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## REPORT

# ECOWAS Security Sector Reform & Governance Training Workshop

Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara International Conference Centre,  
Banjul – The Gambia



21<sup>st</sup> – 23<sup>th</sup> February 2022

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Group Photo: ECOWAS SSRG Training Workshop, Banjul, 21<sup>st</sup> January 2022

Capacity Development of Stakeholders and institutions in the Security Sector and Relevant Oversight Realms.



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## African Security Sector Network (ASSN)

Formed in 2003, the **African Security Sector Network (ASSN)**, headquartered in Accra (Ghana), is a pan-African network of practitioners and organizations working to promote effective and democratically governed security sectors across Africa.

For more information, please contact the **ASSN** team by email:

[info@africansecuritynetwork.org](mailto:info@africansecuritynetwork.org)

or visit the **ASSN** website:

<http://africansecuritynetwork.org/assn/>

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

APCOF	African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum
ASSN	African Security Sector Network
AU	African Union
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CMR	Civil-military relations
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DCAF	Geneva Centre for Security Governance
DSF	Defence and Security Forces
ECOMIG	ECOWAS Mission in The Gambia
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EPSAO	ECOWAS Peace and Security Architecture and Operations
GFRS	Gambia Fire and Rescue Services
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
GoG	Gulf of Guinea
ISSAT	International Security Sector Advisory Team
IUU	Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (fishing)
MFDC	Democratic Forces of Casamance Movement
NSP	National Security Policy
OGN	Operational Guidance Notes
ONS	Office of National Security
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
SSRG	Security Sector Reform and Governance
TRRC	(The Gambia) Truth Reconciliation and Reparations Commission
UK	United Kingdom
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding
WAPCCO	West African Police Chiefs Committee
WAPIS	West African Police Information System
WAVE	Women's Association for Victims Empowerment

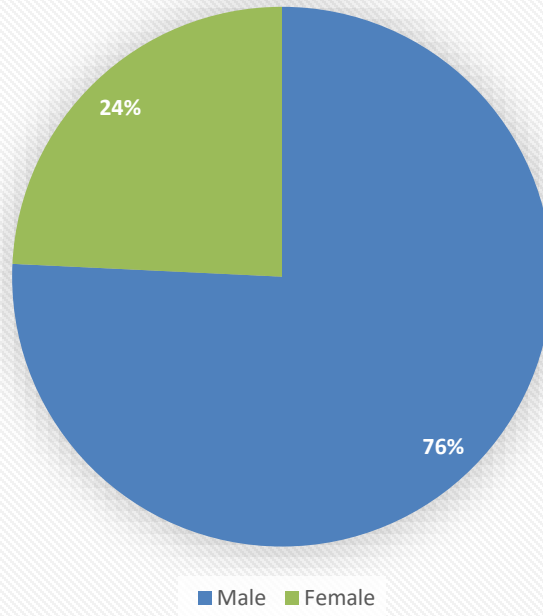


## INTRODUCTION

1. The dissemination of the ECOWAS Policy Framework for Security Sector Reform and Governance (SSRG) continued into the second Member State in the ongoing pilot phase. Themed 'Training Workshop on ECOWAS Security Sector Reform and Governance (SSRG)', the workshop was hosted at the Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara International Conference Centre in Banjul, The Gambia, from 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022.
2. The workshop was conducted within the framework of implementation of the ECOWAS Peace and Security Architecture and Operations (EPSAO) Project by the Regional Security Division, Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security of the ECOWAS Commission, in collaboration with the African Security Sector Network (ASSN) and the GIZ-EPSAO project, supported by the European Union Commission and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).
3. The main objective of the 3-day Training Workshop was to facilitate dissemination and promote awareness of the ECOWAS Policy Framework for SSRG, as mandated by the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS. Other objectives include:
  - a. Enhance stakeholder appreciation of the importance and value of SSRG through introduction to key provisions and core principles of ECOWAS SSRG;
  - b. Promote a common vision and shared understanding of SSRG among national security stakeholders including political decision makers, legislators, oversight bodies, senior security practitioners, and civil society;
  - c. Enhance institution building and capacity for SSRG in a way that strengthens national ownership, national responsibility, and national action for reform;
  - d. Improve effectiveness, professionalism, accountability, and responsiveness of security services to the needs of the people; and
  - e. Mainstream gender into SSRG and promote the role of women and youth in peace and security.
4. The Training Workshop brought together about 33 local participants representing relevant ministries, departments and agencies, dignitaries, policy makers, practitioners, officers of the armed forces and other security services, experts from civil society organizations (CSOs), and development partners who joined the ASSN team to engage in critical discussions on SSRG in The Gambia with a view to mapping the way forward for effective SSRG in the country.
5. While the Training Workshop aimed at 40% participation by women and youth, women's participation was relatively low (8 females only), which represents approximately 24% of the total number of participants.



## Local Participants Attendance





## DAY ONE

### Opening Ceremony

6. The workshop commenced with an opening ceremony attended by national stakeholders, officials of the government of The Gambia, representatives of the ECOWAS Commission and ECOWAS Mission in The Gambia, as well as partners– GIZ, ASSN, and DCAF.

7. In his welcome address on behalf of the Minister for Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry, Mr Ebrima Sisawo, warmly welcomed all participants to the workshop and noted that the workshop is imperative considering that everything about a stable society today, is hinged on security. He thanked the organisers of the Workshop for their astuteness in initiating such a timely programme at a period when The Gambia is embarking on implementation of its SSR Strategy. He encouraged participants to seize the opportunity to build skills and gain the right competence to help The Gambia in the implementation of the National Security Policy so that they will be part of the country's SSRG success story.

