

Executive Summary – Johannesburg 20-21 September 2007

The Norwegian and South African Ministries of Foreign Affairs¹ held a two-day seminar on Multidimensional and Integrated Peace Operations (MIPO) in Johannesburg, from the 20–21 September 2007. This seminar provided the opportunity for the UN staff, civilian and military policy decision-makers, regional and local actors and civil society to exchange experiences about peace operations in the West-Africa region, and to draw on Southern African inputs².

Many observers, including participants at this seminar, generally acknowledge that there is a need for strategic change in approach to peace operations, including peacekeeping, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction due to the transformation of conflicts, particularly in Africa. The adoption of multidimensional mandates by the UN Security Council demonstrates this towards peace operations. Thus, there is realization that most peace missions sent to conflict situations will increasingly be integrated and multidimensional.

Participants sought clarity on the concept of ‘integration’. Of concern was the need to determine how the concept, as understood within the MIPO framework, is different from the previous understandings (especially those in Africa). Although there is no single definition for integrated missions, the working definition used within UN system was found to be useful, referring to integrated missions as complex peace operations whose guiding principle is to link different organizations into coherent support structures.

There was general agreement that the development, planning and implementation of MIPO framework by the UN and the international community must be informed and draw leverage from existing AU frameworks, including drawing in and on regional economic communities, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Some of the pertinent lessons, which emerged from the Missions such as the UN Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) and the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) experiences, reflect that the focus should not only be on military or security issues but also on social and political dimensions.

Significantly, integrated missions must ensure that there is clarity of roles between the various UN agencies. The need for coordination of programmes, activities and the development of effective partnerships between various actors is at the centre of ‘integration’ and integrated missions.

Participants contributed to the discussion by raising issues that inform the varied experiences and challenges facing integration in Africa. Ultimately, these issues will inform and contribute towards the possible development of a coherent doctrine on multidimensional and integrated peace operations. In view of this, participants raised a number of crucial points and perspectives regarding the way forward. The following serve as recommendations:

¹ The views expressed in this publication are those of the author. They should not be interpreted as reflecting the views of the Norwegian or South African Government. The text may not be printed in part or in full without the permission of the author.

² The author would like to extend a warm thank you to all participants at the seminar in Johannesburg for their engaging presentations and discussions. The author is also grateful to the Norwegian and South Africa Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in particular Kingsley Mamabolo, Svein Sæther, Jostein Leiro, Anja Kaspersen, and Jakkie Cilliers for their comments. Last, but certainly not least, many thanks go to Kristina L. Revheim, Anja Kaspersen, Håkon Gulbrandsen, Grace Mulinge and Gunn Jorid Roseth for managing an important initiative, of which this seminar was but one component.

- ***Ensuring interoperability.*** There is a need to have synergy from the conceptualization of the mission, planning, drawing of mandates, implementation, processes, systems, budgets, training etc.
- ***The need for coordination between various actors and activities.***
- ***The need to balance the need for quick impact of the Mission and the issue of sustainability of the outcome and consolidation of peace at the local level.***
- ***The inclusion or incorporation of social aspects and developmental issues*** into the understanding and concept of MIPO.
- ***Resource mobilization, alignment and utilization.*** As a result, it was emphasized that integrated funding processes for MIPO must be established.
- ***Integration must take place at various levels, including strategic, tactical and operational.*** Furthermore, it should be noted that integration can either be partial or full.
- The need to take into account the ***reception of the intervention by local communities.***
- ***Power relations between those who have resources and those who do not have*** must be taken into account.
- ***The need to address regional contexts or idiosyncrasies that may further impact on MIPO or even exacerbate causes of conflict.***
- ***The development of interlocking systems between the UN and African Union in order to enhance capacity development.***
- ***The development of early warning systems*** to ensure that integrated missions are not just reactive but proactive processes.
- ***Humanitarian considerations and assistance must be at the center integrated peace operations.***
- ***Flexibility in planning, design and implementation of a Mission is central.*** Thus, the need to ensure the principle of “**form follows function**”.
- ***The role and importance of taking gender issues and relations.***
- ***The need to ensure strategic assessment and evaluation processes to determine the impact and develop best practices.***

