



Unofficial Summary High-Level Workshop

“Arab Perspectives on The Future of the UN Peace and Security Architecture: Towards a Timely, Collective and Effective Response”

1-2 March 2016

Cairo, Egypt

Background

1. On its 70th anniversary, the United Nations (UN) finds itself confronting a myriad of threats to global peace and security. In fulfilling its primary promise to *“save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”*, the UN faces a gap between expectations between of what it is to achieve and what it is actually accomplishing on the ground.
2. Against this backdrop, timely and potentially groundbreaking reviews of the UN peacekeeping operations¹ and peacebuilding architecture² were carried out last year to take stock of UN involvement in peace and security and to recommend necessary reforms.
3. Although the reviews were initiated independently of each other³, the outcomes they produced create room for synergies and a basis for shared recommendations, that would if implemented enhance the capacity of the UN – including its Member States and in partnership with regional organizations - to act coherently to prevent, manage and resolve conflict and to sustain peace; it is hoped.
4. To draw conclusions from the larger picture in which the outcomes of the UN peace and security reviews connect, the President of the General Assembly Mogens

1 Report of the High Level Independent Panel on the Review of Peacekeeping Operations:

http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2015/446.

2 Review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture:

http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/65/7.

3 In addition to the peacekeeping and the peacebuilding reviews, a review of the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security was also conducted last year.



Lykketoft (PGA) has taken the initiative to organize a **“High-Level Thematic Debate of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) on UN, Peace and Security”**. Scheduled for 10-11 May 2016, the debate will provide a platform for member states to reflect on the recommendations of the reviews, with the aim of identifying synergies, bridging gaps, and easing potential tensions. The ultimate objective of this initiative is to identify priority areas and present recommendations for systematic and realistic reforms at the UN, that enjoys the support of the majority of its members.

The Arab Perspectives High-Level Workshop

5. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt (EMFA) has contributed substantially to the UN review processes, including by providing fora for African and Arab voices to reflect on these important discussions. In November 2014, the **Cairo Center for Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping in Africa (CCCRA)** organized an international workshop on **“African Perspectives of Peacebuilding: Identifying Gaps, Challenges and Opportunities”**⁴, in collaboration with the UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) and the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). In March 2015, CCCRA organized the **“Arab Consultations of the High Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations”**⁵.

6. As part of the preparatory process aimed at informing the UNGA High-Level Thematic Debate, the Cairo Center - in partnership with EMFA - and with the support of international partners⁶, organized a High-Level Workshop on 1-2 March 2016, titled:

“Arab Perspectives on the Future of the UN Peace and Security Architecture: Towards a Timely, Collective and Effective Response”

⁴ <http://www.cairopeacekeeping.org/en/think-tank/conferences-and-workshops/details/1>.

⁵ <http://www.cairopeacekeeping.org/en/think-tank/conferences-and-workshops/details/53>.

⁶ CCCRA would like to take this opportunity to thank the Government of Japan (GoJ), the Government of Finland, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Crisis Management Center of Finland (CMC) for their support of this event.



7. The Workshop saw the participation of 120 participants, including high-level officials from Egypt and the Arab world, representatives of the League of Arab States, the African Union, UN agencies, members of the UN review panels, Arab think tanks and eminent experts, and the diplomatic community in Cairo. A total of fifty-five countries were represented at this event.

8. Director of CCCPA, **Ashraf Swelam** paid tribute to H.E. Boutros Boutros Ghali (1922-2016). PGA **Mogens Lykketoft** addressed the opening session via video message. This was followed by the opening remarks of:

- **H.E. Hamdy Loza**, Deputy Foreign Minister of Egypt;
- **H.E. Amre Moussa**, Chairman of CCCPA's International Advisory Board and Former Secretary General of the League of Arab States (LAS);
- **H.E. Ahmed Benhelli**, Deputy Secretary General of LAS;
- **H.E. Hesham Badr**, Assistant Foreign Minister for Multilateral Affairs and International Security;
- **H.E. El-Ghassim Wane**, Assistant UN Secretary General for Peace Operations.

Summary of Discussions

9. The PGA's initiative to convene a UNGA high-level thematic debate on the role of the UN in matters of peace and security was unanimously welcomed. The initiative of EMFA and CCCPA to organize the workshop was also unanimously praised, for providing a unique opportunity for a regional reflection from the Arab World on the key recommendations of the UN reviews, with the aim of contributing to the ongoing debate on the future UN peace and security architecture.

UN Reform

10. Participants addressed the credibility challenges facing the UN in the Arab world, in particular perceptions regarding its role in conflict resolution in the region.

