



Parliamentary Centre
Le Centre parlementaire

The Parliamentary Centre was honoured to be called as a witness during the meeting of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence on September 21, 2016. This intervention was to support the study conducted by the Committee on issues related to the Defence Policy Review undertaken by the Canadian government. The below are the opening remarks by Ms. Petra Andersson-Charest, Director of Programs, on the Parliamentary Centre's behalf.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair and Committee Members, for giving the opportunity to the Parliamentary Centre to appear before the Committee today.

The Parliamentary Centre is a Canadian, not-for-profit, non-partisan organisation. For almost 50 years, the Centre has supported good governance practices at the national, subnational and regional levels. We have helped strengthen more than 120 legislatures around the world in their lawmaking, oversight and representative roles, working closely with all relevant institutions and actors of governance, including civil society and the media. While our work is global, we started as a support centre to the Canadian Parliament on international affairs, trade and defence.

I will focus my remarks on why the Parliamentary Centre is supportive of a “Whole-of-Government Approach” linked to peace operations, and on the importance of ensuring that good governance is a critical component of this approach to reinforce security and build sustainable peace.

Canada is committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It recognizes that there can be no sustainable development without peace, and no peace and security without sustainable development. **Our experience is also that there can be no sustainable development without good governance.**

Good governance can be seen as the immune system that helps provide the stability, reliability and predictability needed to ensure rule of law, citizen security, a business climate favourable to investment and national prosperity. This helps mitigate state fragility and conflict.

Good governance also provides the best possible process for a decision-making that is inclusive, transparent and accountable, as well as equitable and meaningful at all levels. And it is one of the most effective ways to empower nations to take ownership of their own efforts to achieve stability and peace.

Peace operations require political will and the relevant capacity. Many conflicts are only resolved – or prevented - when the different stakeholders can reconcile their views and agree on how to build a stable, functioning model of governance. **Building peace and good governance are inseparably connected! The first cannot happen without the other!**

Support to build strong and effective institutions should therefore be seen as one of many tools in a comprehensive toolbox Canada can use for conflict prevention, peace building and post-conflict reconstruction. We recognize and strongly support the idea that a combination of tools, and actors, need to be used during the different stages of peace operations. Further, the tools used will have to be adjusted depending on the unique historical, cultural and political context of each country.

When engaging in peace operations it is important that Canada moves forward with a comprehensive and holistic approach built on cooperation and coordination between different actors, such as the military, police, diplomatic corps, civilian experts, and organizations working to support democratic development, humanitarian assistance or disaster relief.

Resources available for peace operations, in Canada and elsewhere, are not likely to increase at the same pace as the security challenges around the world. Canada will need to do more with less and will need to be innovative to meet these challenges.

This is why the Parliamentary Centre supports a holistic or a “Whole-of-Government Approach”. Increased coordination between – and within - the departments of Global Affairs, National Defence, and Public Safety is required to jointly identify gaps and to avoid overlaps. When we combine the knowledge of the highly skilled personnel from our military and police force with that of Canadian organizations and experts, it will add value to our peace operations. It is important that this joint action is effective, efficient and results-oriented. It needs to be based on a common understanding of *what is a successful peace operation*, and have well-defined criteria to determine progress and measure success.

To ensure that good governance becomes a critical component to reinforce security and build a sustainable peace, the existing gap in this support needs to be addressed. Despite increased focus on governance in development assistance projects and the revamped Peace and Stabilization Operations Program under Global Affairs, **long approval processes are an obstacle for effective, relevant and timely engagement.**

When working with fragile states or countries making strides towards a peaceful development, **time is always of essence.** Canada has the mechanism to respond to natural or man-made disasters through the Disaster Assistance Response Team.

The Parliamentary Centre recommends that a similar mechanism be put in place to respond quickly when governance systems are failing and result in escalating security challenges. This could be mirrored on the UK’s across-government and fast-reaction mechanism called **the Conflict Stabilization and Security Fund Framework**. The Parliamentary Centre is among the organisations shortlisted to participate in this framework.

In closing, the Parliamentary Centre would like to stress that **to ensure the success and sustainability of Canada’s peace operations, good governance cannot be overlooked.**

I thank you again, Mr. Chair and members of the Committee, for your time and look forward to your questions.