

**SADC TRAINING NEEDS FOR PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS:
THE CASE FOR WIDER FUTURE ROLE OF THE RPTC**

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1. INTRODUCTION

Background

SADC member states face the challenge of how to distribute limited resources for peacekeeping operations without a clear understanding of what SADC peacekeeping forces are composed of expected to do, type of training and education required. Any deployment of such contingent forces without proper education and training will be catastrophic. The difficulty of achieving such an understanding is often underestimated because of differences in the understanding of peacekeeping among member states. In this case clearly defining peacekeeping is fundamental for the need to have a training establishment such as the RPTC for the SADC region.

This study presents a descriptive, narrative form, rather than an empirical report because the purpose is to capture some of experiences of Regional Peacekeeping Training Centre (RPTC) for the purpose of constructing and communicating what the Centre is, what it has done, and its future wider role for peace support operations in the Southern African Development Community region. According to Cawthra G. du Pisan A. and Omari A. (2007) state that Regions or Sub-regions can be defined in many different ways; through geographical position, trade or through internal or external recognition¹. They however argue that “the division of the world into regions is not as clear as the UN charter might have envisaged, and is further complicated by the development of sub-regional organisations, especially in Africa where the regional organisation, the AU, is shadowed by a number of sub-regional organisations and one of them is SADC region”. Even with different awareness of security threats, differences in security structures, and other challenges facing member states individually, and collectively, the relationship of SADC to the RPTC has been unclear. The latest indications, however, show that the Centre falls under the director of politics and security department in the secretariat ²²

The main purpose of the research was to determine the extent to which the Regional Peacekeeping Training Centre (RTPC), staff colleges, academic institutions, donors and Non-Governmental Organizations provide training and education to the SADC security sector relevant to peace support operations. The result of suggest gaps between what is needed, what is available, and what is in short supply to run Peace Support Operations at RPTC effectively and efficiently. In addition, the researchers were requested to include policy recommendations in order to strengthen SADC capacity in training and education for PSO. The focus of the paper sought to put emphasis on training needs and education for SADC military, police and civilian personnel before they are deployed for peace support operations. The ultimate aim of the research therefore was to promote guidance concerning PSO training in the SADC region for all members states to benefit from the RPTC³

¹ See Cawthra, G. du Pisan, A , and Omari, A. (2007). Security and Democracy in Southern Africa: Gavin Cawthra Comparative perspectives on regional security co-operation among developing countries.

² See Oasthuizen, G. (2006). The Southern African Development Community, the organization, its policies and prospects, Institute for Global Dialogue, Midland south Africa p 299.

³ Ibid p

2. Conceptualising Peace Support operations in SADC

Given the much publicized literature on peacekeeping there has been recent attempt in the 21st century to think conceptually about its changing roles in global politics. "In the past most scholars identified peacekeeping as providing a mechanism for resolving conflict without direct intervention; secondly it mobilized international society to make a commitment to the maintenance of peace, and finally it has been conceived as a diplomatic key opening the way to further negotiation for a peaceful resolution of conflicts". Long gone is the thinking that led to experiences in Somalia, Rwanda and Srebrenica. Hence, peace-support operations concept came into being. According to Bellamy A.J, Williams, P. and Griffin S. (2007) Peace-support operations concept refers to peacekeeping, peace enforcement and war fighting. It focuses on the need to match mandate and means which the earlier wider peacekeeping units did not have⁴. SADC's inclusion of peace support operation training is visible at the Regional Peacekeeping Training Centre (RPTC) in Zimbabwe and this is a very welcome idea although it has been accorded very little support by member states until recently. The acceptance of member states that RPTC should fall under the director of politics and security department in the secretariat has been welcome idea although it has taken them a long time to recognize the importance of RPTC.

There is a broad agreement in SADC region as well as international society that traditional peacekeeping and managing transition operations can play important roles in either encouraging dialogue between states or assisting with the implementation of a peace accord. It is an expected norm that "SADC has to co-ordinate the participation of members in regional and international peace support capacity of national defence forces, promote the joint training of civilian police for such missions, promote, the interoperability of military equipment to be used in such operations and conduct joint multinational exercises in the region and globally". The issue, however for SADC, is one of training and capability of the personnel and perhaps willingness of such training to be shared among member states. In the course of conducting training whether on national, regional and at all levels, the training materials, courses, and mission doctrines have to be standardised in the region in line with UN doctrines⁵. The uses of peace support operation forces will naturally vary with the environment, size and stability of the region, but the symbolic function of peacekeeping forces in SADC is very important, in underlining the existence of collective security within the region and globally. The 21st century has witnessed the changing conduct of peacekeeping, especially seen by the large retreat from "the traditional wider peacekeeping." Unlike before, peacekeeping duties in the future are likely going to be subcontracted to regional organizations and alliances and are going to take lead in such area as conflict prevention, election and human rights monitoring, and military security⁶. SADC as regional community

⁴ Bellamy, A.J, Williams, P. and Griffin S. (2007). *Understanding Peacekeeping*. Cambridge; Blackwell p 172.