8. The Chief of Staff at the Office of National Security (ONS), Mr. Abraham K. Mendy, added that the workshop was long overdue given the prevailing and emerging security threats in the ECOWAS region. He underscored the need for interventions in reforming our security sectors not only for the needs of the state but more importantly, to meet the security needs of citizens. He noted that the President of The Gambia, His Excellency Adama Barrow, had earlier highlighted the challenges of the security sector he inherited when he was elected, since the prevailing situation did not reflect the needs and aspirations of the Gambian people. Consequently, he called for collaboration and coordination in reforming the Gambian security sector, in line with good governance and democratic principles. He urged participants to be open in sharing ideas to establish the kind of security sector that The Gambia hopes to achieve.

9. Subsequently, Resident Representative of President of the ECOWAS Commission in The Gambia, Madam Vabah K. Gayflor, acknowledged the participation of distinguished personalities at the workshop and extended the compliments of the ECOWAS Commission. She expressed her pleasure at having The Gambia as one of the first countries piloting the dissemination of the ECOWAS Policy Framework on SSRG. She further traced the trajectory of the Policy Framework since it was initiated in 2009 until its adoption in 2016, and commended ECOWAS for supporting the Implementation Plan developed in 2018 to facilitate implementation in member states. She also expressed gratitude to the Geneva Centre for Security Governance (DCAF) for assisting ECOWAS in the development of the Toolkit for Security Sector Reform and Governance in West Africa. The three instruments, the SSRG Policy Framework, the Implementation Plan, and the Toolkit, form a comprehensive package for supporting member states in their efforts to improve the security sector. Madam Gayflor clarified that the SSRG Policy Framework is not intended to replace national SSRG initiatives but rather to compliment such efforts. She thanked all partners including the ASSN for the workshop and concluded that the ground is now set for a better SSR agenda in The Gambia.



10. Representing the GIZ, Ms Subetta Chansa, Technical Advisor on SSR, observed that over the past year, SSR has gathered momentum within the ECOWAS region as member states have sought to improve security in their countries. She encouraged national stakeholders to work collaboratively in domesticating and applying the principles of the Policy Framework as it represents the cornerstone of SSR in the region. She further expressed hope that participants would dedicate their full presence to open and candid discussions over the three-day workshop.

11. The concluding remarks of the opening session was given by the Executive Secretary of ASSN, Prof Eboe Hutchful. Prof Hutchful indicated that the dissemination of the ECOWAS SSRG workshop in The Gambia is gratifying for the ASSN as it is the first time the Network is hosting an event in The Gambia, though members of the Network have previously served and currently hold critical SSR positions in The Gambia. He expounded the nature and operations of the ASSN and its credence in hands-on experience sharing in the pursuit of SSR, in the wake of multifarious security challenges in the region. He expressed the ASSN's admiration for The Gambia in articulating and adopting a National Security Policy and acknowledged the substantial SSR work ongoing in the country with the support of DCAF.

## Introductions and Expectations

12. Participants and resource persons took turns to introduce themselves and shared their expectations of the workshop, and the outcomes they hope would be achieved far beyond the workshop. The expectations included the following:



- a. Better understand the core principles of SSRG and how the ECOWAS Policy Framework on SSRG dovetails into the Gambia's National Security Policy.
- b. Enhance skills in civil society participation in security and how to work collaboratively with state actors to promote security governance.
- c. Understand gender and the role of women in SSRG.
- d. Understand how SSRG addresses the concerns of gender and youth.
- e. How to fully enable and facilitate gender mainstreaming in the security sector.
- f. How SSRG translates into improvement in the daily lives of women, children and youth.
- g. Explore the critical role of CSOs in helping civilians and all citizens understand SSRG.
- h. Role of the media in SSRG and how media practitioners and experts can better report on security sector issues as well as dissemination of sensitive security information.
- i. Understand the role that the National Human Rights Commission can play in SSRG.
- j. Discover what can be learned and added on to what already exists in terms of legislation, policy and practice to facilitate effective SSRG in The Gambia.
- k. Enhance knowledge and skill in SSRG policy development and implementation.
- l. Articulate recommendations to support the implementation of the National Security Policy and improve the security sector of The Gambia.

13. A participant however noted from his reading of the concept note that the expected outcomes of the workshop appear overambitious considering the current realities on the ground.

14. Prior to the workshop, participants were required to take the DCAF-ISSAT online introductory course on SSR to foster a better understanding of the key SSR concepts and issues. Six participants indicated that they attempted the course. Participants were encouraged to take and complete the introductory course during and after the workshop as it was an integral part of the design of the workshop.

15. The subsequent sessions of this report provide a synopsis of the themes covered, key points of interventions, discussions over the 3-day period, dialogue among national stakeholders and outcomes. Each presentation was followed by:

- a. group work (breakout groups) where participants brainstormed in their groups and returned to plenary to share their findings and recommendations;
- b. question and answer (Q&A) session facilitated by a resource person to integrate learning and promote interaction and experience sharing; or
- c. examples and interventions from participants with germane experience to share.

16. The content of these interventions was consolidated and presented on day three of the workshop to chart the way forward for SSRG in The Gambia. The second half of Day 3 was led by national stakeholders and dedicated to dialogue and experience-sharing on the SSR process in The Gambia, outcomes and evaluation.



## Introductory Session: Political Leadership and National Ownership of SSR in The Gambia - from National Security Policy to SSR Strategy and Plan – Abraham K. Mendy

17. To set the stage for the workshop, Mr Abraham K. Mendy, Chief of Staff at the Office of National Security, facilitated an introductory session which gave participants an overview of the background and rationale for SSRG in The Gambia, key milestones in reform, emerging gaps and challenges in the SSR process. Milestones include the National Security Policy, SSR Strategy and Plan, implications and findings of the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC), studies, etc. The session highlighted key priorities and next steps in the reform process.

