

Chapter 12

The Role of Humanitarian and Development Organisations in Relation to the Security Sector in Transition Situations

Meinrad Studer and Oliver Fox¹

Table of Contents

1 The Context: Peacebuilding in Transition Situations

- 1.1 Background
- 1.2 The Interdependence of Security and Development
- 1.3 The Special Characteristics of Transition Situations

2 Contributions of Humanitarian and Development Organisations to the Security Sector

- 2.1 General Considerations
- 2.2 Contributions of Humanitarian Organisations
- 2.3 Contributions of Development Organisations

3 Conclusions

¹ Meinrad Studer is a Senior Advisor of the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation. He contributed this article in collaboration with Oliver Fox, an independent consultant.

1 The Context: Peacebuilding in Transition Situations

1.1 Background

The international humanitarian and development actors have come a long way since their strictly framed roles during the cold war. At that time, humanitarian organisations did not get involved in development, and development agencies and the International Financial Institutions stayed away from countries in conflict. Humanitarian organisations often kept all parties to conflict at arms length, including the security forces of the state authorities, relying on humanitarian law and principles for security.

The period since the end of the cold war has been characterised by a large number of internal conflicts and a shift in strategic paradigm from containment to peacebuilding. The idea that development organisations, and even more so humanitarian organisations, have a role to play in supporting the transition process emerged in the 1990s as the international community was looking for cost-effective and non-military ways to contain the growing number of internal conflicts². It was recognised that the signing of a comprehensive peace accord between parties to internal conflicts was not enough to consolidate peace, with 40-50% of countries relapsing into conflict. The multi-dimensional character of peacebuilding, covering notably the humanitarian and development dimensions, has also been recognised. The recent report of the *High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change* states: “Serious attention to the longer-term process of peacebuilding is critical: failure to invest adequately in peacebuilding increases the odds that a country will relapse into conflict³”.

² Overseas Development Institute, *Crisis state, humanitarian aid and the reconstruction of civilian governance*, Summary of presentations given at a round table event at the ODI, 5 June 2002.

³ United Nations, *A more secure world: our shared responsibility*, Report of the High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, (A/59/565) 2 December 2004, p. 61.

The UN Secretary-General's *An Agenda for Peace* (1992)⁴ and subsequent *Supplement to an Agenda for Peace* (1995)⁵ defined the new concept of collective security that was to guide the work of the Organisation. In particular, in addition to the traditional modes of UN intervention it defined the novel concept of post-conflict peacebuilding, summarised in the *Agenda* as "...comprehensive efforts to identify and support structures, which will tend to consolidate peace and advance a sense of confidence and well being among people⁶".

The new relations that humanitarian and especially development agencies have with the security sector in transition situations should be seen in the context of the peace-building paradigm. Development agencies are now being tasked with helping to implement peace accords and to address the root causes of the conflict, including in the socio-economic, political and security fields. For the OECD Development Assistance Committee "development agencies now accept the need to work in and on conflicts rather than around them, and make peacebuilding the main focus when dealing with conflict situations⁷". Humanitarian organisations have also increasingly played a crisis management and peace-building role, through capacity-building activities and mediation for example.

The second lens through which one has to see the role of development organisations is through their role in democratisation and the building of "good governance" in relation to the security sector. The reform of the security sector has taken place in numerous states in the 1990s as part of a wave of democratisation and reforms, including in South-Eastern Europe, Latin America and East Asia.

⁴ UN Secretary-General, *An Agenda for Peace* Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to the statement adopted by the Summit Meeting of the Security Council on 31 January 1992.

⁵ UN Secretary-General, *Supplement to an Agenda for Peace* Position paper of the Secretary-General on the occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations (A/50/60-S/1995/1) 3 January 1995.

⁶ P. 32.

⁷ OECD Development Assistance Committee, *Helping Prevent Violent Conflict*, Executive Summary, OECD, Paris, 1997/2001.

1.2 *The Interdependence of Security and Development*

Transition situations are characterised by the fragility of the peace and the often embryonic character of the national authorities. The priorities and objectives in this phase are security and the stabilisation of the peace.

There is now an international consensus among OECD countries that development, including security sector reform, cannot succeed without security and stability. In this respect, the OECD Development Assistance Committee uses the concept of “structural stability”, which: “embraces the mutually reinforcing goals of social peace, respect for the rule of law and human rights, and social and economic development. It is supported by dynamic and representative political structures, including accountable security systems capable of managing change and resolving disputes through peaceful means⁸.”

