# Civilian Capacities Network
# Annual Meeting 2013

Cedric de Coning, Lotte Vermeij and Paul Troost

CIVILIAN
CAPACITIES
NETWORK BRAZIL · CHINA · EGYPT · INDIA · INDONESIA
NORWAY · RUSSIA · SOUTH AFRICA · TURKEY

# Civilian Capacities Network Annual Meeting Report 2013

**Cedric de Coning, Lotte Vermeij and Paul Troost**

The Civilian Capacity initiative aims at supporting the emergence and development of national institutions in peacebuilding processes. During its first two years, the CivCap Network has been a forum for nine research institutes – from Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Norway, Russia, South Africa, and Turkey – to exchange perspectives and create mutual understanding between academics and policy makers. The exchange on South–South–North cooperation has been enhanced by the organization of international workshops and joint research publications. For the future, the Network has decided to complement its focus on the Civilian Capacity initiative by adding the Post-2015 Development Agenda as well as Peace Operations to its agenda, and to change the name of the network to the Peace Capacities Network.

# CivCap Annual Meeting 2013

On 18 and 19 September 2013, the Civilian Capacities Network (CivCap Network) convened at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) in Oslo for its second Annual Meeting. The focus was on discussing the accomplishments, challenges and future of the Network. On the first day of the meeting, Network partners discussed a range of topics for possible future research. On the second day, the partners reflected on the work output of the first two years of the Network's existence, and discussed the future direction of the Network.

## Day One: Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding from the Perspectives of Emerging Actors

The first day of the annual seminar was aimed at stimulating discussion on a broad range of topics that the Network might work on in the future. Topics included 'the Use of Force and the Growing Robustness of UN Peacekeeping'; 'Interventions and the R2P/RWP debate'; 'Civilian Capacity'; 'the Post-2015 Development Agenda'; and 'New Development Actors.'

The first presentation, by Cedric de Coning of NUPI and ACCORD, considered the influence of the rising powers on the governance of international peace and security, and especially on UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Looking at the perspectives of the BRICS countries as well as Egypt, Indonesia and Turkey, he concluded that whilst the rising powers are committed to the reform of the global world order, their approach involves an evolutionary strategy aimed at ensuring the overall stability of the global economy, to avoid negative effects on their own internal developmental goals.

The second presentation, by Sandeep Dewan of the United Services Institution of India (USI), considered the use of force and growing robustness of UN peacekeeping. India has extensive experience with the practice of peacekeeping. In recent years, its role has expanded to include the protection of civilians and observing the rule of law. In this regard, the use of force and growing robustness in connection with peacekeeping would appear to contain an inherent contradiction: peacekeeping is intended to have a robust mandate in itself, if it meets the three conditions:

local agreement as to the presence of peacekeepers, minimal use of force, and neutrality. However, recent peacekeeping missions have been guided by more robust mandates that allow for more proactive implementation, resulting in new possibilities and challenges.

The third presentation, by Lina Alexandra and Iis Gindarsah from the Centre for Strategic and International Studies of Indonesia (CSIS-Jakarta), presented the debate on the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) norm, from the perspective of emerging actors. There are various strategic motivating forces for these countries to play a greater role in international affairs, driven by political and economic interests. Where development is concerned, relations between emerging donors and recipients are generally unproblematic, and tend to be based on mutual interests and technical cooperation. With regard to conflict resolution and peace-keeping, emerging actors tend to value national sovereignty and are wary of norms such as the responsibility to protect and humanitarian intervention. Currently, a main concern is the use of the R2P mandate beyond the protection of civilians, and how to respect principles of sovereignty while intervening when required. There is also a need for these countries to strengthen their initiatives for identifying risk factors that may evolve into acts of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. The recognition of these risk factors and the prevention of those conditions would render an R2P intervention scenario obsolete.

Gustavo Barros de Carvalho, Peacebuilding Coordinator at the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) in South Africa, spoke of the challenges presented to the development of emerging actors' perspectives on Civilian Capacities. Given the increased interest in improving the quality of the deploying civilian experts in post-conflict countries, this presentation focused on the anticipated role of emerging countries, with reflections on the role of South Africa in particular. The first challenge is that, although emerging countries are developing various initiatives around the development of civilian capacities, documentation of experiences and transfer of knowledge are lacking. Increasingly, the emerging countries are questioning the real impact of the work on civilian capacities, including its approaches to capacity development. Moreover, due to their broad scope, civilian capacities often remain largely unknown as a stand-alone concept to many actors. Other challenges related to the heavy focus on UN deployments and the apparent lack of a clear interlocutor on peacebuilding issues in many emerging countries. Finally, the concept of ownership is a key challenge for the

civilian-capacity engagement of emerging countries: this could provide opportunities for raising the quality of deployment and matching expertise with needs.