18. The presentation alluded to the fact that given the enormous security challenges facing the Gambia, President Adama Barrow's government with support from international partners, amplified the importance of reforming the country's security sector to meet the expected standard of performance and behaviour in accordance with the rule of law. Consequently, the government tasked the Security Sector Reform Technical Working Group to conduct a detailed security sector assessment to review the capabilities, weakness and challenges of the country's security sector. The assessment report highlighted critical gaps which led to widespread human rights violations and deterioration in the performance of their core constitutional mandates. The core objective of The Gambia SSR reform process is to address the gaps, deficiencies and challenges faced by the security sector with a view to restructuring and cultivating an effective, professional, apolitical and accountable security sector. Mr. Mendy also touched on the principles governing The Gambia's SSR including:

- a. Political will and national leadership.
- b. Inclusive and participatory nature of the process.
- c. Buy-in and ownership of the process by institutions and the population.
- d. Anchoring SSR programming in state reform.
- e. A single vision, an overarching programme, sectoral and cross-cutting projects and action plans.
- f. Prioritizing governance over restructuring and infrastructure.

19. According to Mr Mendy, the SSR process led to the development of The Gambia's National Security Policy (NSP), which is the first of its kind since the country's independence in 1965. The new NSP spells out key roles, responsibilities, and mandates of security institutions, organs, agencies, and personnel in order to reconfigure the security sector to meet evolving national state and human security needs, challenges, risks and opportunities well into the next decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The NSP also addresses issues of gender, youth, and social inequality, while leveraging the Gambia's "soft-power" regionally and globally to mitigate environmental, cyber security, radicalization, money laundering, and other emerging challenges. Priority areas of the Gambia SSR are:

- a. Restoration of public trust and confidence by addressing post-authoritarian legacies.



- b. Development of an overarching security governance framework.
- c. Reform, empowerment and strengthening of civilian management and oversight bodies.
- d. Addressing cross-cutting perennial challenges.
- e. Address specific institutional reform activities.

20. Mr Mendy added that the Gambia's SSR Strategy further accentuates these priority areas by stating their objective, outcome, outputs and activities. He concluded by highlighting a few of the challenges with the implementation of the NSP and noted that addressing crosscutting perennial issues including gender remain problematic. Each security institution has a gender unit with trained staff but there is still a lot to do to transform and mainstream gender in the security sector. Also, both the human and technical resources remain inadequate in security institutions. Furthermore, he noted that the legal framework to permit the ONS to perform its coordination role was still lacking, although the Bill was ready to be taken to the cabinet.

21. The discussions following this presentation made the case that strong leadership is a real advantage in SSR implementation and fortunately, some of the Gambians who participated in the SSRG work from scratch were present at the workshop and therefore shed more light on the issues.

22. On how the reform process started for the Gambia, Mr Mendy observed that the ONS team embarked on a study tour in Sierra Leone and Ghana as well as literature review from other countries to learn what others have done and avoid their mistakes. As a result, the technical working group consisted of both international partners and Gambians who followed through a consultative process. Based on their findings, they recommended the institutionalization of the ONS and oversight bodies, hence, the establishment of the ONS under the Presidency.

23. Participants examined the rightsizing of the security forces as part of the reform process to determine if it was done because of a World Bank conditionality or whether there was an assessment attesting to the need for it. Mr Mendy responded that the World Bank itself conducted an assessment and presented the report to the government. He added that a natural attrition rate of 51% had already been achieved. However, for people who have carried arms for most part of their working lives, there is need for detailed reorientation and reintegration into the society. Participants cautioned the government to be mindful of World Bank conditionalities, lest national ownership be compromised.

24. Another dimension to the discussions was how inadequate the 1997 Constitution is to the reform process given that it does not encompass all the security sector institutions. Mr Mendy again assured participants that this is a crucial matter of concern to the government. He noted that after the upcoming National Assembly elections, the constitutional review process will take off in the face of The Gambia needing a new constitution.

25. Some participants wondered where the NSP categorizes the youth since it is not explicit on the subject but acknowledges that youth is not gender and gender is not youth. Other participants were of the opinion that the NSP is not a gender-friendly document; however this was addressed by its emphasis on human security in general.



## Session I: Core Principles and Essential Features of ECOWAS SSRG – Okey Uzoechina

26. This presentation shared insights on the ECOWAS Policy Framework for Security Sector Reform and Governance (SSRG) which was adopted by the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government in Dakar, Senegal in June 2016. It observed that the policy framework clarifies what security means in the ECOWAS regional context, what the core principles and essential features of SSRG are, whose security is to be guaranteed, what the objectives of security are, the challenges to security and required reforms, actors involved in providing and overseeing security, and how regional security objectives can be translated into effective outcomes at the national level. It is not intended to replace a National Security Policy, National Security Strategy or nationally-led initiatives to promote governance and reform of the security sector which is the primary responsibility of member states. Rather, the ECOWAS Policy Framework complements nationally-led initiatives in promoting common security standards and objectives for the region.

27. Core principles and essential features of ECOWAS SSRG highlighted are:

### *Core Principles*

- a. African and West African solidarity and partnership
- b. Respect of national sovereignty and territorial integrity
- c. SSRG and regional integration
- d. Regional and national ownership
- e. SSRG will be context-specific
- f. SSRG and gender
- g. SSRG and human rights

### *Essential Features*

- a. A National Security Policy
- b. A periodic security sector review and needs assessment
- c. A comprehensive professionalization and modernization of the security sector
- d. The involvement of customary authorities and community-based security providers
- e. The effective involvement of CSOs and the media
- f. The establishment of effective democratic control and oversight institutions
- g. An effective resources mobilization strategy and financing of SSRG
- h. A national framework for cooperation and partnership building
- i. An effective communication strategy
- j. A monitoring and evaluation mechanism

28. The unique value added by the ECOWAS Policy Framework lies in its comprehensive approach to “connected security”. This means that improving SSRG will have a knock-on impact by improving efforts to counter terrorism, maritime piracy, transnational organised crime, small arms and light weapons proliferation, etc. The ECOWAS Policy Framework for SSRG places universal standards in the West African context and further prescribes positive steps towards compliance with standards contained in our comprehensive regional security instruments.