11. Participants highlighted that enhancing UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding is not the same as reforming the UN. The latter address issues related to UN decision-



making processes and empowering all its member states. Some participants emphasized that any UN reform should address issues, such as:

- Expanding the membership of the UN Security Council (UNSC).
- Addressing the question of the veto and its potential impact on blocking action endorsed by the international community at large (many Arab participants referred to the Palestinian issue as a staggering example of such inaction).
- Empowering the GA to play its role in the maintenance of international peace and security. UNGA resolution 377 A, also known as "**Uniting for Peace**", should be revisited and revitalized. This will empower the UNGA to act in cases of where the UNSC, because of a lack of unanimity amongst its five permanent members, fails to act as required to maintain international peace and security.

The Primacy of Politics: Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution

12.The Arab world is undergoing a major transformation as a result of the events of the last five years. The region is dealing with multiple and concurrent crises that are undermining the notion of the Arab nation-state and the very fabric of Arab societies.

13.While some of the UN peacekeeping and special political missions (PKOs and SPMs) in the Arab world are amongst the longest-serving in the world, conflicts in the Arab world remain unresolved. This has reduced the role of UN PKOs and SPMs to being tools of “conflict management”, the end result of which is protracted conflict, with grave consequences for the countries involved, the region at large, and the UN’s credibility and standing in the region.

14.Participants opined that there is a pressing need for a paradigm shift from “conflict management” to “conflict resolution”, with repeated references to the question of Palestine in this regard.



15.Many participants expressed concern over what they described as the “militarization of UN interventions”. The so called “robust peacekeeping operations” reinforced by Chapter VII mandates - it seems - have become the default response to crises and conflicts, sometimes for expediency or the appearance of action. UN members, the UNSC and the Secretariat should recommit to chapter VI of the UN Charter. In other words, all means available under Chapter VI should be exhausted before resorting to action under Chapter VII of the Charter.

16.Participants were equally alarmed by what some have described as a deliberate attempt to blur the lines between peacekeeping and the so-called “peace enforcement”, including by adding qualifications such as ‘robust postures’. If “there is no peace to keep”, then peacekeeping might very well be the wrong tool, they argued. In the same vein, many participants lauded the High Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) for stressing that peacekeeping is not the appropriate tool to tackle asymmetric threats or to engage in counter-terrorism operations.

17.One participant raised the important issue of the unintended consequences of intervention. The so-called “Responsibility to Protect”, a term that is yet to be defined, must come hand in hand with the “Responsibility while Protecting”; a proposal already advanced by some countries at the UN.

18.The discussions touched upon the involvement of many regional and international actors in ongoing conflicts. To ensure that such efforts work in tandem and are mutually reinforcing, representatives of LAS opined that there is a need to create a mechanism for consultation and coordination between special representatives and peace envoys of the UNSG, regional organizations and national governments.



Partnerships between International and Regional Organizations

19. Speakers from LAS asserted that the organization is resolved to provide solutions to challenges of peace and security in the Arab region. For this purpose, the League is currently looking at a range of proposals to amend its Charter and to activate the Arab Peace and Security Council.

20. Speakers from the UN and the African Union (AU) highlighted the relevance of the experience of the AU in reconciling the commitment to the principle of “non-interference”, with a commitment to the principle of “non-indifference”. In this regard, LAS should draw its own conclusions from the experience of the African peace and security architecture, which has helped African multilateralism become more effective, they argued.

21. Participants reflected on the experience of the AU. On one hand, it was highlighted that actions taken by any regional organization must be fully supported by its member states. The efforts of the AU Commission have failed at times because they went beyond what member states were willing to support. On the other hand, participants agreed that political commitment must be matched by the capacity of the regional organization for implementation. Gaps between aspirations for action and the ability to carry out such actions on the ground are counterproductive.

22. Many participants opined that LAS should invest heavily in laying the foundations of a comprehensive “Arab Peace and Security Architecture”. In doing so, LAS should rely primarily on its own resources and those of its member states, and complement that – if and when needed and appropriate – with external technical support and capacity building. This is crucial for ensuring ownership.

23. The UN and LAS Secretariats are eager to explore avenues for further cooperation and coordination. References were made to proposals to establish a UN liaison office at LAS, pursuant to the recommendation of the HIPPO to establish an office of preventive diplomacy in North Africa and West Asia.



24. For the UN-LAS partnership to be successful, LAS must build the minimum requisite capacity. In this regard, LAS can draw on the African experience. Through partnerships with the UN, the European Union (EU), and others, the AU has moved forward in building the requisite capacity for a successful partnership, which has also brought the AU and African countries tangible results in terms of providing “African solutions to African problems”, some participants argued.