There is growing awareness in the international community of the interdependence between security and development, which has been echoed in the recent Report of the UN Secretary-General *In Larger Freedom* where he states:

“Not only are development, security and human rights all imperative; they also reinforce each other...Accordingly, we will not enjoy development without security, we will not enjoy security without development, and we will not enjoy either without respect for human rights.”⁹

This is particularly true for transition situations, the special characteristics of which we will now examine.

⁸ OECD Development Assistance Committee, *Helping Prevent Violent Conflict*, Executive Summary, OECD, Paris, 1997/2001.

⁹ UN Secretary-General, *In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all*, Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/2005), 21 March 2005.

1.3 *The Special Characteristics of Transition Situations*

In the UN, the challenges posed by transition situations have received greater attention in recent years. A joint UN Development Group (UNDG) / Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA) Working Group published its report on the subject in February 2004. It defined transition as being:

“the period in a crisis when external assistance is most crucial in supporting or underpinning still fragile cease-fires or peace processes by helping to create the conditions for political stability, security, justice and social equity.”¹⁰

The term transition situation is not synonymous with the term post-conflict situation. In practice they often refer to similar realities on the ground but have different underlying assumptions. Specifically, the term post-conflict carries with it the assumption that one can distinctly separate out various phases of a conflict, and that there is a linear progression from conflict to peace. The UNDG/ECHA Working Group on Transition Issues puts it this way:

“While in the past, transition processes were largely regarded as sequential or a continuum from relief to development or even from conflict to peace, it is now increasingly recognised that these facets exist simultaneously, at varying levels of intensity, susceptibility of reversals, and opportunity.”¹¹

The transition should be seen as a process whereby the various conflicts present in a society are gradually resolved through structural reforms and changes, and democratic modes of governance are put into place that encourage dialogue and permit non-violent change. In some cases, such as in relation to South-East European countries, the transition is multi-dimensional, involving democratic, socio-economic and security aspects.

¹⁰ United Nations, *Report of the UNDG/ECHA Working Group on Transition Issues*, February 2004, p. 6.

¹¹ United Nations, *Report of the UNDG/ECHA Working Group on Transition Issues*, February 2004, p. 6.

However, it must be noted that the scope of the transition concept has not received unanimous support. Specifically, the Group of 77 (G77) has criticised it for not encompassing post-natural disaster situations. This debate has served to highlight the contentious nature of the concept, touching as it does on the questions of political stability as well as on the sensitive question of state sovereignty.

Transition situations present particular challenges for development and humanitarian agencies, both in relation to the objectives they should pursue and to their *modus operandi*. One such challenge is the operational and funding “gap” that sometimes occurs between the relief and development phases of transition. The mandate of the UN Working Group mentioned above underlined in particular the need for the UN System to “address the funding and strategic planning gap between relief and development activities in the context of natural disasters and complex emergencies”. This gap describes the period between the end of humanitarian activities and the beginning of development. Where there is a fragile peace, the existence of such a gap can undermine the transition process.

2 Contributions of Humanitarian and Development Organisations to the Security Sector

The approach and contributions of humanitarian and development organisations to the security sector are necessarily very varied, and depend on the context. Here we will concentrate on some of the key aspects of the relationship of humanitarian and development organisations to the security sector in the fragile peace context of transition, which covers several dimensions, including the operational security and access dimension and the direct and indirect contributions of these organisations to security sector reform.

2.1 *General Considerations*

One key dimension is the role that the security sector plays in providing security to humanitarian agencies in transition situations, where they are often still vulnerable to numerous threats and thus their relationship with the security sector may be ambiguous.

On the one hand, humanitarian organisations are often dependent on the local armed forces or militia to provide security for their activities and to guarantee them access to the beneficiaries of humanitarian aid. On the other hand, humanitarian organisations are often involved in upholding humanitarian law and other international standards in the security sector, including in the penitentiary sector.

The situation for development organisations is different in several respects as they generally operate in an already more secure environment and are thus less dependent on the security sector for security and access. Their activities in situations of transition generally cover the reform of governance structures, which often include the security sector. They usually operate within a political or policy framework elaborated in close cooperation with the national authorities.

