SECURITY SECTOR REFORM AND DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION AND REINTEGRATION

Statement of Purpose:

The purpose of this briefing paper is to outline basic concepts of Security Sector Reform (or SSR) and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (or DDR).

Security Sector Reform

The concept of SSR emerged in the late 1990s as a first major attempt among donor agencies to formulate a coherent policy approach to security issues and security institutions. SSR is the technical and political process of transforming the security sector to establish or enhance accountability, effectiveness, and respect for human rights and the rule of law. It aims to establish accountability of all components of the security sector to a civilian government. It includes structural reforms, security management, and oversight.

The security sector comprises a number of institutions. Each has its own function and therefore each may require a specialized approach towards its reform. Within state security forces, reform can encompass the military, the internal intelligence service, the police and the prisons.

In addition to directly reforming state security sector institutions, SSR also often entails reforms to civilian institutions that control, oversee, and hold security sector institutions accountable.

SSR usually has two tasks: (i) reform security institutions in order to increase their effectiveness, and (ii) ensure that these institutions are governed in accordance with the principles of democracy and civilian oversight.

The Security Sector

The security sector comprises all institutions, groups, organizations, and individuals responsible for providing, managing, and overseeing security for the state.

It includes the following actors:

(1) core security actors, such as the armed forces and intelligence agencies;

(2) justice and law enforcement; and

(3) oversight bodies.

Non-statutory security forces, including liberation parties and political party militias, can also play an important role in the security sector. The institutional component of SSR focuses on reforming the structure of security institutions, building the capacity of security forces, and restructuring the governmental institutions that manage them. It can include all these actors.

Regarding state security forces, states often strive to define specific roles for each security force and institutionalize civilian oversight to prevent the armed forces from going beyond their assigned responsibilities. States may provide centralized oversight over the security sector to decrease the likelihood that separate factions will develop. In other contexts, states might choose to decentralize elements of the security sector where decision-making was previously centralized. Decentralizing the security sector can be beneficial when large segments of the population are disenfranchised from security services, due to limited territorial control or concentration of security operations in regions such as the capital.

Core Principles of Security Sector Reform

This section outlines six core principles of SSR: (1) strengthen governance and oversight; (2) obtain local buy-in; (3) foster transparency and public participation; (4) balance operational assistance with institutional support; (5) link security to justice; and (6) do no harm.

1. The first principle of SSR centers on **governance and democratic civilian oversight** in the security sector. This involves applying principles of good governance, such as transparency, accountability, public participation, and the rule of law, to enhance the effectiveness and legitimacy of security institutions.
2. The second principle of SSR is about **ensuring local leadership** in designing and implementing. This enables ownership of reforms and makes sure they address local priorities, thus creating sustainability beyond external assistance.
3. The third principle highlights the importance of **transparency, public participation, and oversight** in SSR. In many conflict or post-conflict states, government secrecy regarding military and police operations breeds corruption and undermines public confidence. Public involvement in making decisions and monitoring can mitigate abuse and increase citizen confidence in the process.
4. The fourth principle of SSR is about **balancing support for operational forces with efforts to strengthen supervisory institutions**, such as government ministries. International assistance programs often aim to train and equip military and police forces and pay little attention to ministries that manage and administer those forces. It is important to foster institutions that can carry out support and management functions, including policy, budgeting, and human resources.
5. The fifth SSR principle focuses on **linking security with justice**. Many actors in the security sector, particularly the police and law enforcement, work closely with the justice sector, including the courts, prosecutors, and correction services. Security forces can therefore contribute to promoting effective law enforcement and protecting human rights and the rule of law.
6. The sixth principle, **do no harm**, is relevant for all international assistance. It is particularly important for SSR. Before providing assistance, international actors ought to conduct a risk analysis, invest in risk mitigation and management strategies, and ensure ongoing oversight. This can make sure external assistance is being properly used.

Key Steps in Implementing Security Sector Reform

The following four steps help implement the core principles outlined above. They are essential to achieving effective SSR programs.

1. Step one involves conducting a **comprehensive assessment** of the security sector, noting the relationship between the security sector, other government institutions, and society at large.
2. Step two includes **forming a diverse team** with expertise in various fields to create a detailed strategic plan. This plan should encompass a mission statement, reform objectives, and the necessary methods to achieve them.
3. In step three, the focus shifts to **delivering training, guidance, and technical support** to put the strategic plan into action.
4. Moving to step four, **continuous assessment** of progress and setbacks is crucial. It also involves identifying and internalizing lessons learned from the ongoing process.

SSR is a prolonged and intricate undertaking. Ensuring success in SSR necessitates upfront consideration of adequate resources, determination, and patience to see through the implementation of reforms from the outset.

The Importance of Effective Security Sector Reform

The most effective reforms create a security sector that is transparent, able to execute distinct institutional responsibilities, accountable to civilian authorities, and responsive to the needs of the public.

SSR is especially important in post-conflict states, where the most pressing need is to rebuild security capacity or to eliminate non-state armed groups and factions within the security sector. By respecting the rule of law and establishing greater civilian control over the military, an effective security sector reform

reduces the risk of conflict which in turn encourages reconciliation and economic reconstruction.

