Africa Forum\(^1\) on SSR

“Security Sector Reform as a Key Component of Stabilisation and Peace-building Processes in Africa”

24-26 November 2014

Hosted by the African Union (AU) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

in co-operation with the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), the African Security Sector Network (ASSN), the Slovak Republic,

and with the support of DCAF’s International Security Sector Advisory Team (ISSAT)

Aim

To complement and build on the recent developments in security sector reform (SSR) policy frameworks, tools and approaches. To look for concrete steps, such as the creation of the groups of Friends of SSR in Africa, and to better define the role of the AU in supporting SSR in conjunction with other regional, multilateral and sub-regional organisations.

Introduction

It is universally accepted that security is fundamental to people’s lives and livelihoods; it is a foundation of, and an enabler for, political, economic and social development as underscored by UN Security Council resolution 2151 on SSR. In recent years, the number, scope, and complexity of SSR programmes and processes in Africa has increased and it is evident that SSR has gained traction in development, peace-building and post-conflict discourses and programming. SSR has been recognized by the AU as an essential item on the agenda of peace, security and sustainable development in Africa. There is a similar rise in the number and types of actors that have become more readily engaged or directly support SSR processes.

In January 2008, the Assembly of the AU Heads of State and Governments encouraged the AU Commission to develop a comprehensive AU Policy Framework on SSR. Following an extensive AU-led consultation and drafting process with Member States, Regional Economic Communities and civil society representatives, and assisted by the SSR Unit in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and ASSN, this Policy Framework was adopted by the AU Heads of States and Government during the Summit in January 2013.

Key normative developments—including the adoption of the [AU Policy Framework on SSR](#) and the publication of the [second UN Secretary General’s Report on SSR](#) in August 2013, as well as the

\(^1\) ISSAT support to the Africa Forum on SSR is part of ISSAT Support to the High Level Panel Series. Previous meetings in this series include Brussels 2010/2011 and Nairobi 2012 – see further [http://issat.dcaf.ch/content/view/full/7257](http://issat.dcaf.ch/content/view/full/7257)
unanimous adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2151 – the first stand-alone resolution on SSR—have further spurred the momentum in SSR policy and programming discourse in Africa.

These documents have also raised attention to the outstanding challenges faced by multilateral organisations, regional and sub-regional organisations, and bilateral donors when supporting national SSR processes: the challenges of building effective, efficient and accountable security institutions in complex stabilisation\(^2\), peace-building\(^3\) as well as developmental environments.

Despite the increased amount of resources committed to SSR across the African continent, the inconsistent successes of SSR processes to address root causes of insecurity, coupled with new and changing security threats, underscore the need to assess if the right tools, concepts and approaches are being deployed. The varied successes of SSR in peace-building, or even development contexts, also require a look at where existing gaps in SSR design and implementation remain. This is an opportune time to take stock of current trends and opportunities in SSR and consider if the current national, regional and international approaches, structures, norms and processes are adapting to keep pace with contemporary sources of insecurity. This debate will also explore the further application of the growing myriad of lessons and good practice identified across successful SSR programmes and processes in Africa.

The 2014 SSR Forum on SSR in Africa aims to offer a platform of dialogue and exchange for senior Government officials and experts who are engaged in SSR on the continent. The two-day event will provide an opportunity to discuss what lessons can be learned from the full spectrum of SSR processes across the continent, including contexts such as Somalia, the Central African Republic, South Sudan and Mali. The discussions should help to identify how the international community, and regional and sub-regional organisations in particular (including the AU and the regional economic communities (RECs)), could enhance its support to SSR processes going forward.

**Background**

This event follows on from the successful 2012 High Level Panel on SSR in East Africa. Several important developments have taken place since the previous High Level Panel, highlighted by the adoption of the AU Policy Framework on SSR in January 2013; the publication of the second UN Secretary General’s Report on SSR “Securing States and societies: strengthening the UN comprehensive support to security sector reform” in August 2013, and the unanimous adoption by the UN Security Council of Resolution 2151, which will help to inform and frame the debates.