Humanitarian organisations, on the other hand, operate independently of this framework and their goal is principally to save lives and livelihoods and to uphold relevant international humanitarian standards, especially through protection activities.

Where an outside intervention is taking place, such as by a UN peacekeeping force or a regional organisation, the situation for humanitarian organisations may become particularly challenging. The humanitarian *modus operandus* and principles, especially neutrality, require that these organisations avoid taking sides with any force that is or may become a party to the conflict, i.e. use force. This implies certain difficulties, because while often seeking to coordinate with the external force in supporting transition, they must keep a certain distance from all political and military authorities, including the host government and the

external force. The rule of thumb is generally that the ‘hotter’ a conflict, the greater the distance that must be kept.

2.2 *Contributions of Humanitarian Organisations*

Humanitarian organisations are not closely involved in the security sector reform agenda, but there are nevertheless some activities, which are worth highlighting because they do or can have a direct impact on this sector. For example, in several South-Eastern European countries the ICRC has been cooperating with the OSCE in relation to the security sector. The ICRC also undertakes actions to better regulate the armed forces through the national implementation of international humanitarian law (IHL), and has recently started several programmes for human rights training for security and police forces.

Innovative approaches such as "food-for-arms", where humanitarian food rations are distributed in exchange for the deposit of small arms and light weapons, have confirmed the relevance of targeted humanitarian interventions in this field. Still, work remains to be done to ensure that non-combatants do not feel disadvantaged for having not taken up arms, which can lead to increased tensions¹².

Another area of direct impact is in protection, which relates directly to the military, judicial, penal and human rights practice of the authorities. Some humanitarian organisations, such as the ICRC and the UNHCR, maintain close contacts with security sector agencies and institutions in undertaking their protection activities, based in particular on international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law. Protection activities essentially seek to uphold the rights of non-combatants, especially civilians, but also prisoners of war (POWs) and other detainees. The cooperation of the security sector is clearly indispensable if this goal is to be achieved. Many humanitarian agencies, including the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), have

¹² Lewis, Patricia, "Requirements for effective security sector reform", *Security sector reform: its relevance for conflict prevention, peace building and development*, Joint UNOG-DCAF seminar, DCAF, Geneva, 2003.

stepped up their advocacy efforts in relation to the security sector in recent years in view of ensuring better protection for civilians, including refugees and internally displaced persons, often with a focus on vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly or in some cases, women.

The direct impact of humanitarian organisations on the security sector is complemented by the indirect impact of humanitarian action on the environment in which the transition takes place. Humanitarian action may have a pacifying and stabilising role. In addition, many humanitarian organisations undertake “environment-building”, which, in complement to the core tasks of humanitarian protection and assistance, seeks to build up a culture and institutions likely to support peace-building efforts. Together, the wide spectrum of humanitarian activities can contribute to creating the conditions for reduced tensions and may thus lay the groundwork for a successful security sector reform process.

This indirect role of humanitarian action relates to the provision of humanitarian aid in response to vital needs. The struggle for access to life-sustaining resources, such as water and fertile land, contributes to perilous tensions in many areas, especially if there are no effective political mechanisms to overcome them.

As the Working Group on Transition has noted “political stability and security cannot be achieved, let alone sustained, without tangible improvements in the basic conditions of people’s lives, in contrast to their situation during or even before conflict”¹³. Humanitarian action does not seek to resolve these underlying structural problems, but it can act as a palliative by temporarily addressing shortages in access to resources that are essential to save lives and livelihoods. This can in turn reduce existing tensions and create a sense of hope among beneficiaries¹⁴ and a momentum towards a political resolution of the crisis.

A second dimension of indirect action is in the field of protection. It is now recognised that humanitarian organisations, through the protection

¹³ UN, “Report of the UNDG/ECHA Working Group on Transition Issues”, February 2004.

¹⁴ See CAP launch 2003 under the theme: “Hope for the future”.

activities, contribute to creating an environment favourable to respect for human rights and humanitarian law. In doing so, they address sources of grievance and tensions and help create the right conditions for transition peacebuilding.

The protection activities carried out by humanitarian organisations are very varied: The UNHCR has a mandate for the protection and reintegration of refugees. The ICRC has a mandate to protect non-combatants including especially civilians but also prisoners of war (POWs) and political detainees. UNICEF has a special mandate to protect children. A large number of specialised NGOs play a protection role in a wide range of issue areas, such as mine awareness, unaccompanied minors, and persons missing due to conflict.

