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Security Sector Reform, Conflict Prevention and Regional Perspectives

*A Discussion Paper for
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Abstract

This paper attempts to deepen understanding and to strengthen and further develop in UK government SSR programmes policies and programmes in relation to conflict prevention.

The first part of the paper examines what are the links between SSR and conflict prevention.

The second part examines the regional approaches for addressing SSR. The extent to which it is appropriate to develop specific regional or sub-regional SSR approaches is considered, followed by a brief review of SSR challenges in each region and a discussion of the scope for developing and using regional mechanisms.

The paper concludes with some key issues and priorities that arise for UK SSR policy.

Introduction

The UK government has in recent years developed a leading role in promoting and assisting security sector reform (SSR) as a key element of efforts to support conflict prevention, post-conflict peace-building, democracy and good governance, and national and regional security. Strategies have been developed and experience has been gained. Nevertheless, the challenges are complex and it is important to deepen understanding and to strengthen and further develop policies and programmes – the aim of this meeting.

The decision to establish an SSR strategy under the Conflict Prevention Pools naturally highlights two key issues: what are the links between SSR and conflict prevention; and how should strategy to promote SSR be developed for each region, taking into account the differing needs and contexts?

The aim of this discussion paper is to address these two broad issues. The next section discusses the relationship between SSR and conflict prevention. The following sections discuss regional approaches for addressing SSR. The extent to which it is appropriate to develop specific regional or sub-regional SSR approaches is considered, followed by a brief review of SSR challenges in each region and a discussion of the scope for developing and using regional mechanisms. The paper concludes with some key issues and priorities that arise for UK SSR policy.

There is as yet no widely agreed definition of what is meant by the ‘security sector’. In this paper the security sector is understood to include those institutions and organisations to which the State has allocated a legitimate role in the use, or threat of use, of coercive force in society to tackle external or internal threats to the security of the State and its citizens. It thus includes: military and para-military forces, intelligence services, national and local police services, border and coast guards, and penal systems. It further includes the civil authorities mandated to control and oversee these agencies, including defence, interior, finance ministries, national security agencies and the judiciary, and relevant functions and institutions of the legislature. According to this approach, the security sector is not taken here to include non-statutory security forces, such as guerrilla armies or private security companies, though these are understood to be very relevant to SSR priorities in many countries.

SSR and Conflict Prevention

Both SSR and conflict prevention are complex endeavours, and thus the relationship between them is bound to be multifaceted.

Conflict prevention activities aim to reduce manifest tensions and/or prevent the outbreak or recurrence of violent conflict. They can involve many different types of action, including diplomacy, mediation, institution building, confidence-building measures, measures to address particular grievances and measures to address underlying causes of conflict (poverty alleviation, democracy-building, etc).

Conflict prevention is closely related to conflict management, conflict resolution and peace-building. It depends for its effectiveness on good conflict assessment, timing and political communication. It is relevant for each stage of the so-called conflict cycle: prior to manifest tension; in a situation of tension or crisis; during violent conflict; and post-conflict. In practice, for example, many international conflict prevention efforts have aimed to prevent a re-emergence of violence after conflicts, or to prevent violence along one line of social or political division from spreading to become an instrument in other overlapping conflicts.

Security sector reform (SSR) is similarly multifaceted. It can range from relatively modest reforms in one or more security sector agency (army, border guards, etc) or its governance (ministry of defence, financial oversight, etc) to the thorough transformation of much of the security sector and its relationship to government and society. The aims of SSR may include: enhancing the efficiency or effectiveness of the security sector to meet the needs of national security or policing policies; adapting the security sector to changes in national security needs and policies; state-building; enhancing civilian control; enhancing democratic control and oversight; enhancing state or security sector legitimacy; right-sizing the security sector to enable resources to be re-allocated according to societal priorities, conflict prevention; and the implementation of peace agreements. Effective SSR requires an appropriate combination of high level political commitment, buy-in from at least domestic constituencies and from elements of the security sector concerned, legitimate and realistic policies, effective consultation and planning, and resources to enable transition.

It is clear that SSR can contribute in many ways to conflict prevention and reduction. However, many efforts to reform the security sector are not primarily concerned with conflict prevention or reduction, and so their contribution to these goals may be more or less indirect.