29. The presentation further underlined that SSRG is a highly political process which requires sound understanding of contemporary political conditions that enable or stifle SSRG, and how SSRG may contribute to renegotiating the social contract. It particularly emphasized national ownership of SSRG and indicated that it entails the political will to:

- a. Assess, develop, lead, implement, monitor and evaluate security sector reform and governance (SSRG) activities;
- b. Include and seek the participation of a broad range of national stakeholders in SSRG process;
- c. Commit national resources (human, financial and material) to implement SSRG initiatives and programmes; and
- d. Have the capacity to coordinate external support to SSRG programmes.

30. Discussions following this presentation touched on, among other things, how youth is featured in the ECOWAS SSRG. Participants noted that, particularly for The Gambia, youth unemployment is high and there is a need to address this as a matter of urgency to discourage the youth from engaging in social vices and violence.

31. Participants also discussed the lack of capacity as a key challenge of SSRG in ECOWAS. This is more pronounced in the region's inability to curtail border insecurity, crime, transnational organized crime, drug trafficking, counter terrorism, and maritime piracy, just to mention but a few. Another challenge mentioned was the promotion of learning and information sharing among member states. In spite of the existence of institutions such as WAPIS and WAPCCO, learning and experience sharing platforms have been limited.

32. Lack of funds and inadequate government commitment to funding and sustaining SSRG for the long term was raised as a major challenge to both ECOWAS and its member states with regards to SSRG implementation. Generally, partner support for preventive security measures remains weak until such time as danger appears imminent.



## Session II: Armed Forces and Defence Oversight – Emile Ouedraogo

33. This session clarified key concepts of Democratic Civil Military Relations and examined the linkage between the historical legacy of African armed forces and the problematic nature of civil-military relations in Africa since independence. It further highlighted the implications of the democratic transitions for civil- military relations (CMR) in Africa – notably the variety of CMR arrangements emerging on the continent in the aftermath of democratisation – and questioned the extent to which Africa is moving towards professional, democratic, ‘republican’ armies.

34. Attention was drawn to key contemporary challenges facing peaceful, democratic and harmonious civil-military relations in Africa: the new forms of politicization of defence and security forces (DSF); the militarization of national politics; electoral ‘coups’ and violations of constitutions, and other governance and management deficits in the sector. The factors and causes of military interventions in West Africa were noted to include decline in the prestige of political parties; fragmentation or weakening of the civil political elite; contagion effect of coups d’état and insecurity in neighbouring countries; internal social antagonism and socio-political turbulence such as strike actions which cripple the functioning of state institutions; ethnic conflicts; uprisings; economic crises causing the implementation of austerity policies affecting all sectors of society; corruption and impunity; governance; violation of constitution; and electoral hold-ups and post-electoral crises.

35. Another dimension of insecurity examined was the issue of new military roles and missions as well as emerging national and cross-border threats (terrorism, transnational crime, intra- state conflicts, insurgencies and armed non-state actors) and their implications for human rights and democratic governance of the security sector. The session ended offered strategic guidelines to strengthening CMR in Africa, underscoring the role of a truly neutral and apolitical civil society; democratization and professionalization of defence and security forces; and the need for a new social contract.

36. Following the presentation, a proposal was made to explore the secret behind the stability of few countries in the region that have never experienced a coup. The idea was to draw lessons from their experience in view of the recent resurgence of coups in the region. The Botswana and Senegal experiences were shared: while Botswana was said to owe its political stability to discipline among its people and institutions, coupled with strongly upholding its cultural values, the Senegalese army was credited for operating on the basis of merit. For the latter, there is consequently, no room for ethnicity, favouritism, nepotism and the like. These issues form part of the training and orientation of the armed forces and security services, so officers come out professionally trained to play their constitutional role in a democratic society.

37. It was further noted that, because the Senegalese army is well remunerated, they continue to maintain standards and civil-military relations remain strong. In a project named ‘Army Nations’ which goes beyond guns and bullets, the military serves in humanitarian missions, providing technical assistance in infrastructural development in remote spaces within the country and also



intervening in disaster response situations. These efforts have generated great trust and respect among the civilians and the military such that civilian abuse by the military is virtually absent.

38. Another perspective highlighted was the fact that, experiencing a coup or multiple coups does not preclude countries from undergoing reforms to professionalize their security sector institutions. The case was made of Ghana which experienced several coups in the post-independence era but due to its commitment to democratic governance, has built a formidable and professionalized army over time.

39. The need to use regional mechanisms to deter the military from political interventions was also emphasized. It was noted that in the recent coups in Mali, Burkina Faso, and the unsuccessful coup in Guinea Bissau, ECOWAS made pronouncements and imposed sanctions since coups violate the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance which codifies zero tolerance for power captured by unconstitutional means. However, participants debated these mechanisms can be used more effectively as preventive measures to avoid coups altogether. It was also noted that although most of the coups have happened in Francophone ECOWAS countries, there appears to be a common denominator.

### Session III: Intelligence and National Security Management – Amb. Johnny Kwadjo

40. The presentation on Intelligence and National Security Management x-rayed the nature of intelligence services and their development in West Africa in particular, within the context of the broader SSR process and the democratization efforts in the ECOWAS Region. It noted that intelligence services (sometimes referred to as “security services”), provide independent analysis of information relevant to the security of the state, society, and the protection of vital national interests, and as such, depend on the executive branch of government. Their primary purpose is to gather and analyse strategic information required for decision-making by state authorities. Even though intelligence activities generally involve a vast amount of information obtained from open sources, some of the activities at times, require a high degree of secrecy, as a portion of the information required can only be obtained by using covert methods or secret sources which need to be protected from disclosure.

41. Consequently, while intelligence services may legitimately use secret operations in the pursuit of information on behalf of the state and society, there is a danger that the use of this power and information can be abused. This brought to light the need for democratic oversight (parliamentary oversight in particular) of the intelligence services in addition to executive control. This is because, owing to the secretive nature of intelligence work, intelligence services can become a threat to the society and the political system they are meant to protect.