A third dimension is social-psychological, since rehabilitation and reconstruction after a violent conflict are not only confined to the physical structures, but also include social structures in general¹⁵. The activities of humanitarian organisations can help to build up trust between warring communities and to facilitate the reconciliation process. The actions of humanitarian organisations in this field are quite diverse, and the following examples are designed to illustrate this point.

For one thing, physical reconstruction projects can have a positive social effect if it creates a new rationale and opportunities for cooperation among and between communities. Recently, the United Nations has sought to build on the positive team-building and social effects of sport to contribute to peacebuilding. The UN Secretary-General has named a Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace, Mr Adolf Ogi from Switzerland, to advance this agenda worldwide.

Other activities support reconciliation and the psychological well being of a population. In particular, it has been recognised that feelings of grief and revenge fuel violent conflict. Activities that help the grieving process and channel feelings of anger and revenge into constructive actions thus contribute to the peace-building process. The ICRC has a

¹⁵ Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, *Peacebuilding: SDC Guidelines*, Bern, 2003.

tracing mandate whereby it seeks to reunite family members that have lost trace of each other. Reunited families are better able to cope with the trauma of armed conflict. Similarly, the ICRC transmits Red Cross messages from prisoners and detainees to family and friends. Many humanitarian organisations integrate a psychological element into their activities, and provide counselling for adults and children affected by conflict and related traumatic experiences. All these activities lay the groundwork for reconciliation, peacebuilding and ultimately for successful security sector reform.

2.3 *Contributions of Development Organisations*

The international conflict prevention and peacebuilding agendas have been instrumental in raising awareness among the development community and in promoting the exploration of new areas of cooperation with other actors. The reform of the security sector is one such area which is increasingly becoming a mainstream topic of the international development agenda as pointed out by the OECD Development Assistance Committee:

“Helping developing countries build legitimate and accountable systems of security – in defence, police, judicial and penal systems – has become a high priority, including for external partners, even though there are risks involved. Security system reform should be treated as a normal part of work on good governance.”¹⁶

This view is supported by the recent report of the High Level Panel on Threats, which sets out the view that key aspects of SSR, such as police and judicial reform, should be considered as central tasks of peacebuilding:

“Along with establishing security, the core task of peacebuilding is to build effective public institutions that,

¹⁶ OECD Development Assistance Committee, *Helping Prevent Violent Conflict*, Executive Summary, OECD, Paris, 1997/2001.

through negotiations with civil society, can establish a consensual framework for governing within the rule of law. Relatively cheap investments in civilian security through police, judicial and rule-of-law reform, local capacity building for human rights and reconciliation, and local capacity-building for public sector service delivery can greatly benefit long-term peacebuilding. This should be reflected in the policies of the United Nations, international financial institutions and donors, and should be given priority in long-term policy and funding."¹⁷

The UNDP and the World Bank are two of the key international development players that are involved in supporting SSR in transition situations, although in their official terminology these organisations do not usually refer to SSR as such. Rather, their objectives and activities are framed in the terms of sustainable (human) development, economic growth, and poverty reduction, but in practice, many of them can be considered as contributing to the SSR agenda *de facto*, especially since there is significant convergence between their respective ultimate goals.

The UNDP plays a role primarily through its work on governance and institution-building (e.g. reform of the civil police and judiciary etc.) and peacebuilding (e.g. DDR). As the main UN operational development agency, UNDP has both the capacity and legitimacy to support SSR in transition situations. The creation of a well-trained and accountable civilian police force has been one of the key focus areas of the agency's activities in relation to the security sector in transition situations¹⁸. Programmes in this field have been carried out by UNDP in, *inter alia*, Haiti, El Salvador and Cambodia.

The reform of the police force is a sensitive issue in many transition situations insofar as the force has often been directly or indirectly

¹⁷ United Nations, *A more secure world: our shared responsibility*, Report of the High Level Panel on Threats Challenges and Change, (A/59/565) 2 December 2004, p. 62.

