

# **The Role of International Organisations in SSR:**

## **UN, OECD-DAC, OSCE and others**

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### **Introduction**

Security Sector Reform (SSR) programmes tend to be driven by external actors. These comprise the following actors: national governments in their capacity as development donors; non-governmental organisations – whether local, national, regional or global in their origins or range of activity – private military and security companies; regional and global intergovernmental organisations, on which this paper shall focus.

Intergovernmental organisations have assumed increasingly important responsibilities in shaping the SSR agenda. They have played a central role in designing and delivering programmes for reform in several countries, and a number of them have developed, or are in the process of developing, policy frameworks to guide their various SSR activities.

This document is divided into three parts. Following this introduction, the second section describes the main features of intergovernmental organisations' involvement in SSR. The third section offers a table illustrating the SSR activities of these organisations.

### **Intergovernmental Organisations' Involvement in SSR**

There is a broad range of intergovernmental organisations whose activities fall under the rubric of SSR. Accordingly, the concept has been shaped by a variety of policy experiences.

These organisations

- Tend to approach SSR from either a development (e.g. World Bank) or security (e.g. NATO) or democratic governance perspective (e.g. Council of Europe),

- Have a global (e.g. UNDP, UNDPKO, World Bank) or regional (e.g. African Union) or sub-regional focus (e.g. ECOWAS),
- May be active in field activities such as capacity building and technical assistance (e.g. Stability Pact) or norm development (e.g. OECD), or both (e.g. OSCE), and
- May concentrate on SSR in different country contexts: developing, transition, and developed, whereby each of these contexts has also experienced a post-conflict dimension, for example, Sierra Leone, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Northern Ireland. In such post-conflict situations, there remains, however, a threat of relapse into violence.

Table 1. Typology of IO Involvement

<i>Thematic approach</i>	development	security	governance
<i>Geographic focus</i>	global	regional	sub-regional
<i>Instruments</i>	field activities	norm-setting	both
<i>Country contexts</i>	developing	transition	developed
		post-conflict	

Some international organisations, such as the European Union and the United Nations, bring together all or almost all of the elements

mentioned above. Most intergovernmental organisations deal only with developing and/or transition countries, which in some cases are also post-conflict environments. Some international organisations are also concerned with SSR in developed countries, but there are as yet no SSR programmes explicitly elaborated for mature democracies.

The fact that SSR has been shaped by a variety of policy experiences has a number of implications.

- Intergovernmental organisations can be active in a range of SSR activities, but may not recognise these as being part of the SSR agenda, either because of a lack of familiarity with the concept and/or owing to the absence of an overarching framework for their SSR programmes.
- SSR definitions and approaches can vary considerably from organisation to organisation; for example, the OECD uses the term *security system reform*, the UNDP *justice and security sector reform* - terms that reflect the specific concerns of individual organisations.
- Until very recently, intergovernmental organisations focusing on security and development had little contact with one another, despite the fact that in the 1990s they found themselves increasingly involved in the same countries and regions.
- Within individual organisations, the material, administrative and personnel resources required for SSR activities may not be organised in a way that is conducive to pursuing the holistic approach that is at its core.

In view of these considerations, intergovernmental organisations face several challenges in shaping and implementing their SSR agendas.

One challenge is to elaborate a SSR concept that effectively gives an overarching framework and orientation to the range of SSR activities in which the intergovernmental organisation is involved. This is essential if SSR programmes are to be conceived and implemented in a comprehensive manner.

Second, if such policy frameworks are to be effective they need to be supported by robust implementation guidelines. These should be based on an in-depth understanding of how SSR has been approached in different country and regional environments. Additionally, implementation guidelines should consider which policies have worked well in different contexts and settings, and why some policies have been more successful than others.

Third, in order to carry out effective SSR activities, international organisations may have to review the way the human and material resources at their disposal are organised, as well as their internal procedures. The cross-cutting nature of SSR programmes may necessitate bringing together expertise from various departments, some of which may not be accustomed to working together. Financial instruments available to international organisations may have to be consolidated to ensure that sufficient resources can be brought to bear. Different skill sets, greater multi-disciplinary experience and new kinds of managerial, sector and country expertise may also be required for SSR work. This can have repercussions for recruitment and training policies.

Fourth, it is necessary to ensure that intergovernmental organisations can work synergistically together, both in the field and at home. In addition they need to be able to collaborate effectively with other entities engaged in SSR, for example, the national governments and non-governmental actors mentioned above. Such multi-actor involvement puts a premium on effective cross-jurisdictional communication, coordination and co-operation. To overcome inefficiencies caused by compartmentalisation of responsibilities and to instil a sense of joint-stakeholdership of programmes, innovative approaches may be required. International organisations may need to take inspiration from the "joined up government" approaches practiced by a number of national governments, whereby ministries of defence, foreign affairs and development come together to implement SSR.

Finally, international organisations have a responsibility to ensure that their SSR activities are carried out in a transparent and accountable

manner. This can be particularly challenging where oversight is weak or only indirectly exercised by member states. Demonstrating openness and responsiveness to stakeholders is critically important for the overall legitimacy and credibility of SSR programmes.

## Main Features of Intergovernmental Organisations Involved in SSR

The following table gives the SSR profile of some of the major intergovernmental actors playing a role in SSR.

<b>Intergovernmental Organisation</b>	<b>SSR Focus</b>	<b>Geographical Scope</b>	<b>Country Contexts</b>
<i>AU</i>	Norm development	Regional/ Africa	Developing, post-conflict
<i>Council of Europe</i>	Capacity-building and technical assistance, norm development	Regional/ Europe	Transition, post-conflict
<i>ECOWAS</i>	Norm development	Regional/ West Africa	Developing, post-conflict
<i>EU</i>	Capacity-building and technical assistance, norm development	Global	Developing, post-conflict, transition; developed through members' ESDP activities
<i>NATO</i>	Capacity-building and technical assistance, norm development	Regional/ Euro-Atlantic	Transition, developing, post-conflict; developed countries as concerns defence reform
<i>OECD DAC</i>	Norm and policy development	Global	Developing, post-conflict, transition
<i>OSCE</i>	Capacity-building and technical assistance, norm development	Regional/ Euro-Atlantic & Euro-Asian	Transition, developing, post-conflict; developed countries as concerns norm development and implementation
<i>Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe</i>	Capacity-building and technical assistance	Regional/ Western Balkans	Transition, post-conflict
<i>UN &amp; Agencies</i>	Capacity-building and technical assistance	Global	Transition, developing, post-conflict
<i>World Bank</i>	Capacity-building and technical assistance	Global	Developing, post-conflict, transition