The overall objective of security system reform is to create a secure environment that is conducive to development, poverty reduction and democracy. This secure environment rests upon two essential pillars: *i)* the ability of the state, through its development policy and programmes, to generate conditions that mitigate the vulnerabilities to which its people are exposed; and *ii)* the ability of the state to use the range of policy instruments at its disposal to prevent or address security threats that affect society's well-being.

The traditional concept of security – which revolves around the protection of states from military threats – is being redefined in three important respects that provide the basis for the security system reform policy agenda:

● The focus of security policy itself is broadening from an almost exclusive focus on state stability and regime security to include the well-being of their populations and human rights.

● Security and development are increasingly seen as being inextricably linked which opens the way to mainstreaming security as a public policy and a governance issue. This invites greater public scrutiny of security policy.

● State institutions involved in providing security are being re-evaluated. The military is now seen as only one instrument of security policy with traditional legal, social and economic instruments receiving greater attention.

The SSR policy agenda covers three inter-related challenges facing all states: *i)* developing a clear institutional framework for the provision of security that integrates security and development policy and includes all relevant actors; *ii)* strengthening the governance of the security institutions; and *iii)* building capable and professional security forces that are accountable to civil authorities.

Background

Over the last decade, donors have increasingly recognised the ways in which the security environment can contribute to or undermine development. Until recently, because security was equated with military security and the protection of the state, development actors saw the provision of assistance in this area as the primary responsibility of their defence, intelligence and police counterparts. In the late 1990s, this view began to change as the close links between security and development became more recognised.[1]

DAC work on security systems started with a 1997 review of DAC members' approaches to dealing with military issues which linked a number of diverse issues relevant to security. The DAC then developed a conceptual framework for security assistance. "Security Issues and Development Co-operation: A Conceptual Framework for Enhancing Policy Coherence." This subsequently led to the incorporation of key security concepts into *The DAC Guidelines: Helping Prevent Violent Conflict* (2001). Security issues are also covered in *The DAC Guidelines: Poverty Reduction* (2001).