In general, measures to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the security sector in meeting security and policing needs of the state and society will contribute to conflict prevention. Insecurity often intensifies uncertainty and disaffection, undermines legitimacy and respect for state institutions, and provides a context in which political, social or criminal groups are more tempted to pursue their goals

through violence. Similarly, SSR measures that enhance good, democratic governance of the security sector, ensure good civil-security sector relations, and improve security sector legitimacy, all contribute to the building of a peaceful society in which conflicts can be pursued and resolved without violence or the fear of violence. 'Right-sizing' the security sector enables appropriate resource allocation, so that the state can facilitate poverty alleviation, development and political institution building and address underlying sources of conflict.

More specifically and directly, the potential contribution of SSR to conflict prevention can be illustrated in relation to each phase of the 'conflict cycle'.

Situation without manifest tension

In this context, SSR may contribute to conflict prevention particularly through measures that enhance good democratic governance, control and legitimacy of the security sector, as part of the process of building responsive institutions enabling political dialogue and effective peaceful management and resolution of conflicts and tensions. In this context, there are opportunities for SSR to assist conflict prevention by addressing underlying grievances and concerns, including measures to: enhance access to justice; strengthen democratic civil oversight and control, ensure the security sector reasonably reflects the composition of society (ethnic balance etc) and respects civilian rights; develop relevant and widely supported security policies and strategies; cut waste and build security sector capacity to meet realistic and widely acknowledged security and policing priorities (reducing the scope for political violence or intervention); develop relevant confidence and security building mechanisms (both within the country and with neighbouring countries). Measures to ensure appropriate control and regulation of private security companies or militias may be a key conflict prevention measure in this context.

Manifest tensions and/or crisis situation

In this context, conflict prevention measures need to directly address emerging tensions, reduce incentives to use violence, and strengthen mechanisms for non-violent conflict management and resolution. To be effective in this context, conflict prevention measures must alter the existing political dynamics and are thus bound to be controversial and resented by at least some political groupings. SSR is almost invariably highly relevant to these goals, though opportunities to pursue SSR will be constrained and dynamic. If elements of the security sector are a substantial part of the threat of violent conflict (for example, threat of a coup or gross violation of human rights), then measures to ensure appropriate political control and restraint are a top priority. If the problem is the misuse of the security sector by political authorities, then high level diplomacy and pressures may be required. If lack of capacity or

professionalism of the security sector is a key factor (for example, poor crowd control, inability to enforce law in certain areas or deter violent political opportunists, poor border control), then capacity-building support as well as direct assistance will be very relevant. Measures to enhance effective control over private armed group or militias are often critical in this period.

During periods of crisis or tension, well-designed SSR measures may contribute substantially to confidence-building and political settlements. For example, measures to increase recruitment of under-represented ethnic minorities or to broaden civil oversight over police, army or other security sector activities may be important not only to address specific problems but also to symbolise wider political commitment to reform and peaceful change. External assistance and encouragement is often of critical importance in stimulating and carrying through such SSR initiatives in this context.

During violent conflict

It may seem strange to talk about conflict prevention during violent conflict, and there are also strong constraints on SSR in this context. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that violence is often patchy even during war, and measures to prevent conflict from spreading or encompassing additional societal or political groups are important. In practice, the military and other elements of the security sector are most profoundly shaped during their efforts to cope with violent conflict. External assistance for SSR is generally high risk in this context. Nevertheless, there are opportunities to make much required capacity-building assistance conditional on conflict reduction and prevention measures such as elements of reform, enhanced political control, and changes in use of different elements of the security sector (e.g. substituting police for army in some roles).

Post-Conflict

After violent conflict has subsided, efforts to prevent the resurgence of violent conflict are of paramount importance. SSR generally has potentially critical contribution to make, though priorities for SSR depend on the specific context. Peace agreements generally include measures to demobilise or reform elements of the armed forces, or to integrate previously rival combatant groups into a single force. Implementation of these measures must therefore be high on the agenda if the overall peace agreement is to succeed. In this context, SSR measures can play a key confidence-building and symbolic role. Measures to ensure appropriate political control and oversight over the security sector are typically urgent. The capacity and commitment of the police and judiciary to support law, order and access to justice for communities and citizens usually require priority attention. SSR to enhance capacity to deter or combat violent ‘spoilers’ or opportunists is a similar priority. Processes need

to start to build institutions and practices for good democratic governance of the security sector, including reviews of security priorities and policies and enhanced oversight.

