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Dear Kwesi,

I hope that this letter finds you and your colleagues at the ASDR well.

The purpose of this rather formal correspondence is to provide feedback and some hopefully useful comment on the way forward on the ASDR contribution to the African Human Security Initiative (AHSI) project. I hope that you will excuse the fact that our comments are characteristically forthright and direct.

Let me start off by thanking you for this first iteration of the ASDR document that we received some days ago. As you will recall that the purpose is to update the presentation that you provided during our September meeting, based on the feedback and subsequent discussion, and thereby:

- Present a theoretical framework that would justify the choice of a set of key commitments of African Heads of State within the ambit of the ASDR theme, namely peacekeeping and conflict resolution. These commitments would also be unpacked in a table that covered, for each commitment, key indicators of compliance (benchmarks), methodology of how the partner would go about measuring compliance and any associated problems (if any, and measures to overcome these problems). In summary this input would motivate, define, document (and subsequently comply) with a solid methodology; and
- Provide a schedule of activities in the form of a work plan. This would include a time schedule, activities and output, providing a clear description of the research process over time, including country visits, etc.

The ASDR document presently provides a brief introduction, followed by a section on the project concept. This section largely deals with the fact that the project follows a 'statist' analysis and comment on the restriction to APRM accession member states. A subsequent brief section is entitled 'methodological concerns about cluster' but actually lists 6 commitments from the Convention on the Elimination of Mercenaries in Africa. The work plan section reflects the fact that the ASDR intends to have a workable draft by the first week in December 2003 and then moves on to various issues including the choice of a research partner and reference to selection of commitments (other than those on mercenaries?). The apparent methodology and thrust is to work through respective embassies in Accra and Abuja, to follow a historical analysis and to rely on secondary research.

Generally the ASDR submission does not follow a logical and structured sequence and appears to consist of loose discussion notes, not too dissimilar from the original presentation made at the ISS in September. The submission also restricts itself to the convention on the elimination of mercenaries. No mention is made of peacekeeping and conflict resolution, the main thrust of the ASDR cluster. Nor is there a work plan and explanatory table of the various benchmarks that have been chosen.

You will recall that it is up to the ISS to work on a draft conceptual paper, to be circulated to other project partners by the end of October. One of our tasks is to provide some type of definition and framework for our discussion of 'human security' since it represents the core concept that binds the various research clusters together, and include within that framework a motivation for the 'choice' of clusters. This is therefore still a bit of a lacuna in providing conceptual coherence to the work of the various partners. This being said, we think that ASDR needs to rework and expand the present concept and some suggestions follow below.

We would suggest that the ASDR paper start with a very brief conceptual framework on human security (using a relatively narrow approach), working from there to the problems of instability and the conflict in the continent, possibly some reference to the key drivers of such conflict, but then devote the central portion of it to the strategies and approaches that African leaders have adopted towards conflict management. Once the complete paper is written up one would assume that it would include an analysis from recent African history to illustrate the manner in which leaders engage in peacekeeping and/or conflict resolution or not. From this could flow a description and selection of key commitments, including a motivation for their selection. Certainly the use of mercenaries by African neighbours is an important factor that has undermined the commitments to peacekeeping and conflict resolution, but there are many others, such as the support for insurgent groupings provided from neighbouring countries.

At the risk of being accused of a South African bias we attach an example of the theory approach that we think could be useful that was prepared by Dr Anne Hammerstad of SAIIA who is responsible for the democracy and political governance cluster.

We look forward to receipt of a revised and updated version of the ASDR document and workplan at your earliest convenience.

Warm regards,

Jakkie Cilliers & Kathryn Sturman  
Institute for Security Studies

Attached: SAIIA methodology and ISS (Cape Town) work plan