

Introductory Remarks at the
New Directions in Security Sector Reform Workshop

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Good morning, bonjour, et bienvenue au Centre de recherches pour le développement international. It is my pleasure to welcome you to the International Development Research Centre and to open the New Directions in Security Sector Reform workshop.

Security sector reform, including judicial and legal reform, has assumed an increasingly prominent role on the international policy agenda since the late 1990s. It has been linked with debates on poverty alleviation, sustainable development, professionalisation of security services, democratic governance, and conflict mitigation.

Canada's new international policy statement identifies the reform of the security sector as one of five core pillars of good governance. Supporting civil society engagement in the development of security policies and civilian oversight of transparent and accountable security systems are important contributions to conflict prevention, sustainable development, and democratic governance.

For several years now, IDRC's Peace, Conflict and Development program initiative has supported a variety of security sector reform research projects, exploring a number of different aspects of this agenda: for example, examining national security practices of South African states and the impact of democratic practices and democratic deficits on approaches to national and regional security. A second example is an initiative in Guatemala that supported capacity building and strengthening of civil society actors through improving access to information on State responsibility of security, the role of citizens in security, and the functions and responsibilities of security and defence institutions in a democracy.

This workshop is a core component of a three-part process that is designed to better target IDRC's research programming around issues of security sector reform by taking stock of commissioned research, learning from results, elaborating particular challenges, and identifying requirements for effective research. With the participation of our research partners and colleagues from the Canadian government and civil society, the discussion and debate over the next two days will be both interesting and forward-looking in terms of programming, policy influencing, and policy-making.

Dr. Nicole Ball and Dr. Dylan Hendrickson will begin the discussion with an overview of current trends in policy developments and scholarly debates, particularly with respect to the impact of the 9/11 attacks and the perceived shift away from human security towards more traditional security concerns. In addition to examining existing research initiatives, Nicole and Dylan will also map out future directions and new avenues for security sector programming.

We will also have an opportunity to hear from our research partners from Guatemala and Africa. Although our programming on security sector reform has focused on Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa, we are interested in exploring this agenda in South Asia and the Middle East. To give us a sense of current debates in South Asia on security sector reform, we will have an opportunity to learn about military reform in Indonesia — a new democracy and the third largest in the world.

Finally, Dr. Jenny Pearce and Dr. Sam Amoo will present evaluations of IDRC-supported research in Guatemala and in Sub-Saharan Africa. These findings will provide insight on how IDRC has helped to build and support research that influences policy and democratic auditing capacities in security sector reform.

We also hope that, over the next two days, we will all gain a better understanding of security sector reform-related work in other world regions, and identify potential synergies and possibilities for collaborative work.

I thank you for your participation in this workshop.