In this as in other phases, SSR is generally a highly politically sensitive issue. This provides opportunities as well as risks for outside assistance. There is generally high awareness of the need to reform during political crises or shortly after conflicts end, of which advantage should be taken advantage before it subsides. The high political sensitivity means that well-designed and properly communicated SSR may contribute disproportionately to confidence-building and conflict prevention. However, it also means that any SSR measures need to be developed and implemented with high awareness of conflict prevention and peace-building priorities. This must include awareness of how reforms may be interpreted by various stakeholders, or misrepresented by political opportunists.

Trade-offs and dilemmas

There are often important trade-offs to be made. For example, in some contexts conflict prevention concerns may imply postponement of ‘right-sizing’ or reforms in the interests of efficiency or resource re-allocation. Similarly, such concerns may imply prioritising SSR efforts in sectors where reform is relatively difficult. For example, there has been a tendency for outside assistance to focus on reform of armed forces, because mechanisms and experience for such support are relatively well-developed, even though the main concerns for security sector misuse relate more to paramilitary or special forces.

There are often complex choices to be made about which potential conflicts to address through SSR. In conflict prone countries, there are typically many political and social divisions and conflicts, and measures to prevent violent conflict in relation to one of them may exacerbate other conflicts. Measures to strengthen the state to ensure security and political control across its territory may empower elites or security sector agencies that are oppressing or illegitimately exploiting sections of society. Many of these dilemmas are raised acutely for example in efforts to support ‘war on terror’ in various parts of Asia or Africa.

Some potential violent conflicts are of more direct concern to the UK than others, for reasons of foreign policy or national interests but also more contingently because of domestic political lobby groups or media coverage. There is a natural tendency for the UK to focus support for SSR and other conflict prevention measures to address the conflicts that concern it most. However, it is important to recognise that UK’s priorities will not necessarily be shared by the government concerned or by its people. This is not simply an issue of having different approaches to the same conflict, but often of prioritising different conflict risks. There needs to be clarity and

compromise on such priorities if SSR it to make an effective contribution with a degree of local ownership.

Regional Approaches and SSR Assistance

Approaches and priorities for SSR depend greatly on the specific context, including political and security cultures, character of state institutions, the role and social standing of security sector agencies (army, police etc), history, and national and regional security priorities and concerns. SSR programmes thus need to be customised to specific national contexts.

However, neighbouring countries often share similar histories, cultures, and political and developmental priorities. Countries are part of a regional security complex, and many security challenges are often transnational. It thus makes sense in principle for the UK and others that are interested in providing support for SSR to consider regional and sub-regional strategies and approaches.

On one level, this is relatively unproblematic. Resources available for assistance may initially be divided by a donor into regional or sub-regional allocations. It is then necessary to develop regional strategies and priorities for using these resources, based upon a detailed investigation of needs and opportunities throughout the region. In practice, however, these may simply consist of an aggregated set of national assessments and aid strategies, without a substantial regional or sub-regional dimension.

It is less clear that it makes sense to develop specific regional or sub-regional understandings of SSR priorities and needs. There are always important differences between countries in the same sub-region, and important similarities in SSR needs for countries in different regions that are facing similar political or conflict contexts.

Potential advantages of adopting regional approaches to SSR assistance include:

- • The security challenges and concerns are often transnational or sub-regional: a regional approach can enhance awareness and engagement with these challenges and enable development of SSR programmes addressed to cross-cutting transnational issues;
- • Sub-regions and regions often do share similar understandings and approaches to the legitimate role of various branches of the security sector: for example, the role of the military in policing, civil defence or economic activities, the role of the military in politics;
- • Sub-regions and regions often do share similar political sensitivities or approaches to SSR and to external assistance for SSR. For example, some sub-regions tend to regard external assistance for

military SSR as an undesirable challenge to national sovereignty but are relaxed about aid for police reform, and in other regions the reverse may be typical. Some regions accept norms of democratic governance and open government; others are generally not willing to accept assistance in this normative framework.

