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Dear Alpha

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

The purpose of this rather formal correspondence is to provide feedback and some hopefully useful comment on the way forward on the IHRDA 'concept note' to the African Human Security Initiative (AHSI) project.

Let me start off by thanking you for this first iteration of the IHRDA document that we received some days ago. You will recall that the purpose is to update the presentation that IHRDA 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 IHRDA theme, namely human rights. These commitments would also be unpacked in a table that covers, for each commitment, key indicators of compliance, 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 IHRDA document begins with the background and introduction to the project in general and to the human rights theme in particular. It then lists six areas of commitment to human rights to be reviewed in each of the eight countries. Finally, there is a cursory list on methodology. This is a good start, but needs some further refinement.

The general introduction is not too much of a concern at this stage, as it has still to be supplemented by a general theoretical section to be included in each monograph. 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.

It is important to elaborate and improve on the argument linking human rights and human security in Africa, however. The report of the Human Security Commission, published earlier this year, may help in this regard. This and other secondary material to assist your desk research will be up on our website in the next week.

Turning to the commitments themselves, we recommend that you narrow the focus and reduce the number of commitments to be reviewed, for practical reasons of the short time available to do the research, and to avoid overlap with the work of other clusters. So, for example, you should at least leave out commitment no. 6 "the right to participate freely in one's government", as this duplicates the democracy theme addressed by SAIIA (see attached concept paper). The second generation rights to health and education are also extremely broad and difficult to quantify in terms of state compliance. We would urge you to limit the review to the three areas of "freedom of expression", "right to personal safety" (freedom from arrest, torture, personal security of women, children, refugees, etc.) and "access to justice". There are more than enough issues and challenges in these commitments to keep you busy until February!

The questions that you list under each of these commitments provide your indicators. It may be helpful to write these up into a schedule. The next step is to draft a work plan, with a more detailed timeframe and explanation of your field trips, interviews, etc. At the risk of being accused of a South African bias we attach an example of the approach that could be useful, namely the conceptual framework for the democracy and political governance cluster by Dr Anne Hammerstad of SAIIA.

Hope this helps and look forward to receipt of a revised and updated version of the IHRDA document at your earliest convenience.

Warm regards,

Jakkie Cilliers & Kathryn Sturman
Institute for Security Studies

Attached: SAIIA methodology