¹⁸ UNDP, *Governance in Post-conflict Countries*, downloaded the 9 March 2005 from the UNDP website at: <http://magnet.undp.org/docs/crisis/monograph/monograph.htm>.

involved in the armed conflict, the repression of civil unrest or implicated in human rights violations. Changing the nature of such a force is therefore no easy business. The programme must also often seek to overcome the deep-rooted distrust of the population if the transition is to be successful. UNDP is often faced with the following dilemma:

“...strengthening the police force is complicated by the fact that in a number of countries, abuses of human rights, political allegiances, and repression by the police force constituted one of the most egregious catalysts resulting in the escalation of armed conflict in the first instance. Furthermore, in most countries emerging from a long history of internal conflict and war, internal security has, as a rule, been transferred into the purview of the armed forces. The latter in most instances has been directly responsible for some of the most heinous abuses of human rights.”¹⁹

In other cases, the UNDP is faced with a situation where the almost complete failure of the state or its break-up into parts leaves the police force virtually non-existent at the national level. Such was the case in Somalia after its break-up, where the UNDP initially focused its activities on basic capacity-building and training activities for the police. Subsequent assistance was for the development of curricula, teaching materials and the training of police trainers in a wide range of police skills and activities, including management and human rights.

However, it is essential to highlight that sector-specific reforms such as of the police may have limited success if they do not form part of a wider strategy to transform a country's institutions and promote good governance. On this point, the UNDP concludes that:

“Experience has shown that implementation of programmes for strengthening civil police forces, improvement of jails; training of lawyers and strengthening the judiciary are best handled as a package. Each is dependent on the other for success and all

¹⁹ UNDP, *Governance in Post-conflict Countries*, downloaded the 9 March 2005 from the UNDP website at: <http://magnet.undp.org/docs/crisis/monograph/monograph.htm>, p. 32.

must be in place to ensure smooth functioning of the entire system of law and order in the country. The current level of fragmentation of UNDP projects in this area should be avoided as effectiveness is severely compromised."²⁰

The UNDP and the World Bank play a leading role in the implementation of programmes related to disarmament, demobilisation, rehabilitation and reintegration (DDRR) of combatants. DDRR is a core theme of security sector reform insofar as it contributes to the processes of military "right-sizing" and, equally importantly, to demilitarisation of a country's culture and economy. According to the UNDP, this is one of the most challenging priorities in transition situations²¹. Since 1990 major post-war demobilisations have taken place in a wide range of countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Haiti, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Sierra Leone and Uganda. Such efforts require as much participation as possible so that affected groups take ownership of the reforms.

Apparently paradoxically, the UNDP has underlined the problematic nature of such programmes:

"Although often viewed as an integral part of a transition to stability, law and order, demobilisation of combatants should be accorded relatively low priority by UNDP as so many critical variables remain outside the organisation's control. Much depends on the effectiveness of peacekeeping and progress in political reconciliation. In practice, the success rate of demobilisation programmes remains low.

Furthermore, once political agreement is reached, actual demilitarisation and demobilisation is exceedingly difficult as few income generating activities can sufficiently compensate ex-combatants who have known no other profession since their

²⁰ UNDP, *Governance in Post-conflict Countries*, downloaded the 9 March 2005 from the UNDP website at: <http://magnet.undp.org/docs/crisis/monograph/monograph.htm> pp. 62-3.

²¹ UNDP, *Human Development Report 2002: Deepening democracy in a fragmented world*, Oxford University Press, New York and London, 2002.

childhood years for the loss of their weapons. Indeed, demobilisation can paradoxically contribute significantly to a deterioration of law and order. The risk of failure under such programmes is therefore extremely high. Devoting funds to other, central aspects of governance may offset the negative effects to demobilise the military.”²²

This example serves to highlight the complexity of the relationships between the various aspects of the SSR agenda and the overall dynamics of peacebuilding. It shows that individual activities such as DDR can in fact undermine peacebuilding in specific cases. Therefore it is essential that SSR activities of development organisations be approached from a holistic perspective in relation to peacebuilding, which incorporates a conflict-impact analysis.

The World Bank recognizes that “war is development in reverse” and views conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction as “central to its mission of poverty reduction²³”. The Bank has widened its focus from mainly rebuilding infrastructure. It now plays a role in at least three areas directly related to SSR: the creation of effective and accountable institutions; clearing land mines; and DDR. In addition to this, it often also plays a crucial role in creating the right institutional, political and socio-economic conditions for SSR, through support for projects and programmes in the fields of good governance, institution-building, civil society capacity-building and macro-economic policy. One of the main instruments of pressure at its disposal, with which it can push through reforms, is aid conditionality.