- Regional organisations and institutions may be mobilised or engaged with in the development and support of SSR programmes.
- SSR programmes may reinforce regional co-operation and confidence-building.
- EU mechanisms for SSR aid may be more easily mobilised through a regional approach.
- Bilateral or sub-regional co-operation may greatly enhance SSR effectiveness (for example, for border guards, CBMs).
- Geographical proximity facilitates experience sharing, spread of precedents, lessons learned processes, and co-ordination, amongst both donors and the recipient countries.
- Potential for enhanced efficiency of aid provision, since effective SSR engagement with any one country in the region requires regional analysis this can be used in developing assistance in neighbouring countries.
- Potential disadvantages of adopting regional approaches to SSR assistance include:
 - Such approaches may encourage inappropriate regional generalisations and caricatures, increasing risks of inadequate analysis of specific national or sectoral SSR characteristics, needs and opportunities.
 - Governments may be less willing to accept SSR aid mediated through a regional framework or approach (perhaps due to concern about precedent-setting for comment or agenda-setting by neighbouring governments in the area of SSR, or about accepting similarities with neighbours).
 - Adoption of a regional approach may bias priorities for SSR assistance with opportunity costs for specific national SSR programmes.
 - SSR strategy development, co-ordination and lesson-learning may be better enhanced by focussing instead on developing strategies for specific types of context (such as pre-conflict, weak state, democratic transition, crisis, post-conflict reconstruction, DD&R) or SSR agenda (police, army, intelligence services, border guards, parliamentary oversight, national security policy review, 'war on terror', combating transnational crime)

Setting out these pros and cons clarifies that there may be real advantages to developing regional approaches and perspectives to SSR strategies and assistance, so long as this does not detract

unduly from the need to specific national analysis and programming, and that opportunities are also pursued to develop thematic or sectoral strategies and programmes.

Overview: SSR issues and challenges in each region

This section aims briefly to provide an overview of some of the distinctive issues and priorities relating to SSR, and SSR assistance, in different regions of the world. Each region is highly complex, and the aim of this section is simply to raise some key points for possible discussion relating to perspectives and approaches in each region and sub-region covered.

Eurasia

This is taken to cover OSCE countries in Europe and Central Asia. All of these countries have undergone substantial SSR in recent years, not least to take account of the end of the Cold War and demise of the USSR and Yugoslavia.

The countries emerging from the FSU and Warsaw Pact share a similar history and heritage in relation to their security sectors and the old political systems for control, and have some commonalities in their experiences of political transition relevant to SSR. One implication of this is that priorities for SSR for these countries do not generally focus so much on establishing civil control over the military, but rather on establishing systems of democratic oversight and control to prevent political misuse of the ‘power ministries’ and the security sector, particularly interior troops and various paramilitary groups. The widespread problem of unaccountable influence of informal networks on the security sector decision-making has taken a similar form characteristic of post-communist countries.

SSR in Eurasia has been heavily shaped by regional institutions and norms, including NATO, OSCE and the EU. For example, OSCE norms of democratic institutions, human rights, confidence-building, and the code of conduct on politico-military affairs have provided an important framework for the development of SSR and for legitimising civil society engagement and donor conditionality in this regard. Interest in joining NATO or developing PfP programmes has provided a powerful and effective incentive for SSR, particularly in relation to the armed forces and ministries of defence. Similarly, interest in association agreements or membership of the EU has provided powerful incentives to consolidate rule of law and democratic institutions, relevant to policing, judiciary and overall SSR.

As the transition has proceeded, the SSR priorities and concerns of groups of countries of the FSU and former Yugoslavia have diverged. The group of Central European countries that have joined NATO or are on track to join NATO and/or the EU continue to have complex and important SSR needs. But these are generally low political profile and increasingly similar in character to the recent agendas of existing EU and NATO members. In contrast, the countries of the Caucasus, the former Yugoslavia (except Slovenia), Albania and Moldova have profound SSR challenges related to post-conflict and/or fragile states. In these countries, SSR has a direct and important role to play in conflict prevention and peace-building, as well as in combating transnational crime and ensuring democratic accountability of security sector forces including paramilitaries. In Kosovo and Bosnia & Herzegovina, SSR challenges relate to security provision by international forces and the development under international oversight of appropriate national security sector agencies.

Elsewhere in the FSU, SSR progress has been slow, though each country has at least made progress on establishing national armed forces. Though there are big differences between them, key challenges in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Central Asia are similar in many respects, and include strengthening institutions for democratic oversight and control (particularly of the internal 'power ministries'), treatment of conscripts, right-sizing the armed forces, and developing effective police services and border controls. The 'war on terror' and intervention in USSR has had a generally welcome spin-off of enhanced SSR assistance for several Central Asian states

Sub-Saharan Africa

Perspectives on SSR in Africa will be specifically addressed in another presentation, so this discussion can be particularly brief. Overall, SSR is a major and urgent challenge in virtually every part of sub-Saharan Africa. This is widely recognised in principle across the continent, by civil society, governments and regional and international organisations, though the obstacles to achieving effective SSR are great in most countries, in the context of weak states, poverty, experience of recent violent, HIV/AIDS, and difficult democratic transitions. In East, West, South and Central Africa, the agendas are similar and in principle comprehensive: there are concerns to enhance civil control of the military; professionalise security sector agencies; strengthen democratic oversight and constraints against political misuse of armed forces, police and militias; enhance policing and access to justice; border controls, regulate and control private militias and private security companies.

