

Address by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Honorable Sue van der Merwe, to the Pretoria Diplomatic Association, on the occasion of the Seminar on Multidimensional and Integrated Peace Operations – Trends and Challenges: Experiences from West Africa, Sandton Convention Centre, 20 September 2007

Your Excellency, Mr Raymond Johansen
Vice Minister of Norway
Distinguished guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my honour to be here today together with Vice Minister Johansen to open this seminar convening to discuss one of the most pertinent issues of our time, namely the global effort to create conditions for human security in all its multidimensional forms. Your Excellency welcome to South Africa and I trust that you will have a pleasant stay during your visit.

In the same manner that unilateral and multilateral approaches to global politics uneasily exist side-by-side, so too do the concepts of state and human security.

The convening of this seminar is therefore quite opportune given the historical cynicism about future of state-civil society relations. This is particularly so on our continent where the trend towards democratisation is gaining momentum and thus posing a direct challenge to the traditional role of the state as the central actor in both domestic and international politics. In the same manner that this assumption was and continues to be challenged in other parts of the world so is it being challenged in our own continent.

The topic of this seminar, namely *Multidimensional and Integrated Peace Operations – Trends and Challenges*, presents us with an ideal opportunity to re-examine the effectiveness of partnerships between states and civil society in trying to resolving contemporary challenges we face on the continent in particular addressing the underlying causes of conflict and finding lasting peace solutions.

Reflecting on our own experience based on our involvement in peace operations in the continent and beyond, we have come to appreciate the complexity and multidimensional nature of African conflicts. Bringing an end to the destruction associated with it requires a complex integration and structuring of a number of capabilities and functions. Over the last two years, our government has been grappling with finding ways and means to address the challenges associated with producing effective and efficient integrated peace missions.

We hold the view that at the heart of designing a successful peace mission is the ability to simultaneously dismantle war economies and systems of profiteering and plundering that sustain conflict, whilst replacing these with economies that produce public goods to all citizens. This view of course is premised on our foreign policy vision of an African continent, which is prosperous, peaceful, democratic, non-racial, non-sexist and united

and which contributes to a world that is just and equitable. In our efforts to realise this vision, we are guided by the African Union's (AU's) Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Framework (PCRD), which finds resonance in the United Nations' Multidimensional and Integrated Peace Operations.

From our standpoint African Union and United Nations efforts provide a foundation from which we can start to redefine security to include the human aspects in the implementation of peace operations. Defined from integrated, rather than a purely state-centric perspective, the concept security assumes a much broader dimension entailing the establishment of a safe and secure environment within which the civilian components could carry out their humanitarian, peace making, peace building and reconstruction tasks. Such a broadening of the definition of security therefore transcends traditional definitions which were solely about protecting state sovereignty against external aggression.

A broadening of the definition of security will therefore as a matter of course therefore also necessitate the formation of state-civil society partnerships to be able to come up with new understandings and meanings of security in a changed global environment. In his report entitled "In Larger Freedom" former Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Anan argued that:

Sovereign States are the basic and indispensable building blocks of

the international system. It is their job to guarantee the rights of their citizens, to protect them from crime, violence and aggression, and to provide the framework of freedom under law in which individuals can prosper and society develop. If States are fragile, the peoples of the world will not enjoy the security, development and justice that are their right. Therefore, one of the great challenges of the new millennium is to ensure that all States are strong enough to meet the many challenges they face.

He goes on to argued that:

States, however, cannot do the job alone. We need an active civil society and a dynamic private sector. Both occupy an increasingly large and important share of the space formerly reserved for States alone, and it is plain that the goals outlined here will not be achieved without their full engagement.

In its 1997 report entitled "The State in a Changing World", the World Bank argues that:

A state that ignores the needs of large segments of its population is not a capable state. And with the best will in the world, a government is unlikely to meet collective needs efficiently if it does not know what those needs are. Reinvigorating public institutions must begin by bringing government closer to people. In certain settings, it may also mean decentralizing government power and resources.

These ladies and gentlemen, are some of the challenges that we are grappling with in an effort to create a better African and a better. Hopefully, through your deliberations

here today you will be able to bring us closer to this ideal. It is also further worth noting that your seminar comes hot on the heels of the 61 st session of the United Nations General Assembly, which has amongst its agenda items peace and security; economic growth and sustainable development; development of Africa; human rights; and humanitarian assistance, to mention just a few.

As you can see, there are a lot of parallels between what you will be discussing and what is happening at a global level and we hope that with the benefit of such a multidisciplinary group of people, we will engage in a vibrant and fruitful discussion. I would now like to highlight a few points, which you may wish to further discuss, critique or evaluate as part of your deliberations over the next two days.

The first of these relates to the relationship between the desired impacts of multidimensional mandates and the concept of integrated missions. Take for example the complex challenges posed by conflicts in Africa, which require AU policy coordination to ensure clear division of labour, set priorities and to develop principles to guide planning and implementation. Experience has shown that the complex challenges posed by these conflicts require us to go beyond the traditional notion of state sovereignty in which military force was regarded as the predominant measure of a state's power. Consequently such an approach focused on treating the symptoms rather than the root causes that ignited the violence.

An analysis of the United Nation's Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) literature reveals that the traditional approach to peace operations was the preferred mode of dealing with conflict. Typically then, such an approach would tend to be state-centric and exclude other stakeholders within the affected society resulted in extended periods of instability as a result of the threat that conflicts may flare up again due to lack of proper post-conflict support mechanisms. The Brahimi Report highlighted these limitations, which led to the United Nations introducing multidimensional and integrated peace operations, which rely of mutually reinforcing civil and military interventions. I therefore ask the question, can the West African case studies serve as models for future peace operations and if so what success factors can we build on to ensure sustainable peace?