42. Within the context of developing democracies in West Africa, the presentation observed that weak oversight of the intelligence services remains a problematic issue. This is due not only to the legacies of prior non-democratic regimes—in which the intelligence or security apparatus was a key element of control and human rights abuses often went unpunished—but also to the inherent tension between intelligence and democracy; between the requirements of secrecy and those of openness and public accountability. Democracy requires accountability of governors to the governed and transparency. Intelligence services, by contrast, must operate in secret in order



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to be effective. They thus avoid, to some degree, both accountability and transparency. Even well-established democracies that have typically developed mechanisms to deal with this dilemma continue to struggle with the tensions inherent in the exigencies of democracy and the necessity of intelligence activities. Fledgling democracies in West Africa are still in the process of creating effective mechanisms and transforming the left-over effects of the legacy of intelligence activities inherited from authoritarian regimes.

43. The presentation concluded on the note that in a democracy, intelligence services should strive to be effective and politically neutral (non-partisan). They should adhere to professional ethics and operate within their legal mandates and in accordance with the constitutional and democratic norms of the state. Democratic oversight of intelligence structures should begin with a clear and explicit legal framework. Also, intelligence organisations should be established by enabling legislation passed by the parliament. Statutes should further specify the limits of the service's powers, the methods of operation and the means by which intelligence services will be held accountable.



## DAY TWO

### Session IV: Police and Policing Oversight – Sean Tait

44. Despite the obvious and critical importance of police and policing oversight, the session disclosed that the issue of policing oversight and accountability as an area of academic and professional endeavour has a limited profile and political saliency in Africa.

45. Policing oversight and accountability provisions of the National Security Policy of The Gambia was examined, assessing the opportunities and challenges and touching on issues such as popular ownership, guiding principles, good governance, and rule of law. The presentation stressed the need to decentralize and capacitate the Police Human Rights and Complaints Units as well as conduct periodic security sector review and needs assessment of the Police Service. The involvement of customary authorities and community-based security and justice providers and effective involvement of CSOs and the media were proposed for a more effective and accountable democratic control and oversight.

46. The session also highlighted the 'Model Police Law for Africa' passed by the Pan-African Parliament (with the close collaboration of APCOF) as well as the 'Common (Policing) Standards Indicators for East Africa' and how a similar initiative for West Africa might align with the ECOWAS SSRG Policy and national policing law and practice. The Model Police Law for Africa translates the principles of democratic policing into a legislative instrument which can be adapted for use at a national level, or used as a template based on which national legislation can be reviewed or developed. It also explored what these might contribute to common/shared policing norms in West Africa, and the challenges they may pose particularly in West Africa where the variety of colonial and post-colonial policing traditions and practices present a particularly complicated terrain of policing structures and organs.

47. It was noted that efforts by the Pan-African Parliament to develop the model law are complementary to existing initiatives by the African Union Steering Committee on Security Sector Reform, and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, as well as support security reform efforts at the Regional Economic Communities such as the ECOWAS SSRG and national levels.

48. Following the presentation, participants engaged in a discussion on how to address issues arising from situations where a case is reported to the police and follows through the process to court, and at the same time a Parliamentary Committee of Enquiry is set up to investigate such case. Upon thoughtful reflections, the facilitator recommended that clarifying roles and making the mandates of each organisation known to all stakeholders is critical.

49. The group exercise covered the following:

- a. Identify the key SSR priorities facing the Gambian Police Services.
- b. Discuss how oversight mechanisms and processes can contribute to addressing this.



- c. What needs to be done in the short medium and long term.
- d. What can you commit to in terms of taking this forward.

50. With regards to the key SSR priorities facing the Gambia Police Service, participants stressed on the need to revise the policies and legal frameworks, and to fast-track the adjudication of cases. On how the oversight mechanisms can address this, they mentioned advocacy for budget increments, resource mobilization, dissemination of information, branding and media advocacy. Participants also identified what needs to be done in the short, medium, and long term to include: capacity building, provision of logistics and adequate manpower, infrastructural development, addressing welfare issues, strengthening police operations, and make police conduct fair, transparent and accountable to restrain abuse of power. Participants further identified commitments to take police reforms forward in the Gambia to include finance, political will and commitment of the leadership at all levels.

## Session V: Corrections, Human Rights, Safety and Security – Uju Agomoh

51. The presentation alluded to the fact that corrections and prison/incarceration systems in Africa have tended to receive very little attention or priority in Security Sector Reform and Governance. Many consider the area ‘unsexy’, even though this sector is one where the rule of law is tested, and hence often the site of routine (even horrendous) human rights abuses.

52. The presentation addressed three broad themes:

- a. Corrections, Justice and Security Sector Reforms: this aspect highlighted the importance of effective interface between correction, justice and the security sector as well as the role of corrections in promoting justice and SSR.
- b. Corrections and Human Rights: this aspect focused on human rights principles guiding prisons/correctional services, the rationale for observance of the human rights principles, the gaps in practices, and practical steps towards promoting compliance. It also touched on international, regional, and national human rights instruments.
- c. Community Corrections and Safety and Security in the Communities: this aspect focused on how safety and security can be promoted in communities through effective engagement and utilization of community correctional approaches.

53. The Prisons Service or Correctional Service is an important institution in the criminal justice sector. Any reform of the criminal justice sector which does not include the Correctional Service will be ineffective and unsustainable because, the correctional system plays an important role in public safety and security as the “key holder” of the justice sector. Maintaining the correct balance between security, control and justice is the key to effective correctional administration. To achieve this, security, control and justice must be balanced in a way that ensures that inmates are not restricted more than is necessary and that imprisonment is only for the purposes of restricting liberty and not an opportunity for torture and other human rights abuses.



