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Management Response to the External Evaluation of Justice Rapid Response JRR

1. Introduction

Justice Rapid Response (JRR) is an intergovernmental initiative and forum with a secretariat, established by member-States, to improve the ability of the international community to end impunity for genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and serious human rights violations. JRR provides a flexible, rapid, and cost-effective means to access relevant, highly specialized investigative expertise to assist with fact-finding, inquiries and investigations in situations where violations of international criminal law and serious human rights violations may have occurred.

Switzerland has been supporting Justice Rapid Response (JRR) since 2005 and became a member of its Executive Board in 2009. It currently holds the Vice-chairmanship. Since 2012, the Swiss Expert Pool for Civilian Peacebuilding Section (SEP) has been supporting JRR with a credit amounting to approximately CHF 300'000 per annum which includes the secondment of the Director of Operations as well as an intern, the funding of the office rental costs in Geneva, as well as the participation of Swiss and Global South candidates to JRR trainings. Part of the Swiss support to JRR was the commissioning of an external evaluation to assess the organization and to help define the Swiss contribution beyond the first three years (July 2012 until June 2015).

The findings of the external evaluation conducted by the Stockholm Policy Group are in line with our observations with regards to the organizational development of JRR. Given that the mandate and services of JRR are highly valued by the international community the evaluation focused on three areas: organisational structure; processes and systems; and funding modalities. The evaluation report will be shared and discussed with the other nine member States at the coming JRR-Executive Board where appropriate follow-up actions will be defined.

The Human Security Division's Steering Committee has taken note of the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation conducted by the Stockholm Policy Group and responds to the recommendations as follows:

2. General Conclusions by the evaluators

JRR is recognized as a key service provider in the field of international criminal investigations and its services are highly valued by all stakeholders. The team at the JRR-secretariat in Geneva is small and its hierarchy flat which allows for timely responses to requests. Nonetheless, it is also obvious that the

Directorate of Political Affairs DP
Bonny M. Wilkinson
Bundesgasse 32, 3003 Bern
Tel. +41(0)58 465 59 20, Fax +41 (0)58 463 89 22
bonny.wilkinson@eda.admin.ch
www.eda.admin.ch

human resources of the secretariat are stretched and the current level of staffing in relation to the workload is not sustainable. This is closely linked to issues of financial sustainability: JRR heavily depends on contributions from a few member States, both financial and in-kind (staff secondments). And finally, given the growth of JRR in the last few years, the organization needs to ensure it has the right structure and the corresponding systems and processes in place in order to fulfil its mandate in an efficient way.

JRR is already addressing some of the challenges highlighted by the evaluation. The Stockholm Policy Group therefore recommends the following:

3. Specific recommendations by the evaluators

3.1 Organisational structure

1. Additional staffing needs are reasonable. Additional human resources, and the ability to employ central staff members on regular contracts, would dramatically reduce JRR's vulnerability and provide additional space for the organization to focus on its core activities. Hence, the evaluation team agrees with the management of JRR to secure additional four positions:

- *separate the roster management and deployment functions in to two positions;*
- *training coordinator;*
- *finance assistant;*
- *and development officer*

--> Management Response SEP: We agree that JRR is understaffed and the Swiss contribution has included staff secondments since the beginning of our support to JRR. Since the evaluation, JRR has moved ahead with the development of the roster management database and has decided that a separation of the roster management and deployment functions into two positions is no longer necessary as the workload of the roster management should be reduced by 30-40% with this new database. JRR has further requested Switzerland to second the position of the Roster and Deployment Manager instead of the current secondment of an intern. The SEP has agreed to that change and are in the process of recruiting the expert. In addition, the current 80% posting of the Director of operations will be increased to a 100 % post.

2. Job descriptions aligned with functions bring clarity. As the organization develops and grows, it is important to establish clear roles and responsibilities to make the organization both effective and efficient. Hence, the evaluation team suggests JRR to write job descriptions that are carefully aligned with the specific function.

--> Management Response SEP: We agree with this recommendation and encourage JRR to continuously establish and review job descriptions in line with the respective functions.

3. Strategic leadership requires less involvement in daily operations. The Executive Director needs to increasingly focus on building and nurturing JRR's relationships with both existing and potential donors, members and partners. Subsequently, the ED should be less engaged in the day-to-day operations, and assign the responsibility to the Director Operations. Hence, the evaluation team suggests the Executive Director should have a focused strategic leadership role whilst supporting the function of outreach and resource mobilization to secure sustainable funding.

--> Management Response SEP: We agree with this recommendation and encourage JRR to clearly define the strategic leadership role of the Executive Director to allow him to build strong and lasting partnerships in order to strengthen JRR's position and secure (financial) support for the organization.

