sexual slavery.

threats to human security.[2] Men and boys are also victims of GBV, and may face even greater barriers than women in reporting it and seeking justice.

- Increasing collaboration between security sector institutions and CSOs, including women's groups. CSOs can provide complementary security and justice services, and help to build the capacity of security sector institutions through training, research and expert advice on gender issues.

Oversight and accountability of the security sector

A core objective of SSR is to reform security sector institutions so that they are transparent; respectful of the rule of law and human rights; and accountable to democratic civilian authority, such as parliament and the justice system. Gender-responsive SSR strengthens oversight and accountability through:

- The increased participation of women, gender experts and women's organisations in official oversight bodies and processes (see Box 2).
- Gender-responsive initiatives to prevent, respond to and sanction human rights violations committed by security sector personnel.

Compliance with obligations under international laws and instruments

Taking the initiative to integrate gender issues into SSR is not only a matter of operational effectiveness; it is also necessary to comply with international and regional laws, instruments and norms concerning security and gender. Key instruments include:

- *The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (1995)
- *United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security* (2000)

For more information, please see the Toolkit's Annex on International and Regional Laws and Instruments.

How can gender be integrated into SSR?

Two complementary strategies can be used to integrate gender issues into SSR policy and programming:

- *Gender mainstreaming* involves considering the impact of all SSR policies and programmes on women, men, boys and girls at every stage of the policy and programme cycle, including assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

- *Promoting equal participation of men and women:* as men are highly over-represented within SSR processes and security institutions, action is required to increase recruitment, retention and advancement of women, and to ensure the participation of CSOs, including women's organisations.

! **Tips for gender-responsive SSR policy**

Gender mainstreaming

- Involve gender experts – such as representatives from women's ministries, parliamentarians with gender expertise and experts from CSOs – in drafting SSR policy.
- Build the gender awareness and capacity of the team(s) responsible for drafting, implementing and evaluating SSR policy (e.g. through gender training or briefings).
- Identify and mobilise 'gender champions' – i.e. senior level decision-makers that support the inclusion of gender issues.
- Conduct a gender impact assessment of the proposed SSR policy, and monitor and evaluate the policy's impact on men, women, girls and boys.

Equal participation of men and women

- Ensure that SSR is grounded in a participatory consultation process, including civil society representatives from women's and men's organisations.

Box 2	Women's organisations' participation in Fiji's security and defence review [4]

In Fiji, women's non-governmental organisations, working with the Ministry of Women's Affairs, provided input for the 2003 national security and defence review process. They met with the Fijian Government's National Security and Defence Review Committee to discuss:

- How the review process was being conducted
- Who was being consulted
- Which issues were identified as security threats
- How international standards and norms, such as UN Security Council Resolution 1325, were being incorporated into defence programming.

The women's organisations made concrete recommendations, including for the permanent appointment of the Minster for Women to the National Security Council and representation of women on Divisional and District Security Committees.

✔ Ensure representation of women and men in the teams responsible for the assessment, drafting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of SSR policies.

! Tips for gender-responsive SSR programme design

'Understanding the role of women is important when building stability in an area… If women are the daily breadwinners and provide food and water for their families, patrolling the areas where women work will increase security and allow them to continue. This is a tactical assessment… Creating conditions for a functioning everyday life is vital from a security perspective. It provides a basis for stability.'

Brigadier Karl Engelbrektson, Force Commander of the Nordic Battlegroup [5]

Gender issues should also be incorporated into the framework for SSR programme design:

■ **Objectives**: Do the objectives include the improved delivery of security and justice services to men, women, girls and boys? More representative and participative security sector institutions? Increased accountability and reduced human rights violations?

■ **Beneficiaries**: Are the beneficiaries of SSR clearly identified? Are women, girls and marginalised men and boys included?

■ **Activities**: Are initiatives included to address the particular security needs of women and girls, as well as marginalised men and boys? Are there activities to increase the participation of women and other under-represented groups in security sector institutions? What activities address human rights violations by security sector personnel?

