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"Achieving SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) in line with the 2030 United Nations agenda."

Committee: GA1 (DISEC)
Agenda Item: Capacity Building in Developing Countries: Providing support to developing nations to build capacities in maintaining peace and security.
Student Officer:
Position:

Introduction

As conflicts that fuel instability arise globally, the issue of capacity building in developing nations has become increasingly significant. Many developing states have struggled

to maintain order as a result of fragile institutions and limited state capacity, failing to prevent conflict and ensure the protection of their civilians. These structural challenges have often resulted in instability and displacement, reminding that maintaining peace within a state is highly reliant on the capacity to develop even further.

In recent years, due to the tensions caused by political instability, it is becoming increasingly significant that peacekeeping operations and short term measures of stabilization are insufficient in maintaining peace on a national level. As a national institution lacks the capacity to sustain peace once external support is reduced, the high dependence on external powers to sustain peace may cause loss of authority over certain national assets and isolation on the political plane. Therefore, shifting towards strengthening domestic capacities in areas including security and defense is highly encouraged.

Capacity building is now widely regarded as an investment aimed at aiding states to manage their own security challenges. According to the objectives of the UN and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, capacity building has become an important part of international efforts to maintain peace and security in developing countries. This report will provide detailed information regarding different areas where nations can demonstrate capacity building, current issues to be resolved in the respective agenda and provide possible solutions to these problems.

Definition of Significant Terms

Capacity Building
In the UN context, capacity building refers to the process of developing the skills and abilities of individuals, institutions and governments to function efficiently (especially in developing nations) in order to address peace and security issues in a domestic context. In the area of developing measures of maintaining peace and security, it involves strengthening national institutions including armed forces or national police and protecting civilians without long term dependence on external support.

Developing Countries
This term broadly addresses nations with less developed infrastructure compared to industrialized states. These countries often face challenges with weak institutions and high levels of poverty. Developing countries often tend to be vulnerable towards internal or regional conflicts and are highly affected by them.

Security Sector Reform (SSR)
SSR defines the process where governments reform their security system which includes armed forces, police forces and judicial institutions where civilian oversight and military structures are strengthened. This process ultimately results in the optimized usage of these systems. It is mentioned that SSR aims "to achieve effective and accountable security for the State and its citizens, without discrimination and with full respect for human rights and rule of law" (United Nations Peacekeeping, 2014)

Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding refers to the concept of spending broader efforts to maintain or ensure long term stability in a region or nation. This process includes reforming institutions, economic recovery initiatives, and efforts to reconcile in post-conflict situations. In order for this process to operate smoothly, building local capacity is essential.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The SDGs are global sets of aims adopted by the UN to promote sustainable development. In the concept of promoting capacity building to maintain peace, SDG16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) is essential. This specific goal aims to strengthen relevant national institutions and develop peace and security measures.

Fragile States

Fragile States are referred to countries where the government often has limited control and authority over its territory or resources, where conflict undermines public security. State authority and legitimacy is significantly weak due to the political instability or economic collapse. These states are usually the primary focus in international capacity building initiatives.

Detailed Background of the Issue

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change defines capacity building as "the process of developing and strengthening the abilities of countries, particularly developing countries, to effectively respond" (UNFCC). As political disputes unfold throughout modern societies, it has become apparent that national development and security are interdependent areas. Persistent conflict hinders economic development and growth. This results in high poverty levels and political tensions within regional bodies. Such situations have led to changes in traditional aid approaches.

Recent efforts show that international agencies have also tried to mainstream capacity building and make it more accessible to developing states. This indicates that UN development programs should include police academies, judge training and border guards. The World Bank has also begun its efforts to inject fragile and developing states with specialized funding opportunities. Similarly, multilateral frameworks have also been reinforcing these efforts. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) link development funding to security. SDG 16 (peace and justice) and SDG 17 (capacity building) explicitly mention strengthening institutions and international support.

The establishment of the New Deal for Fragile States (2011) by the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS), insists that "fragile states and donors" work together along national agendas, with predictable aid focused on strengthening local institutions, which is one of the many examples of frameworks to be implemented to optimize capacity building in fragile states, as they require tailored capacity building to break cycles of violence and vulnerability.