Above all, international SSR concerns relate to the prevention and reduction of violent conflict and variants of warlordism, and to

promoting ‘good governance’. These agendas are widely shared in the countries themselves, though political elites retain strong sensitivity to unwelcome interference and possible challenges to sovereign authority. Nevertheless in recent years a range of precedents have been established for assistance with DDR and elements of SSR particularly in post-conflict contexts.

Each sub-region of Africa contains a mix of states that are in different situations in relation to the strength and legitimacy of state institutions, progress towards democratisation, and recent experience of violent conflict and despotism, even if they share many security concerns and historical perspectives. This sub-regional variety has tended to obstruct the development of effective regional agreements, norms and programmes to promote SSR. Nevertheless, important institutional developments to enhance regional co-operation on peace and security issues have taken place in recent years in SADC, ECOWAS, EAC, IGAD and African Union itself, providing opportunities programmes to support regional SSR norms building and programmes. For example, opportunities in SADC are tantalising, particularly since South Africa as a sub-regional power has carried out substantial SSR and recognised the benefits of such reform throughout the region.

Asia

In general, there tends to be high political sensitivity relating to external assistance for SSR across Eastern and Southern Asia, particularly reform of armed forces, generally related to post-colonial/post-cold war concerns about sovereignty and caution amongst political elites to establish precedents for external interference in relation to SSR and democratisation and human rights. Regional security-related institutions are relatively recently developed and weak, with relatively few shared regional norms.

However, the sensitivities are not so great for all aspects of SSR assistance. Programmes to enhance police capacity and co-operation on transnational crime are now widely accepted in principle and developing in practice, as is cooperation against terror organisations. Moreover, the norms and dynamics of SSR depend very much on progress with democratisation. Further, there are now some widely acknowledged precedents for extensive DD&R and SSR assistance in post-conflict countries such as Cambodia and East Timor, which current activities in Afghanistan and Sri Lanka may consolidate.

The situation and priorities relating to SSR vary greatly across sub-regions in this area. In North East Asia states are relatively strong, there are few mechanisms for security co-operation except those mediated by the USA, and ‘traditional’ inter-state security threats tend to dominate the agenda. SSR co-operation opportunities are limited, and probably lie mainly in the area of policing, border controls and the judiciary and perhaps enhanced mechanisms for

oversight amongst relatively democratic states. In South East Asia, SSR is a key political concern in much of the region, with concerns centring on issues such as state-building; capacity to exert control across state territory; democratic accountability and oversight; conflict prevention; transnational crime and banditry, and border controls. International concerns about terrorist networks in South East Asia are shared by several governments, with implications for SSR agendas. The highest stakes at present are at play in Indonesia, where SSR is a central issue for the integrity and democratic transition of the country. ASEAN, and the ASEAN Regional Forum, provide regional institutional frameworks for developing co-operation relevant to SSR, though this remains at an early stage and focussed on policing co-operation.

In South Asia, SSR is also a high concern. However, the SSR priority agendas vary considerably from country to country in the sub-region. All are sensitive to external assistance with SSR, except of their own terms, but with Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh feeling greater need for aid. There are shared concerns relating to actual or potential insurgencies and militias, challenges of policing and border controls in some areas, political violence, access to justice, transnational criminal and terrorist groups, and strengthening democratic oversight over the national and provincial security sectors. In Pakistan's case, there are of course particular problems with exerting civil control over the military and intelligence services, while Sri Lanka is preparing for a hard negotiated peace agreement which will raise complex SSR issues. In South West Asia, the complex and enormous challenges relating to SSR and state-building are a well-known priority, while in Iran the primary SSR issues appear to be the development of accountability of judiciary and security agencies to elected institutions.

Oceania

SSR has been a critical issue for conflict prevention and reduction and democratic control in several states in Oceania, including Fiji, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea (and also East Timor). Significant regional cooperation has developed on issues of policing and state security in recent years, with New Zealand and Australia playing an important role.