■ **Outputs**: Are specific outputs directed towards women, men, girls and boys? Are there outputs that focus on preventing, responding and prosecuting GBV and increasing the recruitment, retention and advancement of women within security and justice institutions?

■ **Indicators**: Are there specific indicators to monitor gender-related objectives and the impact of gender activities? Are indicators sex-disaggregated?

■ **Budget**: Are specific funds earmarked for gender objectives, activities and outputs?

■ **Partners**: Are women's and men's organisations, and organisations working on gender issues, included as potential partners? Do identified partners have the commitment and capacity to work in a gender-responsive manner? Are responsibilities and expectations regarding gender clearly spelled out in programme documents, agreements and contracts?

Also available in Tool 1…
- Questions for a gender impact assessment of security policy
- Tips on integrating gender into SSR assessment, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation
- An assessment process for law enforcement agencies to increase their recruitment and retention of women
- Examples of good practices from reform processes in Brazil, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Hungary, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sweden and the United Kingdom

Post-conflict challenges and opportunities

In post-conflict environments, SSR is essential to prevent the re-occurrence of conflict and to enhance public security, which in turn is necessary to initiate reconstruction and development activities. While every context is unique, there are particular challenges and opportunities for the integration of gender issues into post-conflict SSR:

Challenges for the integration of gender issues
■ Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) processes often fail to include women and girls.
■ Pressure to quickly build security sector institutions may result in gender issues being insufficiently prioritised in recruitment, training and logistics.
■ Lack of infrastructure and capacity can hinder women's access to justice.

Box 3	Modernisation of the Nicaraguan police force [6]

The modernisation of the National Police Force of Nicaragua demonstrates the benefits of initiatives to mainstream gender and increase the participation of women. A broad range of gender reforms of the Nicaraguan police was initiated in the 1990s, following pressure from the Nicaraguan women's movement and from women within the police. As part of a project supported by the German development organisation (GTZ), specific initiatives were undertaken including:
- Training on GBV within police academies
- Women's police stations, providing a range of services to women and child victims of violence, in partnership with CSOs
- Reform of recruitment criteria including female-specific physical training and the adaptation of height and physical exercise requirements for women
- Policies to allow police officers to combine jobs and family life
- Establishment of a *Consejo Consultivo de Género* as a forum for discussion and investigation into the working conditions of female officers.

Today, 26% of Nicaraguan police officers are women, the highest proportion of female police officers in the world. Nicaragua's police service has been described as the most 'women-friendly' in the region, and is hailed for its successful initiatives to address sexual violence. The reforms have also helped the police gain legitimacy and credibility in the eyes of the general public: in a recent 'image ranking' of Nicaraguan institutions the police placed second, far ahead of the Catholic Church.

- Security sector institutions often lack civilian trust due to previous human rights abuses, which increases the difficulty of recruiting women.

Opportunities for the integration of gender issues
- The full-scale reform of security sector institutions creates the opportunity to revise security policies and protocols for gender-responsiveness; vet personnel for human rights violations including GBV; provide gender training for new personnel; and set clear targets for women's recruitment and retention.
- DDR processes can be a potential entry point to address gender issues – e.g. through providing GBV prevention training for male ex-combatants.
- Fluidity in gender roles during the armed conflict can facilitate increased recruitment of women, including female ex-combatants, in armed forces and increased participation of women in public decision-making.
- Women's organisations involved in peacemaking and community level security can be strong partners for the integration of gender issues into SSR processes.
- International institutions and donors may provide resources to support gender-responsive SSR processes.

