

People-Centred Security Sector Reform Recommendations for Policy and Practice

These recommendations, aimed at policy-makers and practitioners alike, focus on one specific aspect of Security Sector Reform (SSR): how to increase and improve civil society involvement in SSR processes. The recommendations draw on discussions that took place during the expert seminar, EU-Civil Society Cooperation in the Field of Security Sector Reform, convened by the French Presidency of the EU and EPLO in association with the Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) on 12 September 2008.

Why Involve Civil Society in SSR?

As improving the safety, security and basic living conditions of the public is a fundamental objective of SSR, it is imperative to enable public participation in reform processes. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) can bring people's voices into SSR, articulating their needs, aspirations and concerns. More specifically, the involvement of CSOs in SSR can:

- Improve the quality and sustainability of service delivery within SSR;
- Increase the accessibility and accountability of SSR processes;
- Ensure that SSR is embedded in broader conflict prevention and peacebuilding processes;
- Enable SSR to be a driver of wider social transformation.

How to Involve Civil Society in SSR?

Civil society has played, and continues to play, a major role in the development of the concept of, and approaches to, SSR. Civil society is increasingly a repository of specialised expertise and technical know-how on SSR, and is often directly involved in implementing SSR projects. Examples drawn from EPLO member organisations include:

- International Center for Transitional Justice's (ICTJ) work in Burundi, where it has provided advice and technical assistance to the Ministry of the Interior on establishing census and identification procedures of the National Burundian Police;
- ICTJ's work with UN DPKO, which includes policy development, formulation of procedures, and development of training materials on activities such as vetting of members of security institutions in post-conflict environments;
- Saferworld's SSR-related programmes – notably Community-Based Policing – in South East Europe, Africa and South Asia, which promote a collaborative approach to security both at the local level and in the framework of national reforms;
- Saferworld's support to the OECD in developing the OECD-DAC *Handbook on Security Sector Reform: Supporting Security and Justice*;
- Search for Common Ground's Lobi Mokolo Ya Sika Project in DRC, which includes production of radio programmes, comic books, use of participatory theatre and training to involve the public in SSR processes.
- International Alert's SSR and community security work – particularly in Nepal – which seeks to ensure that national level SSR policy and programming is informed by, and reflects, the diverse security and justice needs and concerns at the local level.

Specific Recommendations

Given the above, the EU should:

(1) Work with civil society at all stages of the SSR process, from design to implementation to monitoring and evaluation. For example:

- Formalise civil society involvement in SSR processes by setting up structures for participation of CSOs as a standard element of any SSR process;
- Increase the involvement of international CSOs in EU SSR policy development. The expert seminar is a good start; a follow-up meeting should be held in a year's time to assess progress and setbacks;
- Include international CSOs with relevant expertise in ESDP SSR assessment missions and EC programming, monitoring and evaluation missions;

- Consistently use CSO representatives in pre-deployment training of (ESDP and EC) mission staff;
- Include civil society SSR experts in the EU SSR roster and among ESDP mission staff (in addition to serving and former civil servants).

(2) Establish partnerships with local civil society in beneficiary countries. This can be achieved through the following measures:

- Use international NGO networks and expertise to map relevant local civil society partners that represent significant local constituencies;
- Condition SSR assistance in beneficiary countries on the involvement of civil society (provide seats in relevant steering committees, build civil society capacity on SSR, enhance the capacity of the media, promote gender equality, etc);
- Recruit local civil society advisors for EU SSR programs and ESDP missions (in the areas of policy, law, political affairs, human rights, gender equality, etc);
- Ensure broad and meaningful consultation of local civil society as part of missions' activities;
- Consult and involve CSOs both at the programming and evaluation phases of EC-supported SSR projects;
- Commit to building local civil society capacity in SSR where this is weak or non-existent.

(3) Promote gender equality as an integral aspect of SSR. Measures could include:

- Consider the impact of SSR policies and programmes on women, men, boys and girls at every stage of the policy and programme cycle, including consistent use of disaggregated data;
- Acknowledge and build into programming the differing needs and priorities of men and women from different social groups;
- Promote equal participation of men and women in all SSR processes, recognising that frequently men are highly over-represented in security institutions and that different approaches may be need to ensure women's participation;
- Use women's organisations as a bridge between local communities and security sector policy-makers, including informing local communities about SSR.

(4) Provide all necessary information about SSR in order to ensure all groups, including marginalised communities, and both men and women within all groups, are aware of their rights and able to hold to account governments and security agencies. For example:

- Prepare and/or support public information campaigns on the rights and duties of law enforcement and other security agencies;
- Promote the training of journalists and other media representatives to enhance their knowledge of security matters and increase their ability to deal with security officials in order to improve reporting on and monitoring of the security sector and its activities;
- Support the establishment of legal aid centres, the training of defence counsellors, and the setting up of public defender offices to raise the public's awareness of its rights.
- Conduct public surveys, in particular of victims and other marginalised groups, to identify their security needs and assess their perceptions of the security sector;

(5) Promote adherence to the highest standards of accountability of all international donors, including the EU, to intended beneficiaries. For example:

- Adopt and observe international standards on access to information, including providing information on funds allocated to SSR projects;
- Promote transparent public procurement procedures within the security sector and use transparent public procurement procedures in SSR projects funded;
- Report on progress and seek feedback from parliamentarians, civil society and the media;
- Assess SSR programme planning and implementation against widely endorsed standards, such as those set out in the OECD DAC handbook.