54. The presentation concluded that at any point when someone is in incarceration, we should all be reminded that the person was once free with dignity and that human dignity needs to be respected and protected even while incarcerated. More so, some prisoners could be innocent but have been charged either because of weak of evidence, or in some cases wrong judgment or technicalities. Others are also culprits of petty offences and not necessarily criminals.

55. Participants called on political leaders to prioritize and take on prisons reform more aggressively and also address economic hardships which lead most people into the crimes that land them in the prisons. Recommendations on holistic prisons/corrections reform considered a tri-dimensional approach: intra, inter and multi-sectoral approach, whole of government approach, and whole of society approach.

## Session VI: Maritime Security and Governance and Management of Maritime Threats - Osato Anastasia Eruaga

56. The presentation was premised on the fact that the maritime environment remains an actual and potential source of wealth creation for global economies, including countries in the Gulf of Guinea (GoG). Particularly, the GoG region has strategic maritime resources including fisheries and abundant offshore hydrocarbons. The region is a strategic maritime route, connecting 25 percent of African maritime traffic and has nearly 20 commercial seaports. Harnessing the resources and the opportunities connected to the maritime environment contribute to the resilience of communities, strengthen state potentials, and reduce broad-based vulnerabilities. However, key to optimal utilisation of maritime resources and potential is the concept of maritime governance through which interests of states are protected and rights and responsibilities are determined.

57. In the absence of properly governed maritime spaces, vulnerabilities are created which potentially affect regional and global stability. These vulnerabilities pave way for the perpetuation of seaborne threats, stifling the resilience of coastal communities, retarding economic development and heightening security exposures of the state, with a ripple effect on other jurisdictions. The security sector remains essential to addressing governance vulnerabilities, especially through maritime defence and policing capabilities. It is thus imperative that states in the region adopt appropriately coordinated reforms based on a nuanced understanding of existing and developing challenges to ensure the proper management of maritime security threats and strengthen maritime governance.

58. The presentation explored the linkages between SSRG and the effective management/governance of the maritime space. It also considered the variety and significance of seaborne threats and crimes as well as their management as an essential avenue of tackling and reducing broader instability and stimulating development in the states in the region. It further connects maritime security governance to the comprehensive SSRG framework and highlights how collaborative and coordinated approaches promote law and consolidate gains in democracies.

59. The maritime environment was described as ‘all areas and things of, on, under, relating to, adjacent to, or bordering on a sea, ocean, or other navigable waterway, including all maritime-related activities, infrastructure, people, cargo, and vessels and other conveyances’. The maritime space is divided into five zones: internal waters, territorial waters, contiguous zone, exclusive economic zone, and the High Sea. The legal boundaries of the oceans and air space were explained, and the presentation also emphasized that the happenings at sea are intrinsically linked to what occurs on land.



60. Considerable time was dedicated to discussing the challenges of maritime security, particularly as it relates to The Gambia. Illegal Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing was one of the key challenges identified. For the Gambia, this typically happens on the high seas and the country lacks the capacity to monitor the threats. The lack of enforcement of maritime laws was also noted. Participants further bemoaned other challenges including human, drug and arms trafficking and illegal dumping of waste.

61. The following reasons were adduced as to why responses to the challenge of maintaining maritime security have not been impactful:

- a. emphasis on developing navies and military capacity when the problems require law enforcement, environmental control, and maritime safety;
- b. a failure of onshore ministries and other government entities to coordinate their activities, pool their resources, and cooperate regionally and internationally to address the concerns-being territorial about the respective agency’s mandate cause by overlapping laws or limited capacities; and



- c. the failure to identify the need for populace to own the problem.

62. Participants concluded the session by mapping the various institutions which should be involved in addressing maritime challenges in the Gambia and their respective roles:

- a. Ministry of Justice – development of maritime security laws and prosecution of offenders.
- b. Office of National Security – Coordination of Maritime Security Regulations in the waters.
- c. Centre for Policy and Strategic Studies – research and capacity building.
- d. African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights – research and stakeholder capacity building.
- e. Prisons – Custody of arrested suspects.
- f. Media – reporting and dissemination of information on maritime security related issues.
- g. Ministry of Foreign Affairs – national interests, territorial Integrity, international agreements and cooperation.
- h. CSOs – Advocacy, research, capacity building, monitoring and reporting, sensitization and awareness creation.
- i. Military/police – Defence of the country’s territorial waters, monitoring and surveillance capacity, enforcement of and prosecution of offenders, sea rescue capability and capacity.
- j. Navy – Maritime defence and safety, maritime response and crisis management.
- k. Immigration – control, supervise, manage entry points.
- l. Drug Law Enforcement Agency – Drug interceptions at sea, intelligence collection and analysis, collaboration with sister security institution.
- m. National Human Rights Commission – monitoring and reporting of Human Rights, advise government on laws and policies related to maritime security.

## Session VII: Effective Management of External Support to SSR in The Gambia – Alexander Burain

63. The background to this presentation indicated that The Gambia has received massive international support to various elements of SSRG. There are currently over 14 active donors providing support to SSRG in The Gambia, with others also providing *ad hoc* or remote support. To ensure that such assistance leads to impactful results, are sustainable and reinforce national reform priorities, there is a need at national level to build an effective system of management of external aid. Such a system should ensure alignment with development priorities as outlined in national SSR policy frameworks, transparency, predictability of aid, and even national ownership of such aid. Equally, there is a need for considering financial sustainability and affordability of the aid that is given, and effective oversight/accountability for how such aid is used. The session covered important issues of planning, security sector expenditure, linking priorities of policies with implementation priorities, and the role of various stakeholders in management of external support.

64. The session featured a role play/simulation of a real-life experience where a few police officers arrested some people for different crimes and offences and brought them to a prosecutor to investigate the crimes. They followed the process and some of the culprits went into pretrial detention while others went to prison which was depicted as overcrowded and gender insensitive.



