



PARLIAMENTARY FORUM
ON SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

Policy statement on aid and security

Board of the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons,
meeting in Maputo, Mozambique, March 16, 2008

Security and development are often said to be two sides of the same coin. Development without security is impossible; security without development is only temporary, and so forth. Before the UN Summit during the General Assembly in 2005 the former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan stated in his report 'In larger freedom' that:

"The world must advance the causes of security, development and human rights together, otherwise none will succeed. Humanity will not enjoy security without development, it will not enjoy development without security, and it will not enjoy either without respect for human rights."

Today we are at a stage where the linkages between development and security are at the forefront of the political agenda. For example, one of the leading messages of the UN's High-Level Panel Report is that "development and security are inextricably linked. A more secure world is not possible unless poor countries are given a chance to develop...Even people in rich countries will be more secure if their governments help poor countries to defeat poverty and disease by meeting the Millennium Development Goals."

Nonetheless, there are fundamental concerns related to the interplay of security and development assistance which need to be addressed. Since the UN's inception the close connection and inseparable links between security, development and human rights have been a recurring topic of discussion but responsibility for carrying out activities to achieve goals within these areas has been disjoined into separate departments both within the UN system and among state institutions.

Pairing development and security has opened the door to increased funds and political attention since security often implies immediate action and political prioritising. After the terrorist attacks of 9/11, tendencies in the debate suggested that the links between poverty and terrorism are inseparable, that funds towards poverty reduction will reduce terrorism. Today, the debate has partly gone in the other direction given the realisation that the development funds that have increasingly been diverted to projects to fight terrorism have not necessarily been effective to fight poverty. While fighting poverty is an investment to increase security the reverse is much more complicated. Areas with chronic poverty may be overlooked if they are not considered an immediate security threat. A narrow focus on security and fighting terrorism might put short term

needs of stability before long term needs of justice and immediate priorities of donor countries before the ultimate needs of the poor.

One of the main concerns about the emerging security and development agenda is that linking security and development is liable to result in the securitisation of development rather than the 'developmentalisation' of security. Sceptics of the security and development nexus also refer to the danger in linking poverty and terrorism. Poverty as such does not lead to conflict, where inequality often can. Injustice and impunity creates frustration and if democratic institutions fail to fulfil their civil responsibilities there is an increased risk that social frustration leads to undemocratic actions and the unilateral and illegitimate use of violence. These inequalities can only be stabilized through further development.

At the High Level Meetings of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD in 2005, the security-related Official Development Assistance (ODA) criteria¹ were expanded in a few limited areas. Expenditures associated with non-military security sector reform, control of small arms and light weapons, and conflict resolution became ODA-eligible.

A few member countries have proposed to further broaden criteria to include reform and non-military training of military forces and peace keeping operations, including contributions to "peace support operations capacity" by developing country militaries. However the majority of members strongly resisted further expansions of ODA for military-related cooperation programs between donors and developing countries and at the High Level Meeting in 2007 these were rejected.

Various concerns have been highlighted in the debate. Firstly, expanding ODA criteria to include military-related expenditures compromises funding intended for poverty reduction and fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals. There is worry that countries who have already met UN targets may re-allocate funding and that the countries who have not yet met targets might find an easy way to reach the goal, without allocating more for development.

There is also concern among development NGOs that the growing trend of prioritizing geopolitical and security motives in aid allocation. This is visible in the fact that more than 60% of the increase in ODA between 2001 and 2004 was allocated to three countries, Afghanistan, Iraq and the Democratic Republic of Congo, which between them are home to fewer than 3 percent of the developing world's impoverished people. Additional expansion of ODA criteria would merely support linking the fight against terrorism with the fight against poverty.

Additionally, expanding the criteria would meet the self interest of donor countries for short term stability or counter-terrorism efforts at the expense of poor countries' quest for development and peace in a long term perspective. Such an approach could increase the already growing tension in the UN system between the North and the South.

¹ The Development Assistance Committee (DAC), based in the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), is a forum for the 22 donor countries that set the criteria for ODA (Official Development Assistance) by consensus. The criteria are guidelines to help DAC members determine which expenditures are eligible to be counted as ODA and which are not. The criteria are generally poverty-oriented, but can be interpreted differently by different governments, and include other issues.

Clearly, the primary objective of ODA must be poverty eradication. While recognising the links between security and development and the need for an integrated approach in peace and development operations, the focus should always be on 'human security' rather than 'armed security'. Security and military activities should be funded by state defence budgets, not development assistance. A holistic, integrated approach does not require further expansions in official development assistance criteria and resources should be reserved for poverty eradication only.

Objectives

The Board of the Parliamentary Forum of Small Arms and Light Weapons, meeting in Maputo, Mozambique on March 16 2008;

Recognizes the link between security and development which heeds an integrated, simultaneous approach towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, with the ultimate goal of human security;

Supports present OECD-DAC policies on the relationship between security and development, reaffirming that the proliferation of small arms negatively affects development, but strongly resists broadening the ODA definition to include spending on security and military activities, including activities which would undermine donor credibility and the effectiveness and legitimacy of aid;

Safeguards development cooperation in its own right, not as an instrument for other needs, and supports the implementation of programmes on the basis of inequalities and linked only to performance against poverty reduction, not security goals;

Underscores the need for political and legislative commitments in ensuring that the role of aid is to fight poverty and inequality and that aid budgets should not be directed for other purposes;

Encourages Forum members in their respective parliaments to engage actively to ensure that development aid reaches the poorest people and is not allocated according to perceived national, global security or foreign policy interests of donors;

Advocates ownership by developing countries in exercising control over their development policies and ensuring economic policy conditions do reinforce democratic processes;

Supports Forum members in their parliamentary work to assist their governments to ensure that ODA remain within a clear focus of poverty reduction and critically monitor expenditures; while avoiding aid budgets to be inflated with increase of expenditures related to, for example, export credits, debt cancellation or costs for refugees and students.

Mandates the Forum's Secretariat to closely follow the international debate on aid and security and offer appropriate information to Forum members.