Eduarda Hamann from the Igarapé Institute in Brazil spoke on emerging actors and the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Many questions could be raised over the approaches and main topics of this agenda, but it has been a more open and inclusive effort than the Millennium Development Goals. The active participation of emerging actors is vital for achieving consensus about the agenda, although challenges remain: domestically, many of the countries have weak policy communities, while poverty persists and inequality has been steadily rising (albeit to a lesser extent in Brazil). On foreign policy, it remains difficult to assure joint positions on many development and especially security-related topics, which could indicate a limit to cooperation. Regardless, the interdependence between security and development could feature in the creation of new goals, as already suggested by the report of the High Panel. In this context, the CivCap Network has a key role to play in exploring commonalities between countries and proposing a new narrative to the Post-2015 Development Agenda that would go beyond North–South development aid and include serious consideration of issues related to security, violence and fragility.

Finally, Onur Sazak from the Istanbul Policy Center in Turkey explored the subject of emerging actors as new development actors. He sees a sincere willingness on the part of emerging actors to take over development roles, which creates fertile grounds for new opportunities. While domestic considerations such as constituencies and elections still dominate the development strategies of Turkey, the country claims to provide its aid without any conditions to the receiving parties. At the same time, there is an ongoing debate about state building as institution building: who determines the values that underpin the creation of institutions? And, what values are the driving forces in these processes? Coordination is another important issue, as the current system governing development strategies in Turkey is quite arbitrary and bureaucratic. On the international level, similar development approaches are witnessed in other emerging countries, promoting the departure from conditionally driven aid and moving towards horizontal cooperation and non-tied aid. However, critics suggest that there is a gap between the rhetoric of non-tied aid and the national self-interests and priorities underpinning the development agendas of emerging donors.

## Day Two: Perspectives on the Achievements and Future of the CivCap Network

The second day of the Annual Meeting was devoted to taking stock of what the Network has achieved in its first two years, reflecting on what can be learned from that experience, and exploring what future directions the Network should take. The first session focused on the achievements of the Network over the first two years, as well as the challenges experienced.

### Strengths

One of the Network's strengths has been the way it created space for governments to engage with the CivCap initiative: the Baseline Study engaged the relevant agencies in government and helped them to reflect on what they and others in their governments were already doing that is relevant to the CivCap agenda. It also demonstrated to them that different governments all over the world are working on finding solutions to the same or similar challenges they are dealing with, and that there is value in peer-to-peer exchanges. These can lead to identifying lessons learned and best practices, which can then be useful again at the national level. The Network has also stimulated the cooperation of the partners on the international level, particularly at the UN. These exchanges resulted in the identification of new areas of engagement, stimulated peer-to-peer learning, facilitated useful comparisons and information exchanges between the countries, and created awareness in the respective governments on the necessity of and opportunities for interagency cooperation. In addition, the partners have brought the CivCap debate onto the agenda of their respective governments through the research products the Network generated, as well as the other relevant information it made available to national counterparts.

A further strength of the Network has been its ability to contribute to policymaking. With the creation of a comprehensive and compatible network of peers, the CivCap Network has impacted new fields, made valuable country expertise available on issues related to peacekeeping and peacebuilding, created opportunities for regional bottom-up consultations, and engaged with the UN and League of Arab States (LAS) on a number of policy matters. The Network's support, clear feedback, as well as the incentive for mapping what various countries and civil society are working on has been highly valuable to the UN and LAS and has stimulated a different way of thinking about civilian capacities. Furthermore, the Network has created new knowledge on civilian capacities in

emerging countries and their regions, on South-South cooperation, as well as on the perspectives of emerging countries on issues of peace-keeping and peacebuilding.

## Challenges

Challenges also remain. Almost all the partner countries lack a natural home for peacebuilding and CivCap. It is clear who deals with peace-keeping and development issues, but there is no equivalent focal point or mechanism that takes responsibility for peacebuilding related issues. This means that the Network partners have to deal with several government departments or agencies simultaneously, and that none of them takes full ownership of the agenda. Some countries are also ambiguous about the CivCap concept and the terminology used within the field of peacebuild-ing more broadly. Usage of less sensitive language is important. Under-standing the connotations and interpretations of the peacekeep-ing/peacebuilding terminology and choosing the right wording is essen-tial to tackle challenges faced in the partner countries. As the Baseline Study demonstrates, the partners discovered that they needed to adapt the CivCap narrative in order to find national agendas to link up with, and this in itself was also an important insight that the CivCap Network was able to bring to the UN CivCap debate.