Another key framework that oversees capacity building in fragile states is the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), which was created in 2005 to coordinate international support for states suffering post-conflict consequences. The primary purpose in this shift was that UN peacekeeping missions would transition to UN country teams focusing on reforming military and judicial systems, police and other capacities. Since then, UN policy documents and Security Council reports[1] have emphasized capacity development at all stages of maintaining peace.
sdgs.un.org

Despite this shift, the implementation of capacity building mechanisms, especially in the security sector, faced issues. Since the reform processes are highly dependent on external funding and assistance, progress is usually not continuous and often slow. A Guardian report on fragile states noted that the dramatic fluctuations in aid flows can leave aid dependent governments on a "development rollercoaster" (The Guardian, 2014). Therefore, despite the fact that detailed plans regarding various reforms existed, the execution of such plans and the receival of actual support often lagged.

In a positive aspect, some regional initiatives show how developing nations gradually improve. The African Union has shown progress in endorsing the goal of "Silencing the Guns". In this process, the formation of an African Standby Force allowed rapid response to crises, indirectly strengthening capacity building in African States. Such measures indicate that the actions regional actors take have more impact on regional development compared to external intervention.

Simultaneously, India has actively supported the development of African capacity with leaders agreeing to build African defense academies and training centers at the recent India-Africa summit. (The Economic Times, 2025). The Economic Times also notes that India "has been one of the leading providers of peacekeeping forces in Africa under a UN mandate," (The Economic Times, 2025) highlighting a model of South–South support.

Similarly, China has begun offering security training to various African and other fragile states in different regions. China's Minister of Public Security announced plans to "send police consultants to countries in need" to help local forces "quickly and effectively improve their law enforcement capabilities" (Davidson, 2024). In just the past year China has reportedly trained over 2,700 officers and pledged 1,000 more for African States (Davidson, 2024).

These examples of change in the African region indicate a shift in international capacity building mechanisms. Similar to African regions, regions that consist of fragile states in Southern Asia, Middle East and Latin America have also started receiving support to strengthen capacity building. Therefore, it can be said that emerging powers such as states and regional organisations also see capacity building as a tool of diplomacy and security.

The need for peacebuilding through security sector reforms is becoming a growing consensus amongst international bodies. Major donors and organizations have launched

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[1] [A/74/976–S/2020/773 Security Council](#)

countless initiatives, and the issue of insufficient capacity building is actively highlighted, yet coordination problems exist.

Timeline of Key Events

1994	UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali issues an agenda for peace which calls for preventive diplomacy and post-conflict peacebuilding.
2004	*Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness*: Principles of state ownership are endorsed which influences strategies of peacebuilding.
2005	*World Summit*: UN establishes the Peacebuilding Commission to support countries emerging from conflict.
2011	International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding launches the New Deal, stressing local leadership and capacity-building in fragile contexts.
2014	*US–Africa Summit*: The United States of America announces new funding to help African rapid response peacekeeping forces and security institutions.
2015	*2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*: UN General Assembly adopts SDGs, including target 16.a on capacity building for security.
2018	The UN and Member States agree on measures to enhance peacekeeping effectiveness, including strengthening country capacities.
2024	World leaders endorse a "Pact" with over 50 proposals, including commitments to peace operations and support for national capacities.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

United States of America:

The US has been considered as a distinct contributor to capacity building initiatives through financial assistance and security cooperation. It often focuses on strengthening police and military strategies and capabilities which support counterterrorism efforts. These efforts ultimately enhance institutions in fragile states. The US generally sees capacity building as efforts to prevent instability escalating to global threats.

People's Republic of China:

China has been actively involved in capacity building efforts by contributing troops to peacekeeping operations and offering assistance to developing nations. In this process, state sovereignty is emphasized where stability is supported through institutional strengthening

Republic of India:

India contributes to international peacebuilding efforts and initiatives of capacity building, especially focusing on regions in Africa and South Asia. India actively supports defense cooperation and technical assistance that aims to develop local security institutions. Its involvement is an important focus on international promotions of regional stability amongst developing countries.

European Union:

Through both civilian and military training initiatives in developing countries affected by conflict, The European Union greatly contributes to international capacity building efforts. The EU's approach especially emphasizes human rights and security sector reform. Member States of the EU often aid police training, judicial reform and border management as broader peacebuilding strategies.

African Union:

The African Union holds an important role in coordinating efforts of capacity building on the African continent. With its commitment to peace and security, the AU actively supports initiatives that enable African countries to respond to regional conflicts sovereignly. The AU emphasizes regional cooperation and long term institution building.

Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF):

DCAF provides advisory services on security sector reforms, oversight on democratic measures and institutional governance. It actively supports developing countries through assisting in policy and legislative development and especially capacity building for civilian oversight mechanisms.

International Crisis Group:

The International Crisis Group is an independent body that supports capacity building through conflict analysis, early warnings, and recommendations for possible policy reforms. While the organization does not primarily train security forces, the research done by the International Crisis Group informs governments on preventive measures.

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

The Establishment of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission

(UN General Assembly and Security Council, 2005)

The UN aimed to improve coordination amongst international actors that support countries suffering from post-conflict consequences. It primarily was created to provide attention and support to institution rebuilding and prevent relapse into violence by prioritizing national peacebuilding efforts.

The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States
(International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, 2011)

The New Deal is an agreement that has emphasized national ownership in efforts that include capacity building. It aimed to promote state-inclusive political processes while aligning international support with domestic priorities. It was indicated that this agreement would shift capacity building efforts away from solutions that required mostly external support or partnerships. However, it was not as effective as it was intended to be.

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
(UN General Assembly, 2015)

The 2030 Agenda for SDGs aimed to create links between peace, strong institutions and security development. Several goals highlighted the importance of capacity building to develop national defense sectors and sustaining regional and global peace.

Security Sector Reform Programs
(Regional Frameworks, 2000s-present)

Throughout the 21st century, the UN and other regional actors and states have implemented various reforms in developing and fragile states to professionalize armed forces and judicial bodies. These efforts focused on improving institution effectiveness and accountability, though the efficiency of the results have varied due to issues with political commitment.

Alternative Solutions

The insufficient measures that promote capacity building can be developed in various ways. One of the most significant solutions in order to strengthen capacity building measures is to increase funding stability. The UN can appeal for donors that meet their promises, or commit to a consistent amount of funding. As the Reuters report underscored, the UN urged states to pay peacekeeping dues "in full and on time" to sustain operations. (Nichols, 2025). It is also suggested that global funds should be dedicated for peacebuilding which ultimately reduces dependency of other sources of economic support.

Experts state that capacity building must be nation-led in order to achieve an independent development in the security sector. As noted in the 2011 New Deal, fragile states should develop their own capacity plans, and donors should align with them (The Guardian, 2014). This possible circumstance indicates that local authorities will have more control over the developing sectors,

which makes the nation gain its independence in the defense sector easily. One way to achieve this would be to focus on strengthening national budgets and institutions. Although this sudden shift may be seen as a challenging one, if executed properly at a regional level, it can be promising.

Capacity building cannot be purely focused on military or police forces. In order to completely eliminate regional threats, peace should be sustained by eliminating risks within the whole system of maintaining peace, which includes judiciary bodies and border management efforts. Therefore reforms must focus on the aforementioned areas as well. Inclusive government reforms that include the development of civilian oversight mechanisms can also be beneficial in this situation. A more multifaceted approach would be optimal to ensure the smooth and inclusive integration of further reforms. To serve as an example, the UN's Transition Assistance Initiative combines police training with support for local courts and civil society, Similarly, integrating women and youth in security sector reform is also seen as a capacity building measure, initiatives including the UN Elsie Initiative train more women soldiers and police on the understanding that diverse forces are more effective (Ghittoni, 2018).

Modern tools can be used as primary sources to aid capacity building. The safe digitalisation of a states' security system can serve as a guide in developing nations. An example where the integration of technology within the defense sector can be initiatives including the UN Tech Lab piloting drones for mapping conflict zones which indirectly strengthen state authority. However, this process must be executed very carefully as the digitalisation of sensitive data can cause many risks to surface.

A final suggestion for new ways to improve capacity building within the defense sector would be models that call for stronger evaluation. New frameworks may suggest more close monitoring of outcomes of peacekeeping measures. This may also be an effective way to address and eliminate corruption, where capacity building in regional areas have Regional or global oversight mechanisms to ensure smooth development.

Useful Links

Here is a report from the United Nations Development Programme that explains the relevance between maintaining peace and capacity building.

If you want to learn more about the effects of external powers on the region of Africa on capacity building, you can check out this article by HORN International Institute for Strategic Studies.

In order to explore the concept of Security Sector Reforms (SSR), you can check out this manual published by the DCAF.

To give a concrete example of state fragility, you can analyse this report published by the OECD that compiles state fragility data within the past year.

If you want to learn more about funds regarding UN Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding, you can check out this source.

Here is an introductory video regarding the concept of capacity building.

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