In particular, the newly adopted AU Policy Framework on SSR aims to guide SSR across the continent, and represents a major step in fostering African ownership of current SSR activities and lending an African character to prevailing SSR approaches in peacekeeping, post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building contexts. The policy endeavours to set standards and norms for how monitoring, implementation and SSR advice at both the national, sub-regional and regional levels should be shaped. The role and strengthening of parliamentary bodies across the continent is crucial in this regard. Ultimately, it is envisioned through this policy framework that regional approaches to SSR

\(^2\) Stabilisation is understood to mean a combination of military, humanitarian, political and economic instruments to bring ‘stability’ to areas affected by armed conflict and complex emergencies, it can be seen to have a far broader transformative, geographical and historical scope. Indeed, stabilisation is connected to a long and varied history of (liberal and illiberal) interventions in societies and states’, from [http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/5978.pdf](http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/5978.pdf)

\(^3\) “A range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development. Peacebuilding strategies must be coherent and tailored to the specific needs of the country concerned, based on national ownership, and should comprise a carefully prioritized, sequenced, and relatively narrow set of activities aimed at achieving the above objectives”, from [http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pbun.shtml](http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pbun.shtml)
will form critical building blocks for the AU’s continental approach to SSR. Indeed, regional cooperation and integration forms a core component of the AU’s SSR Policy Framework, which clearly states that the RECs are “leading stakeholders in all continental peace and security policies and strategies” (para. 69).

The challenge, however, has been to begin progressive implementation of the policy. In this regard, the AU Commission, through support from the UN and the EU, has endeavoured to build its capacity to deal with SSR through the multi-year programme ‘Building African Union Capacities in Security Sector Reform’, which aims to develop AU technical guidance notes on SSR, provide training to RECs, and launch a series of Joint Assessments on SSR by the AU, UN and EU.

In 2012, South Africa became co-chair with Slovakia of the UN SSR Group of Friends, helping to lead and frame SSR debates at the UN. In addition, in January 2013 the Nigerian and South African Permanent Missions to the UN hosted a second High-Level Forum entitled “Building partnerships for security sector reform in Africa: lessons learned and ways forward”, following on from a successful event in May 2010. The African Development Bank helped to further push the SSR agenda by highlighting the importance of security sector reform in its 2013 High Level Panel report on Ending conflict & building peace in Africa: A call to action by outlining some of the existing gaps in security discourse, including public finance management.

In 2013, the second UN Secretary General’s Report on SSR highlighted the considerable progress in UN engagement and support to SSR in fragile and challenging contexts as well as some key limitations and contemporary challenges. While UN-wide system-coordination has improved—assisted by the development of the UN SSR Technical Guidance Notes to help build a common UN framework for supporting nationally led SSR processes—the report also identified the political challenges of engaging in SSR, the need to better address questions of ownership of SSR processes, and called for improved engagement with parliament, civil society organisations and citizens. The 2014 Africa Forum on SSR will consider progress and challenges in addressing some of the issues raised in the report as well as assess the prospects and opportunities to implement its recommendations.

Unanimously adopting resolution 2151 (2014), the UN Security Council, under the Presidency of Nigeria, reiterated the centrality of national ownership, recognized that SSR needs to be in support of, and informed by broader national political processes, and underlined the importance of strengthening support to sector-wide initiatives that aim to enhance the governance and overall performance of the security sector. The Resolution also requests the Secretary-General’s Special Representatives and Envoys to fully take into account the strategic value of SSR in their work, including through their good office functions.

Lastly, the resurgence of conflict, for example, in the Sahel region or in the Horn of Africa, has pointed to the regional dynamics that may be root causes of insecurity and fragility. This underscores the need to consider regional approaches to SSR implementation and policymaking that span beyond national borders and build more effective networks of regional cooperation and collaboration. Gaps in security governance have undermined stability in countries such as Mali, while the absence of equitable and inclusive state-led security and justice services in the Central African Republic have limited the State’s ability to contain the current violence.