Each of the partners have their own programmes and busy schedules that may challenge timely contributions to the output and activities of the Network. In order to deal with this it has been agreed that the Net-work will develop a yearly plan, presenting expected outcomes, activities, and deadlines. It is also necessary to have a clear division of roles among the partners, especially when the Network and partners work on the same subject matter. It has been agreed that the Network's focus will always be the collective perspective of its members, so that the individual partners can focus on their national and regional perspectives. In this way there should be a clear distinction between the identity of the Net-work's focus and that of the partners. In addition, the capacities of each partner institute will be mapped so that sub-groups can be formed to work on specific topics that are listed on the Network agenda. Finally, the partners suggested forging stronger linkages amongst them, further strengthening the Network and creating the possibility for exchanges of researchers and visiting fellowships.

**Future Plans**

On the basis of the challenges identified, and the lessons learned to date, the Network intends to broaden its focus beyond CivCap, while remaining within the broad sphere of peacebuilding and the security-development nexus. To reflect this broadening of the scope, the Network will continue its work under a new name: the Peace Capacities Network. The Network's main focus will be on the individual and collective capacities, policies and mechanisms that exist within partner countries, and it will address the interface between international peace, security, and development activities. The Network will pursue this common agenda via three main, but closely interlinked pillars of interest: 1) CivCap; 2) The Post-2015 Development Agenda (especially the peace and development nexus); and 3) Peace Operations (especially the peacekeeping/peacebuilding-, or security and development nexus).

The Network will use the CivCap pillar to build on its existing work on civilian capacities, and to take it further under the motto 'moving from policy to practice'. Partners will, together with national counterparts, identify and appoint national focal points, establish national mechanisms that can take responsibility for coordinating and facilitating secondments, identify and address bottlenecks, and enable deployments.

The Network will use the Post-2015 Development Agenda to stimulate debate at the national level, and collectively among partner countries. Discussions will focus on the question whether the Post-2015 Development Agenda should include peacebuilding goals and the peace and development nexus more generally, for instance in the context of the work of development agencies of the respective partner countries. Internationally the partners will work together to stimulate the engagement of their partner countries in the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

The Network will use the Peace Operations pillar to stimulate national and collective interest, awareness and knowledge on the peace, security and development nexus generally, and the peacekeeping/peacebuilding nexus in particular.

For 2014, the 2013 Annual Meeting agreed on a number of activities, including:

(i)     A seminar on the perspectives of new and emerging donor countries on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, and especially the inclusion (or not) of peacebuilding goals - potentially to be hosted by Turkey;

(ii)    A seminar on a Peace Operations topic, possibly on the UN policy on the peacekeeping/peacebuilding nexus - potentially to be hosted by India; and

(iii)   The next annual meeting, to focus on the interlinkages (and thus inter-agency cooperation) between CivCap, peacebuilding, technical cooperation and development - potentially hosted by Indonesia.

## Conclusion

In sum, the CivCap Network can look back on a number of achievements since its inception two years ago. As a south-south-north network, the peer-to-peer exchanges have produced a comprehensive and comparative overview on the state of civilian capacities in the partner countries, identifying lessons learned, best practices and new areas of engagement. By sharing valuable country expertise and different perspectives, the Network created new knowledge on South-South cooperation, as well as on the perspectives of emerging countries on issues of peacekeeping and peacebuilding. In addition to that, the Network engaged governments and stimulated cooperation with the UN, LAS and civil society. As such, it has placed the CivCap issue on the agenda and contributed to policymaking, both nationally and internationally.

Looking back on these achievements and the expertise available in the partner countries, the Network aims to further strengthen the partnership while broadening its scope beyond CivCap. The Network will embark on a new phase of engagement, focusing on issues within the broad sphere of peacebuilding and the security-development nexus. It will continue its work as the Peace Capacities Network and pursue a common agenda via three main pillars of interest: CivCap, the Post-2015 Development Agenda, and Peace Operations. In doing so the partners aim to maintain the Network's momentum, deepen its contribution to knowledge creation and policymaking, and strengthen the engagement with national and international stakeholders