A donor steps in to identify the challenges in the system, saying: it's the police, so more police personnel are required. Later, another identified the problem as the judicial system, so judges are required. The role play portrayed how external support can come in but may not necessarily address the root causes of some of the challenges.

65. Therefore, the presentation emphasized the need for political leadership to conduct internal assessment to identify the security needs of the country and its people and take ownership of the process by convincing donors of what their needs are rather than have donors dictate to them what donors think their needs are. There was a caution, however, to the effect that while donor assistance is helpful, its use should be meaningfully coordinated. Donor assistance is finite and optimal use of it should be made while it lasts since donor fatigue may set in. In granting external support to SSRG, it was advised that donors must be mindful of the peculiar context and local circumstances; a country should not be considered a homogenous entity since different segments of the population have different security needs.

66. It was further observed that the preclusion of the armed forces in internal security is a mirage. Without the navy for instance, it is difficult to patrol the waters in connection with maritime security. With regards to oversight, lawyers were identified as vital oversight entities to take up cases against the injustices in the system.

67. Participants appreciated the detailed analysis of and exposure to the Gambia's security sector and noted that the Gambian Police are doing their best under the prevailing circumstances. However, when state attorneys are involved in the process, they typically don't get all the necessary evidence from the police, so cases go back and forth which accentuates the need for lawyers in the prosecution process and a more open, fair, and speedy system.

68. It was noted that, given that different donors come in with little or no sense of coordination on how to move the SSRG agenda forward, they mostly end up doing their own thing rather than coordinate with others so progress is at best minimal.

69. A key challenge identified by participants is misplaced priorities in SSRG in The Gambia. Typically, capacity is a huge gap usually presented to donors. However, when there is a director level capacity building event like training, the directors assign junior staff to participate. Yet, the same directors will rather go for capacity building programmes held outside the country and designed for junior staff just because of the allowances they will receive.



## DAY THREE

### Session VIII: Gender and Security Sector Reform: Women, Youth, CSOs and SSR – Titilope Ajayi

70. While gender mainstreaming is generally accepted as a key component of any successful process of reform in the security sector, and embedded in a number of international and regional instruments, in reality progress in realizing this goal, and translating the instruments into national legislation and action have been modest overall owing to a variety of challenges. The challenges range from lack of political will to weak, ineffective or misconceived policies and strategies for implementation, to name a few. This session reviewed the international and regional frameworks and guidelines on gender, peace and security, focusing in particular on the AU SSR Policy Framework, including the Operational Guidance Notes (OGN) on Gender and SSR, and the experiences and lessons learned from their implementation, in addition to exploring broader national experiences and case studies relating to gender, security, and security governance.

71. More often than not, CSOs rather than states or security institutions have been at the cutting edge of the movement to engender SSR, in particular through the work of women's organizations and feminist groups. The session also discussed how CSOs can strengthen their capacities and knowledge on SSR, and also their ability to engage security sector operatives, collaborate with them, and monitor their compliance with regard to principles of gender equity.

72. Participants viewed a video titled 'We should all be feminists'. The video narrated the personal experiences of a feminist and the extent to which society and cultural inclinations influenced marginalization of women, particularly in Africa. In the debriefing session, participants shared lessons learned and how it applied to the security sector in the Gambia. They asserted that cultural values indeed influence gender immensely as men are seen to be stronger. Also, because men are viewed to be wealthy, when a man enters a public place with a woman, the attention of customer service is focused on the man while the woman is completely ignored. Such cultural values, mindsets and norms have restricted female participation in the security sector. The few women who strive to make headway typically do not get high up the ranks. Hence, the saying, 'in the security sector, the higher you go, the fewer the women'.



73. The gender problem was identified as a social construct, created by society because people's perceptions are based on what society makes them see and believe. The debriefing concluded on the note that it is not naturally inbuilt for women to be softer or the weaker sex (nature) but rather, it is the exposure and orientation society gives them (nurture) that makes them believe and act in that manner. Consequently, if boys and girls are raised to perform the same roles, they are bound to grow up doing the same things and there will be no room for women to think that they are good for specific domestic roles only.

74. On the best approach to the issue of culture and gender, participants suggested a reorientation at all levels of society, in a subtle manner and over a long period. They indicated that the approach of condemning what exists will hardly work. The need to tailor the approach to the context and showcase how empowering women can be beneficial to the entire society was equally emphasized.

75. The key gender and SSRG issues and challenges in the Gambia were identified as:

- a. Few female officers at the decision-making level.
- b. Gender not mainstreamed into policy and practice.
- c. Lack of institutional policies: affirmative action on recruitment, training and promotion.
- d. Inadequate awareness creation of the opportunities in the security sector in communities.
- e. Lack of resources for capacity building.

76. Mainstreaming gender into policy and practice was seen as key to improving female participation in the security sector in The Gambia.



## Session IX: What Is SSR Coordination, and Why Is It Essential? Lessons from Sierra Leone – Francis Keili

77. This session shared the practical experience of Sierra Leone in developing and implementing a coordinated Security Sector Reform, while highlighting the critical challenges inherent in its SSR coordination. It also shared the role that the development of the National Security Strategy played in crystalizing the foundation for SSR coordination; and the existing hybrid National Security Architecture which enhances security sector service delivery. Participants were also enlightened on why SSR coordination is essential, the technical and political challenges involved, Sierra Leone's experiences with SSR coordination, and the relevance of the lessons learned for The Gambia.

78. Three elements of the Sierra Leonean experience were highlighted:

- a. The role of the development of the National Security Strategy in Sierra Leone as a catalyst for SSR coordination.
- b. The hybrid and decentralized National Security Architecture designed by Sierra Leone as part of its post-conflict security sector service delivery.
- c. The link between SSR and development – specifically the country's (first ever) poverty reduction strategy.