A second and closely related point is with regards to how can these integrated missions be implemented. Some nagging questions remain for policy makers, including how to assess and evaluate integration and its impact. What should be the key structures around which the various elements and actors could be integrated? Is form more important than substance? Clearly it is no longer enough to address security concerns by merely creating a safe and secure environment at the expense of accountable and professional defence and security forces operating under responsible civilian control and oversight.

By the same process of analysis, experience has shown us that we can no longer to see state security as an end in itself without any post-conflict socio-economic reconstruction and development programme. Socio-economic development is a Multidimensional and Integrated Peace Operation's process that contributes to improved living conditions. As

we all know, the long-term goal of peace operations in general is to place the affected country on the path of sustainable socio-economic development. However, the immediate objective of any post-conflict reconstruction plan is to accelerate short-term socio-economic recovery creating enabling conditions for rehabilitation and delivering peace dividends. Herein lies the attraction of the multidimensional and integrated peace operations for they take into account all the other possible elements around which are relevant in coming up with lasting peace solutions.

The third point relates to how integrated missions can contribute to an efficient transition from peacekeeping to peace building. In the same vein as the formulation of the state-centric model of security, peacekeeping has for a long time been the hallmark of United Nations Missions. Beyond that however not conscious mechanisms were put in place to ensure that countries coming out of conflict situations did not relapse after the withdrawal of these Missions. Peace building seeks to close this vacuum.

Typically, the constituent elements of peace building include building up local capacities, strengthening civil society, restoring essential infrastructure and commercial relations. If we are to understand peace building within the context of the Multidimensional and Integrated Peace Operations process, it would entail co-operation between the state and civil society to empower communities within the affected populations to implement sustainable peace supporting operations. No one can doubt the veracity of this proposition. However, you need to engage in further discuss to determine whether as a country, as a continent or indeed as the community of nations we have gone far enough to develop effective post-conflict support mechanisms and if there are any shortcomings, what are these and how do we address them.

The fourth point that we will need to address is how these integrated missions can contribute to a more demographically and gender sensitive approach to peacekeeping and peace building. In our quest to create a just and equal world, I am certain that beyond using blanket terms such as civil society, we would also wish to go a step further and disaggregate what this concept entails. For example, in conflict situation the civilian population becomes the primary target of violence, but men and women tend to experience conflict differently. The experience of women and girls in armed conflict is a reflection of both gender relations and women's status in society.

Peace operations must therefore be informed by these differentiated effects of conflict and should seek to protect women's rights and ensure that are integrated in all action promoting peace, implementing peace agreements, resolving conflict and restructuring war-torn societies. If peace operations are to succeed in ensuring a sustainable peace and long-term reconciliation based on democratic principles and internationally recognised human rights, it is crucial that their activities and policies uphold the principles of gender equality and non-discrimination. Therefore, any credible peace operation should have a gender component.

The fifth point relates to the training implications of the integrated mission concept. As I have already indicated earlier on, the nature of conflicts, particularly within our continent has grown more complex and requires us as a government seized with the

task of promoting a peaceful Africa to develop the requisite capacities and functions. In recognition of this challenge, we tasked one of our science councils, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) to undertake research to enable us to draw as baseline of systems and process requirements for integrated missions as well as identify gaps in our current portfolio of responses. Based on these findings we can then look at coming up with tailor made programmes to address specific training requirements working in partnership with civil society, bilaterally with countries such as Norway as well as within the multilateral framework of the United Nations.

The sixth point I wish to highlight for further elaboration is how can integrated missions facilitate effective disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants; as well as how can they facilitate security sector reform.

The seventh and final point how can the independence and delivery of humanitarian assistance safeguarded within the framework of integrated missions? The apparent increasing number of attacks on humanitarian personnel, as highlighted in recent media reports is of grave concern to South Africa. The only outcome of actions such as this, is that the people worst affected by conflict, namely the elderly, women and children, do not receive the support and assistance they require for their survival.

South Africa supports the involvement of organisations such as the International Council of the Red Cross as an impartial, neutral, and independent organization which aim to “protect the lives and dignity of victims of war and internal violence and to provide them with assistance.” We also support co-ordination of international relief as well as its work to promote and strengthen humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles. To demonstrate our commitment towards this ideal, for the past two years we have played host to the 6 th and 7 th Regional Seminars on International Humanitarian Law.

I have already alluded to the importance we place on working in concert with civil society, other countries and multilateral institutions to enhance our understanding and capacity to implement multidimensional and integrated peace operations. I wish to emphasise however that we believe that a reformed United Nations remains the only body that can guarantee the achievement of these objectives. At the same time also encourage the development of close working relations between the United Nations and the Africa Union. This we do so based on our appreciation of the fact that the application of Multidimensional and Integrated Peace Operation does not take place in vacuum, but within the context of the emerging African Union security architecture and is informed by its Post Conflict, Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) Programme.

In the same vein that I have argued for the integration of a civil society component into state-led peace operations, I also wish to make the case for the extension of United Nations-African Union co-operation to incorporate regional mechanisms as building blocks of successful peace operations. In the same manner that successful post-conflict peace building can be enhanced through the involvement of civil society, assigning a prominent role to regional organisation allows both the United Nations and the African

Union to build on their comparative advantage, experience, established frameworks and mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution.

In conclusion, it is therefore clear that a definition of security based on traditional assumptions is no longer tenable in an environment in which human security is under serious threat. In this regard, Multidimensional and Integrated Peace Operations provides us with the ideal opportunity to start to address these challenges.

I wish you well in your deliberations and look forward to the outcomes of this seminar.

I thank you.