The Americas

Across Central and South America and the Caribbean, concerns about SSR tend to focus on enhancing civil democratic control over the SSR as a key element of democratic consolidation, combating transnational criminal organisations, and policing. There is relatively little focus on external military threats. The Organisation of American States (OAS) and the USA both have a substantial role in shaping SSR co-operation. Regional norms and programmes now emphasise norms of democratic control and oversight, but otherwise focus particularly on co-operation to combat transnational criminal

groups, particularly drug cartels. Armed insurrections by guerrilla groups and activities of right-wing militias are less of a challenge than in the past, but remain the dominant concern of Colombia. There has been extensive post-conflict or transition assistance with SSR in Haiti, Guatemala and El-Salvador, and SSR remains a key concern for conflict prevention efforts in these countries.

Middle East and North Africa

There are many challenges for SSR in this area, which are generally particularly related to problems of regime security and democratic institution building. However, progress has been slow, and the external assistance for SSR (as opposed to external military assistance) has been highly constrained. A key issue for external assistance has been measures to develop and reform the Palestinian police and militias: a highly contested process since the break-down of the Oslo peace process. It would be important to pursue any emerging opportunities to shape SSR in Algeria and in other key states in this region, but these are by no means clear at present.

Developing regional SSR programmes

The previous sections indicate that there may be potential for the UK and others to assist in establishing or further developing regional or sub-regional SSR programmes. These are already established to a limited extent in a few sub-regions, such as Stability Pact countries or through NATO PfP programmes. The situation may be ripe for extending these to some other sub-regions, particularly where regional institutions have already established relevant norms, programmes or precedents that provide a basis to build upon, and where one or more regional powers identify such SSR programmes to generally be in their interest. Examples include sub-regions or clusters of states in Southern, Eastern and Western Africa, ASEAN, and Latin America.

In those regions where there is already significant support for SSR activities, it is important to review the programmes to identify gaps and opportunities for extending the scope of such assistance. For example, in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, there are now substantial programmes and mechanisms to assist with reforming armed forces and their governance, but these are much less evident in the key paramilitary, police and interior troops sectors. In contrast, programmes to enhance police capacity to combat transnational crime and terrorism are now developing in parts of Africa and core ASEAN countries, but generally often do not extend to other important sectors.

In practice, such regional approaches would normally retain much flexibility and a strong bilateral dimension. In addition to the

powerful political and institutional pressures to retain such characteristics amongst both donors and recipient countries, it is important to retain flexibility to circumvent capacity problems and political constraints in regional organisations.

Nevertheless, links with established regional mechanisms and institutions could have several benefits. It could facilitate links between SSR programmes and wider conflict prevention, security and peace-building, crime prevention and development mechanisms and programmes. It could help to institutionalise progress on aspects of SSR across the region, reinforcing domestic constituencies for reform during political setbacks and embedding key norms for SSR (for example relating to democratic oversight and control) in regional processes. It could help to enhance contacts between security sector agencies (such as the military, police) or security sector governance institutions (parliamentary committees, ministries of interior and defence) across the region, with possible capacity-building and confidence-building benefits.

Policy issues and priorities for the UK

The relationship between SSR and conflict prevention, and regional approaches and perspectives for SSR, raises a complex array of policy issues and challenges for the UK. These include:

- Develop and strengthen mechanisms to enhance the contribution of SSR programmes supported from the Conflict Prevention Pools to conflict prevention and reduction goals, and to ensure that SSR programmes take proper and regular account of conflict assessments in the countries concerned and of trade-offs that conflict-prevention concerns may raise;
- Review the character and progress of SSR assistance programmes in regions where these are relatively developed, such as in Eastern Europe, to identify gaps and inadequacies in scope, and develop strategies to respond to these (such as the relative lack of programmes to support SSR of paramilitaries and police);
- Investigate the opportunities for supporting and encouraging regional SSR programmes linking with sub-regional or regional institutions or agreements, for example in sub-Saharan Africa and South East Asia;
- Support regional processes to establish norms and agreements relating to SSR;
- Recognise that the primary challenges for SSR in many regions arise more from the risk of misuse of security sector forces by political authorities than from lack of civilian control over the military, implying a need to enhance support for oversight by parliaments and civil society;

- Develop SSR assistance programmes that recognise that a key challenge for SSR in many regions is to expand the role and capacity of police forces and judiciary to ensure law and order and access to justice, with accompanying focussing of roles of armed forces;
- Investigate strategies for incorporating measures to support regulation and control of private security companies or militias into SSR programmes.