4. Building processes and systems takes consistency and diligence. The Director of Operations needs to be assigned responsibility to lead the core functions (financial management, administration, and human resources) of JRR. This responsibility focuses considerably on establishing processes, procedures, and systems and aligning them with the functions and associated job descriptions. Hence, the evaluation team suggests the Director of Operations should have a focused leadership role of the core and support function of outreach and resource mobilization to secure sustainable funding.

--> **Management Response SEP:** We agree with this recommendation and encourage JRR to ensure the Director of Operations has the necessary support to carry out her role in leading the process of consolidating JRR as an organization.

5. Human resource management. One of the areas where significant improvement is needed is human resource management, including recruitment procedures, contracting, competence development, salaries, and benefit scales. This is both an issue related to organizational effectiveness and to moral and ethical employer considerations, relating to contracts, payroll management, pensions (social security), holidays, and talent management. JRR is currently elaborating an HR policy and associated processes. This is a development that should be rigorously encouraged, supported, and followed up.

--> **Management Response SEP:** For us, recommendation 5 is closely linked to recommendation 4 and we fully support this recommendation.

3.2 Processes and systems

6. Need to formalize and document the key processes of JRR. As the organization develops and grows, it is important to formalize the standard operating procedures for each function of JRR: Guidelines and principles should be clearly set out to support staff in their daily tasks. Hence, the evaluation team encourages the ongoing work by JRR to document and institutionalize required operational processes as well as support functions.

--> **Management Response SEP:** We agree with this recommendation.

7. Need to update the IT-system of JRR. As the roster grows and the number of deployments increases, JRR is in urgent need of an updated and sophisticated IT-system that supports human resource management, including recruitment procedures, contracting, competence development, salaries, and benefit scales. An IT-system should be able to support for instance a smooth search ability for the roster management to swiftly identify most relevant candidates. Hence, the evaluation team supports and encourages JRR's request for building a new IT-platform.

--> **Management Response SEP:** We agree with this recommendation. JRR is currently in the process of developing a roster management database which will allow the organization to manage its pool of experts more efficiently.

3.3 Funding modality

8. Funding is partnership. JRR strives to secure un-earmarked long-term funding. The most likely scenario for JRR to secure sustainable funding is to continue to build its reputation as the go-to organization for deployments of experts for international criminal investigations. The funders of JRR in the future are most likely going to be donor states and increasingly multilateral organisations (partners e.g. UN Women). Hence, the evaluation team suggests that JRR and especially the Executive Director deepen the dialogue with existing members, donors, and partners, and broaden the funding base to include new countries, especially representing Asia and newer European OECD-DAC members.

--> **Management Response:** We agree with this recommendation. As one of the main partners of JRR, Switzerland strives to provide support to JRR which will help the organization develop and become more independent. Based on this premise we have formulated our support for this second phase of funding. JRR's Executive Board has recently been joined by the Republic of Korea that became the 10th and first Asian member State in the Executive Board.

9. Important to establish clear measure of the cost for JRR's service. This report has outlined the complexities involved in finding sources for long-term funding for JRR and the various aspects of determining the cost for JRR's service. Despite difficulties, we believe that it is essential for JRR to be able to describe the costs of its work both from an overall organizational, as well as a unit cost perspective. The cost analysis and definition of 'unit cost' should take as its point of departure JRR's position in the value chain. This is the basis for ensuring that donors and partners understand what it is they are being asked to pay for. We suggest that cost-sharing or fee for service becomes part of the conversation when the relationship with partners and their commitment to the partnership is ready.

--> **Management Response SEP:** We agree with this recommendation and believe it can help the Executive Director when negotiating partnerships (see also recommendations 3 and 8).

4. Final conclusion by the Human Security Division / Expert Pool for Civilian Peacebuilding Section

Activities in the field of dealing with the past, prevention of atrocities and transitional justice, as well as support to the International Criminal Court (ICC) and to Commissions of Inquiry concerning violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law are priorities of Swiss foreign policy.

JRR is one of the instruments for the implementation of those priorities and has proven to be an effective mechanism for the supply of experts for internationally mandated Commissions of Inquiry, as confirmed by the evaluation.

In order to contribute to the implementation of the recommendations as outlined above and to strengthen JRR's organisational structure, processes and systems as well as a sustainable funding basis, Switzerland will (i) adjust its contribution for the coming years and (ii) mobilise the other member States in the JRR Executive Board to consider their contribution. Accordingly, the Expert Pool for Civilian Peacebuilding Section will continue to support JRR by seconding two experts to the JRR secretariat, providing free office space for the JRR-secretariat in Geneva and contributing funds for deployments and operational costs.

Berne, 3rd June 2015



Daniel Fasnacht
Head

Swiss Expert Pool for Civilian Peacekeeping



Bonny M. Wilkinson
Coordinator

Swiss Expert Pool for Civilian Peacekeeping

Viewed and agreed by:



4.6.15

Claude Wild
Ambassador
Head of Human Security Division