Conversely, poorly managed security sectors can undermine citizens' confidence in the state's ability to guarantee their safety. In such a situation, people can seek security outside the formal state forces by joining or forming non-state armed groups. Poorly managed security sectors may also enable state security forces to seize power in a coup. Security sectors in need of reform are often characterized by a lack of transparency that results in corruption, oversized or unprofessional security forces with inadequate training, poorly managed budgets, limited rule of law, and the use of security forces for advancing domestic political objectives (such as spying on citizens and intimidating or attacking political opponents).

Global Perspectives on Security Sector Reform

There is no fully shared international understanding of approaches required to assist security reforms.

Development agencies define and approach security work in keeping with their differing institutional mandates, organizational priorities and administrative constraints.

In several donor states, other agencies – such as the military and the police – have become instrumental in formulating and implementing SSR-policies with aid agencies playing a minor role.

One instance of SSR involved the United Kingdom and Sierra Leone, as described below:

- The United Kingdom's support for SSR in Sierra Leone is considered to have effectively combined military training, development, and diplomatic activities designed to create an enabling environment for reform and to

address technical and financial needs. The Department for International Development has been in charge of the funding of the reform component while the Ministry of Defense has been responsible for support and training of the new army.

Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration

Related to SSR, DDR stands for Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration, which this section examines. The phases of DDR generally occur in sequence and each process works in synergy with the others.

- **Disarmament** – The core elements of disarmament are the assessment, collection, and destruction or reutilization of weapons.
- **Demobilization** – Demobilization is the process by which combatants are removed from their fighting units and prepared for life outside military command structures.
    - Demobilization is primarily carried out by civilians and supported by the military.
    - Demobilization requires strict timetables and commitments from all parties in order to be successful.
- **Reintegration** – The ultimate objective of a reintegration program is to support ex-combatants in their efforts for social and economic integration into civilian society.
    - Successful reintegration programming includes health care services. Both physical and mental health issues can be addressed shortly after fighting has ceased and can remain a priority for the duration of the program.
    - Local community support is imperative for the successful implementation of reintegration programs.

The DDR process is crucial for peacebuilding and stabilization in post-conflict settings, aiming to prevent ex-combatants from returning to armed conflict and to ensure they can reintegrate into society as productive civilians.

DDR programs often commence immediately following a ceasefire or peace agreement between warring factions.

State Practice in Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration

In post-conflict environments, SSR and DDR should be undertaken together as they are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. International and national donor agencies and security forces have funded and supported Disarmament and Demobilization efforts. However, the most difficult dimension has often revolved around Reintegration. DDR will only be successful when the ex-combatants have been effectively reassimilated with civilian society.

To succeed, such programs must overcome critical economic, social, political and psychological barriers to reintegration. Below are some reasonably successful programs.

- In Timor-Leste, the UN Development Program or UNDP, in association with the International Center for Transitional Justice, introduced a reintegration program for ex-militia centered on a strengthened national truth and reconciliation commission.

- In Sierra Leone, 72,500 combatants were disarmed and demobilized in the period 1998-2002, and 42,300 weapons and 1.2 million pieces of ammunition were collected and destroyed. The National Commission for DDR and the Economic Community of West African State' Monitoring Group and the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone coordinated the program. During Phase II DDR, the Commission worked with a joint DDR coordination and implementation committee comprising all combatant groups and external actors including the UN and the UK Department for International Development.

Aligning Security Sector Reform and Disarmament, Demobilization, and

Reintegration Programs

While DDR and SSR are often considered separate processes with distinct activities, these processes have the shared goal of preventing a resurgence of violent conflict and creating conditions for sustainable peace and security. They aim to accomplish this by establishing the state's monopoly on the use of force and rule of law as part of a broader political transition. As international practice has increasingly affirmed, DDR and SSR are best understood as closely linked and reinforcing processes that are mutually critical for post-conflict stability.

Furthermore, SSR and DDR are not purely technical military processes for creating a new security system. Instead, they are also inherently political processes, because they reflect the new political reality of a state. They also require extensive political will and holistic engagement on not only military issues, but also political, economic, and social issues. These processes are therefore often linked to reforms of other entities, such as ministries or other political actors connected to the security sector.

The section below outlines some notable aspects of the links between SSR and DDR.

- DDR can help shape the context of SSR, because it influences the ultimate size and nature of the security sector.
- Effective and efficient DDR can make more resources available for SSR and new permanent security institutions.
- SSR and Integration are particularly interrelated and mutually reinforcing processes that both encourage DDR through building confidence, which is particularly apparent in instances where there are clear, long-term plans for SSR processes and final security arrangements.
- Long-term considerations for SSR and final security arrangements can help determine the criteria and procedures for DDR, such as integration and reintegration criteria.
- Coordinated planning for demobilization and SSR can help avoid the

emergence of security vacuums.

- The integration of forces, particularly in jointly and specially trained integrated units, with joint oversight and joint command and control, can foster trust between the parties and encourage effective DDR.
- Interim reforms to the security sector can also encourage the likelihood of participation in DDR and long-term SSR activities, as individuals and groups gain confidence that they do not need to keep their arms to remain safe.

SSR plays a critical role in building stable, secure, and resilient societies, especially in the aftermath of conflict. The principles of accountability, effectiveness, and respect for the rule of law are fundamental to the success of SSR initiatives. This briefing paper has shown how these principles can be applied in various contexts, including through the integration of DDR programs and the involvement of community and international partners.