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Switzerland’s international cooperation agency within the Swiss Foreign Ministry, supports security sector reform in transition situations in two main ways: through projects and programmes targeted directly at security sector reform, on the one hand, and through measures that seek

²² UNDP, *Governance in Post-conflict Countries*, downloaded the 9 March 2005 from the UNDP website at: <http://magnet.undp.org/docs/crisis/monograph/monograph.htm>, p. 63.

²³ World Bank, *Post-conflict: building peace through development* World Bank website (www.worldbank.org/), downloaded the 9 April 2005.

to create the right environment and governance structures for reform to be successful, on the other hand.

In addition to its direct involvement in reforming the security sector, the SDC seeks to support the creation of the right environment for security sector reform. Security sector reform is closely linked to the overall transition to peace, sustainable development, democracy and good governance. Therefore it follows that actions to facilitate the transition to peace will support the cause of security sector reform.

Good governance is an essential precondition for security sector reform and a focus area of many development actors. Countries shaken by crises have to take an arduous route from a long-lasting and undemocratic state of war to a democratic peacebuilding process. The aim is not to copy Western democracies, but to reinforce local groups that can produce structural stability and security, allowing conflicting interests to be resolved by civil means and with respect for human rights and dignity.

4 Conclusions

Recent years have seen a shift in the way the international community thinks about the relationship between security and development. Specifically, it is now recognised that security and sustainable development are closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing.

One consequence of this new thinking has been the increasing involvement of development organisations in peacebuilding activities. For not only has it been recognised, within the UN and the OECD, for example, that development interventions are essential to support the transition to peace, but of course development organisations have also come to the conclusion that sustainable development and economic growth are not possible without peace and security.

A similar logic has been at work with regards to humanitarian organisations, many of which, notwithstanding their specific *modus operandi* and adherence to humanitarian principles, have also tried to

incorporate a peacebuilding and development perspective into their work.

At the same time, experience has shown, in many contexts around the world such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia and El Salvador, that security sector reform should be considered a central aspect of transition peacebuilding.

On this basis, development organisations and agencies, notably the UNDP and the World Bank, have integrated substantial elements of the security sector reform agenda into their policies and activities, although their explicit objectives are usually framed in development-economic terms. One of the main entry points for the development actors has been work on good governance, which is also a primary objective of the SSR agenda. But their implication has also developed in an *ad hoc* and pragmatic manner, with interventions in a wide range of security-sector related fields such as DDR. It can be expected that this trend will continue in the future, and also that the coordination of the development actors with the other peacebuilding players will be strengthened, such as through the use of the World Bank Transition Support Strategies (TSS).

Humanitarian organisations have generally maintained a somewhat ambiguous relationship with the security sector. Key security sector actors, such as the armed forces and the police, are responsible for guaranteeing their security, safety and access to beneficiary populations in often volatile environment of transition situations. But at the same time, these actors may well be parties to the conflict, and responsible for violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, and so are prime targets of the persuasion, advocacy, monitoring activities of these organisations. Still, despite this state of affairs, the action of humanitarian organisations often makes a small contribution to the SSR agenda, either directly, by upholding standards in the penitentiary system for example, or indirectly, through its tension-reducing impact and wide-ranging role in environment- and capacity-building.

Overall, it is possible to evaluate positively the current involvement of humanitarian and development organisations in contributing to the SSR

agenda in the context of transition peacebuilding. However, despite the positive role that these organisations may play, peacebuilding is ultimately a political process that is beyond the control of outside parties. Humanitarian and development organisations should not be asked to act as a substitute for the necessary reconciliation process between the parties to the conflict.

Similarly, the SSR agenda itself must also be owned by the national authorities and by the population, and must be adapted to the national and local context. There is no universal model that will fit all cases. For all the above reasons, the fields in which humanitarian and development organisations may be most effective are in reducing tensions by meeting priority humanitarian needs; promoting good governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights; and through capacity- and institution-building. More work needs to be done in terms of coordinating these activities within the overall strategic framework of peacebuilding, which now often takes the form of a UN integrated mission.

We should therefore continue to work towards further defining their role in this field and towards improving the relevant coordination policies and mechanisms to optimise their efficiency.