25. In the same vein, the case for LAS-AU closer cooperation and coordination is straight forward, especially in light of their overlapping mandates.

Triangular Cooperation

26. The role of Troop and Police Contributing Countries (TCCs/PCCs) in carrying out mandates makes their participation in mandate formulation, revision and extension crucial to the success of peacekeeping. Failure to regularly and meaningfully consult TCCs/PCCs has resulted in mandates that are at times “divorced from reality”. It has also undermined mandate implementation.

27. In light of the above, triangular cooperation between the UNSC, the UN Secretariat and TCCs/PCCs should be regarded as a precondition for success. In fact, triangular cooperation must be at the center of UN peacekeeping reform efforts

28. Despite the many mechanisms that exist, consultations with TCCs/PCCs have failed to reach their full potential. This was acknowledged in discussions leading to UNSC Presidential Statement S/PSR/2015/26 of 31 December 2015. In particular, consultations remain limited in scope and primarily focused on mandates. An important first step, therefore, is to expand the scope of consultations, while also institutionalizing its mechanisms to provide for sustained and regular input, including through relying on the outcomes of the C34.

29. Presidential Statement S/PSR/2015/26 sets a deadline of 31 March 2016 for Member States to present their views on enhancing consultations on peacekeeping issues. Top Arab TCCs/PCCs – including Egypt, Jordan and Morocco - should push



forward the discussion on triangular cooperation through existing mechanisms. Egypt's current membership of the UNSC and the African Union Peace and Security Council (AU PSC) was highlighted as an opportunity to play an important role in this regard.

Enhancing National Ownership

30.To achieve national ownership, the vision and priorities of the host nation must be the starting point. Neither the UN, nor any other actor, should impose preconceived paradigms or frameworks on the host nation.

31.National Ownership must be regarded as a benchmark for the UN's work, whether in peacemaking, peacekeeping or peacebuilding. Ensuring national ownership of UN peace, development and humanitarian activities can also go a long way in improving the image of the UN, especially in the Arab world. National ownership would ensure resolving the tension between aspirations and practices in conflict and post-conflict situations.

32.Holding elections is not always the panacea for a conflict, nor is it necessarily the only way to ensure national ownership. The UN should focus more attention on helping countries emerging from conflict to establish national mechanisms, within the constitutional institutions, that emphasize consensus-building and dialogue. In this regard, UN interventions should aim to reinforce, rather than replace, the capacity of local institutions.

33.National ownership is key to countering terrorism and extremist ideologies leading to terrorism in conflict zones and countries emerging from conflict. Local communities and leaders are best positioned to identify and interrupt radicalization by terrorist organizations.



Enhancing Synergies and Effectiveness of UN Field Presence

34. Participants emphasized that global threats to peace and security cannot be addressed in separate and disconnected structural silos. Unless the UN is successful in breaking the silos within its secretariat, agencies, funds and programs, it will fail the people it aspires to serve. The development, humanitarian, and peace and security arms of the UN need to work together towards collective outcomes. For that to happen, the UN needs a strategic vision.

35. Enhancing synergies and effectiveness of UN field presence refers to coherence of the multiple and complex efforts of different actors, with the aim of producing a greater positive effect. UN actors in the field should have a shared understanding of the conflict and its dynamics. In other words, enhancing synergies, coherence and effectiveness of UN field presence starts with analysis.

36. Existing mechanisms of coordination between UN agencies, programs and funds need to be revitalized and refurbished. New mechanisms need to be put in place, if and when needed. Enhancing synergies and effectiveness of field presence also requires qualified leadership on the ground.

37. Another factor that could help the UN improve its effectiveness in the field is to secure adequate, predictable and sustainable financing. The three global policy reviews not only pointed out to the importance of predictable financing, but also indicated that such responsibility rests with the UNSG.

38. Enhancing synergies and effectiveness of UN field presence is not possible in the absence of coordination with other actors in the field, whether political or developmental. The case for establishing a regional or shared services center in the Arab world was highlighted.

39. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is key to enhancing synergies and effectiveness of UN field presence. In this regard, it was highlighted that the UN's traditional approaches to monitoring & evaluation are not fit for purpose. The UN



must develop new tools for assessing its peacekeeping and special political missions in order to be able adapt and evolve. Equally important is the ability to monitor not only the intended effects, but also the potential unintended effects.

40.The duration of the UN peacekeeping operation is not the most important indicator to measure effectiveness or success. On one hand, withdrawing a mission prematurely can lead to a country's relapse into conflict. On the other hand, operations indented to manage - rather than resolve conflicts through a political process –may be actually contributing to frozen conflicts rather than permanent settlements.

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