Gender questions for SSR assessment

Gender can be integrated into various types of SSR assessment, monitoring and evaluation processes in order to increase their accuracy and relevance. Key questions to ask include:

- What are the particular security needs, perceptions and priorities of men, women, girls and boys?
- Are women, men, boys and girls able to access justice and security services?
- Are security legislation, policies and protocols gender-responsive? Is there adequate legislation against GBV? Are internal codes of conduct and sexual harassment policies implemented and monitored?
- Is there adequate funding and programming to prevent, respond to and sanction GBV?
- Do security sector personnel have the capacity to integrate gender issues into their daily work? Have they been provided with adequate gender training?
- How many men and women work within security sector institutions, and in what type of position and at what level of seniority?
- What is the work environment like within security sector institutions? Are there problems of sexual harassment and other human rights violations?
- Do security sector oversight bodies include women, consult with women's organisations and monitor GBV?
- What gender-responsive security and justice initiatives already exist at local and national levels?
- Which CSOs are already working on gender and security issues, and how can these initiatives be supported?

More information

Resources

Anderlini, S.N. with Conaway, C.P. – 'Security Sector Reform', *Inclusive Security, Sustainable Peace: A Toolkit for Advocacy and Action*, 2004.

Nathan, L. – *Local Ownership of Security Sector Reform: A Guide for Donors,* 2006.

Valasek, K. – 'Gender and Democratic Security Governance', *Handbook for Civil Society Organisations on Public Oversight of the Security Sector,* UNDP & DCAF (Forthcoming July 2008).

GTZ – *Gender and Citizen Security: Regional Training Module - Basic Text, Methodological Guide, Support Materials*, 2005.

OECD DAC – *OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform: Supporting Security and Justice*, 2007.

Organisations

Centre for Security Sector Management – www.ssronline.org

DCAF: *Gender and SSR Project* – www.dcaf.ch/gender-security-sector-reform

Global Facilitation Network for SSR – www.ssrnetwork.net

OSCE/ODIHR – www.osce.org/odihr

UNIFEM *Portal on Women, Peace and Security* - www.womenwarpeace.org

UN-INSTRAW: *Gender and SSR* – www.un-instraw.org/en/gps/general/gender-and-security-sector-reform-5.html

WILPF: *PeaceWomen* – www.peacewomen.org

Gender and SSR Toolkit

1. Security Sector Reform and Gender
2. Police Reform and Gender
3. Defence Reform and Gender
4. Justice Reform and Gender
5. Penal Reform and Gender
6. Border Management and Gender
7. Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector and Gender
8. National Security Policy-Making and Gender
9. Civil Society Oversight of the Security Sector and Gender
10. Private Military and Security Companies and Gender
11. SSR Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation and Gender
12. Gender Training for Security Sector Personnel
Annex on International and Regional Laws and Instruments

Each of these Tools and Practice Notes are available from: www.dcaf.ch, www.un-instraw.org and www.osce.org/odihr.

This Practice Note was prepared by Mugiho Takeshita of DCAF, based upon Tool 1 authored by Kristin Valasek of DCAF.

[1] OECD DAC, *Security System Reform and Governance*, DAC Guidelines and Reference Series, (OECD: Paris), p. 20.
http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/8/39/31785288.pdf
[2] UNIFEM, *Not a Minute More: Ending Violence Against Women*, (UNIFEM: New York), 2003, p. 8.
[3] Bastick, M., Grimm, K. and Kunz, R., *Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict: Global Overview and Implications for the Security Sector,* (DCAF: Geneva), 2007, p.159.
[4] Anderlini, S.N. with Conaway, C.P., 'Security Sector Reform', in *Inclusive Security, Sustainable Peace: a Toolkit for Advocacy and Action*, International Alert and Initiative for Inclusive Security, 2004, p. 37.

[5] Engelbrektson, K., 'Resolution 1325 increases efficiency', *Good and Bad Examples: Lessons Learned form Working with United Nations Resolution 1325 in International Missions* (Genderforce: Uppsala), 2007, p.29.
[6] Funk, A., Lang, J. L. and Osterhaus, J., *Ending Violence Against Women and Girls – Protecting Human Rights: Good Practices for Development Cooperation*, (GTZ: Eschborn), 2007, pp. 47-48, cited in: Bastick, M., Grimm, K. and Kunz, R. *Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict: Global Overview and Implications for the Security Sector*, (DCAF: Geneva), 2007, pp. 150-151.