The Africa Forum on SSR Forum will be organised jointly by the AU, the UN, the EU and the ASSN, and the Slovak Republic, with the expert support of DCAF’s International Security Sector Advisory Team (ISSAT, http://issat.dcaf.ch). The aim is to complement and build on the recent developments in SSR policy frameworks, tools and approaches and on the 2012 High Level Panel in Nairobi. The
Africa Forum on SSR will bring together senior Government officials and experts engaged in SSR across the continent to consider the unique challenges and opportunities in engaging and supporting sustainable SSR programming in Africa, as well as share and identify good practice and lessons.

**Agenda**

*Day 1 – 24 November 2014*

- **Session 1: The AU Policy Framework on SSR, the UN Secretary General’s Report and EU Support to SSR: opportunities, gaps and challenges in implementation.**

  This session will look at the role and opportunities for international, regional and sub-regional organisations in norms and standard setting for security sector governance. The session will also debate the ongoing trends and challenges in addressing the implementation of the AU SSR Policy Framework in the light of the recommendations from second UN Secretary General Report on SSR.

- **Session 2: Towards and African Group of Friends on Security Sector Reform**

  This session will give an opportunity to representatives of AU Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RMs), the Pan African Parliament and other African Organizations to express their support for SSR.

*Day 2 – 25 November 2014*

- **Session 3: From securing peace to ensuring stability — phases in SSR; what to support when? Lessons from Somalia and the Central African Republic and/or Libya**

  This session will look at the unique needs, complexity, trends, opportunities and gaps in developing nationally led and sustainable SSR processes in diverse stabilisation and peace-building environments.

  - How can the early seeds of SSR be sown during stabilisation by the key implementers of stabilisation (i.e. donor military and policing formations)?
  - How can stabilisation needs and transitional justice needs be reconciled in the early stages of securing stability?

- **Session 4: From securing peace to ensuring stability — phases in SSR; what to support when? Lessons from South Sudan and Mali**

  This session will look at the unique needs, complexity, trends, opportunities and gaps in developing nationally led and sustainable SSR processes in diverse stabilisation and peace-building environments.

  - What SSR programme changes are envisaged or being implemented in Mali to ensure better governance and accountability of the security sector?
  - What needs to be done/continued in S. Sudan to bring it back on its SSR course?

- **Session 5: Bridging the gaps in SSR — enhancing effectiveness, efficiency and accountability**

  This session will explore the need to rebalance SSR processes and programmes from a predominant focus on capacity building to an equal prioritisation of ensuring effective, efficient and accountable
use of such resources. The session will explore innovative approaches deployed in SSR processes to address gaps in regulatory frameworks, service delivery, effective parliamentary oversight, decentralisation and public finance management. In addition, the session will set to examine the challenges of affordability of ongoing SSR processes and ensuring more effective ownership and sustainability of SSR support programmes.

- **Session 6: Open participant discussion**
  
  An opportunity for getting audience participation and discussion to gather SSR lessons and their practical implications. While there will be a panel, their role will be to field questions, and to help synthesis the key points that could be carried forward from this discussion.

  *Day 3 – 26 November 2014*

- **Session 7: Sustainability of SSR – a view at the long term**
  
  The discussion surrounding this session will focus on sharing experience, identifying what has worked and the challenges that remain on the issue of sustainability for countries that have undergone (or are undergoing) reform of the justice or security sectors. **Kenya** and **Nigeria** will provide some examples for this session.

- **Session 8: The role of sub-regional organisations and national actors in SSR and regional dynamics influencing effective SSR: the cases of the Sahel and/or the Horn of Africa**
  
  This session will look at the opportunities for further developing the capacity of sub-regional organisations to play a leading role in norms and standard setting, monitoring, and evaluation, as well as a supporting role in the implementation of SSR processes. The session will also explore the impact of regional security issues on national SSR processes and explore the prospects and opportunities for developing regional approaches to SSR. Critically, the session will look at opportunities to more actively promote and encourage the work of various relevant actors, including parliament, civil society, business and justice bodies, in national SSR processes.

- **Session 9: Conclusions**