79. The presentation stressed that, while others perceive Sierra Leone's SSRG experience as a model, it was only achieved by dint of hard work and commitment. The post-conflict national government inherited a very poor security sector which had to be reformed to meet the security needs of a post-conflict nation. Eighty percent (80%) of the funding came from the United Kingdom which also provided technical guidance and ensured that Sierra Leoneans took leadership and ownership of the process.

80. While this was immensely helpful, the end of the UK funding to the SSRG process culminated in critical challenges including the lack of political will to further commit funds to the process, problems of professionalism due to high attrition rate in the security sector, weak security sector oversight mechanisms, and lack of civil society inclusion in the security process.

### DIALOGUE/PANEL:

#### National Leadership and Coordination of SSR in The Gambia

81. The afternoon session of Day 3, facilitated by national stakeholders, was dedicated to a dialogue on National Leadership and Coordination of SSR. Led by two representatives of CSOs from WANEP (male) and WAVE (female), participants deliberated on the following:

- a. Promoting National Dialogue and Coordination of SSRG: The ECOWAS model of Interagency Working Group or National Task Force.



b. National Coordination of SSR in The Gambia: Enhancing Internal and External Coordination.

82. Participants delved deeper into the concept and lived reality of human security. It was explained that human security constitutes the new dimension of SSR especially in The Gambian context. The emerging security threats include youth unemployment, rise in crime and criminality among young people. Human security was articulated to include the protection of lives, property, and the realisation of the needs and aspirations of the people. Emerging security threats identified include the incidents in Foni involving the Senegalese forces under the ECOMIG and the MFDC rebels in Casamance. The crisis affected residents of some villages in the Foni area. Other burning security issues identified include the issue of land ownership and allocation, high cost of living, political and ethnic polarisation, petty crimes and banditry, drug trafficking among others.

83. Participants indicated that the Honourable Minister of Justice is the chairperson of the SSR committee, and the Ministry deals with the drafting of laws for the enhancement of the SSR program. The Police Bill, The Armed Forces Bill, the Intelligence Bill are some relevant laws the Ministry is currently working on which are expected to help in the implementation of the reform agenda. Implementation of the TRRC recommendations was also identified as a critical element of the reform. The Ministry of Justice is also responsible for the recommendations including an aspect of reforming the security sector so as to meet democratic standards and norms.

84. Participants reflected that human security is essential to the realisation of the Gambia's SSR process which they believe should create a safe environment, healthy citizenry, and the enjoyment of rights including education, justice, etc. Citizen participation was underlined by many as essential in the process.

85. It was flagged that the Gambia Fire and Rescue Services (GFRS) was less prioritised among security agencies in the whole SSR process. The need for a reform of the GFRS was emphasized, noting that their work is mainly on human security which SSR prioritises. Therefore, neglecting the GFRS in the process is a recipe for a failed SSR implementation.

86. The importance of effective coordination between various security institutions and other national stakeholders/actors relevant in the implementation of the SSR programme was highlighted.

## Recommendations

87. Participants made the following additional recommendations to promote SSRG and improve peace, security and stability in The Gambia:

- a. Robust enhancement of inter-agency collaboration as a necessity in the SSR process. The National Security Bill which is currently submitted to cabinet should be urgently and intensively popularised among the citizenry.



- b. The National Security Bill should be enacted by the National Assembly to enable the ONS play its rightful role and mandate within a legal framework. However, the National Security Bill and Intelligence Bill are a seeming overlap or duplication of efforts. Considering that the two bodies are separate and the Office of National Security serves as the coordinating institution of security policies, it is only prudent that a separate Bill is created. This will also legitimise the existence and operation of the Office of National Security.
- c. Urgently establish an inter-agency committee which should be coordinated by the ONS for the smooth implementation of the SSR strategy and programmes.
- d. Reform of the education system should be prioritized to curb crimes and criminality as many of those involved in crimes and banditry are young school dropouts. Therefore, rise in crime rates is not only related to unemployment but a poor education system.
- e. The National Council for Civic Education should be involved in peace education and creating awareness among the citizenry on the SSR process. Also, involve CSOs in all deliberation and for a successful implementation of the reform programme as their role as gatekeepers and connectors to the grassroots is crucial.
- f. Traditional leaders should be involved and their role defined in the SSR process. This will promote local ownership, national/local leadership and coordination.
- g. Integrate periodic evaluation and review of the progress of the SSR process.

88. Based on the interactive evaluation session, participants recommended the following for subsequent trainings:

- a. Improve on time management
- b. Increase number of days since the three days was too packed and did not allow ample time for discussion and dialogue.
- c. Consider the award of certificates of participation at the end of the workshop.
- d. Expand participation to more stakeholders including CSOs, the National Assembly, disaster management agency, Ministry of Environment, among others.

## Conclusion

89. The high level of engagement at the workshop was a testament to the participants understanding of SSRG in general, its value, and how the process has evolved in the Gambia. However, moving from policy to practice remains a major challenge. This was blamed on the lack of political will and the dearth of coordination among donors and partners working on the security sector.

90. The need for concrete action to promote the role of women and the youth in SSRG remained at the core of the discussions and stakeholders hoped for more engagement on the subject beyond the workshop.

91. Participants expressed their gratitude to the convening partners for such an enlightening and engaging workshop and suggested more of such interactions subsequently. They also stressed the need for follow-up evaluation to ascertain the impact and progress with the training received.



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92. Participants opted to create a WhatsApp group to keep the rich interaction going beyond the workshop. They were also encouraged to reach out to the partners whenever they require advisory or technical assistance.

93. A representative of the ASSN Resource team, Prof. Benjamin Kunbuor, who is also currently working for the African Union on SSRG in The Gambia, closed the training workshop with remarks on how relevant and timely this workshop was to the Gambia and ECOWAS Member States in general. He appreciated the partners for conceptualizing and implementing such a germane project and acknowledged the active engagement by participants. He encouraged participants to take up the mantle and work collaboratively with key stakeholders to change the current narrative on SSRG in The Gambia.