⁵ See Oosthuizen, G. (2006) p

⁶ See Bellmy, A.J, et al (2007) 273-274. *Understanding Peacekeeping: wither peacekeeping?*

has to have well educated and trained personnel for such duties, hence, the total commitment by member states for the RPTC.

Although conceptually sound, peace support operations have run into difficulty in practice no matter how much training. The main issue is that peace support operations concept is not universally applied or endorsed. However, since the end of the Cold War, the UN has entered into a variety of relationships with regional Organisations in Africa like Economic Community of West Africa states (ECOWAS) in matters of international peace and security. In Africa ECOWAS has the most sophisticated security management system, and the most experienced in terms of peacekeeping and the name of the security arm is known as ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG)⁷. The UN and regional peacekeeping forces have engaged in joint activities in Sierra Leone and Liberia. In others, UN has delegated the use of force to particular regional organisation under chapter VII as in Sierra Leone (1997) under ECOWAS. Most regional organisations developed an increasing awareness of their potential role in this field by incorporating peacekeeping activities within their formal remit. SADC created its organ for Politics, Defence and Security in 1996⁸. The regions therefore are responsible for the training and readiness of their committed forces with a view to being able to conduct peace support operations in a multi-national environment. Hence SADC is responsible for the growth and continued improvement of the operating readiness of its peace support operations forces.

3. What is RPTC and its mandate

The very notion of the need to establish the SADC Regional Peace Keeping Centre (RPTC) was mooted in 1995 following a peacekeeping seminar and peacekeeping course for Battalion Commanders which were held at Zimbabwe Staff College as a joint venture between Zimbabwe and the United Kingdom. The pooling together of participants from SADC countries and other regions within Africa brought to light the realisation of the need for well coordinated peace support training which hitherto was exclusively being conducted by individual countries.

Such a development, it was thought quite correctly, would bring the much needed harmonisation in training standards while also ensuring that SADC's aspiration of collective security as envisaged in the Mutual Defence Pact⁹ is fulfilled. Zimbabwe was later assigned by the SADC Interstate Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC) to coordinate peace support training in the region during its 18th Session of the ISDSC Meeting which was held in Lilongwe, Malawi in October 1996. In 1999, a purpose built facility was opened to provide a permanent home for the institution and was followed by the recommendation to mainstream the RPTC under the SADC

⁷ See Cawthra, G. et al (2007) p 36

⁸ See Bellamy, A.J. et al (2007) p 213 the UN and Regional Organizations

⁹ The SADC Mutual Defence Pact signed in 19...; A tool for ensuring collective security in the region.

Secretariat which was later endorsed by the Summit in Grand Baie, Mauritius in 2004¹⁰.

According to RPTC Brief Information Paper¹¹, the organisation falls directly under SADC Secretariat (Directorate of Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation) in line with the Host Agreement signed in May 2005 and its subsequent official handover on 5th August 2005. Its main role is therefore to create a peaceful and secure environment through opening of training by coordinating with cooperating partners, African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN) through SADC so that specialised courses are developed to fill the training gaps. The nobility of the RPTC idea cannot therefore be argued if one considers that it is an essential tool towards conflict prevention and management. What can be argued however is whether all the training needs are fully met by the RPTC as an institution in its present status. Indeed, political and security threats are many and coupled with other challenges such as the overlapping membership issue, do tend to have an impact directly or indirectly on such arrangements¹². It is therefore important to restate the vision, mission and objectives of RPTC which should provide a foundation for a critical analysis as the paper seeks to identify the actual training needs. These are set out in RPTC Brief Information Paper¹³ as follows:

Vision

The vision of the RPTC is to be a reputable and responsive Centre of Excellence in training, research and development of capacities and expertise in Peace Support Operations (PSO).

Mission statement

The mission of the RPTC is to study the theory and practice of PSO and to coordinate peace support training in the SADC Region as mandated by the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operations.

Objectives

The RPTC objectives are in line with the core objectives of the strategic plan for the Organ (SIPO) which aims at creating a peaceful and politically stable and secure environment. SIPO exists:

- a. To promote regional cooperation in peace and security among SADC Member States.
- b. To built capacity in conflict prevention and conflict management including PSO.
- c. To train peacekeeping practitioners and provide training enabling all SADC Member States to take part in PSO.

¹⁰ The Regional Peace Keeping Training Centre: Peace for a Common Future, 'Brief Information', Harare, Zimbabwe and 2004 Summit proceedings.

¹¹ Ibid p.2

¹² See Oosthuizen, G. (2006). The Southern African Development Community, The Organization, its policies and prospects, Institute for Global Dialogue, Midrand, South Africa p284

¹³ See RPTC: Brief Information, Harare, Zimbabwe.

- d. To assist planning for SADC peacekeeping formations and for SADC PSO exercises.
- e. To develop and deliver peacekeeping training in line with SADC, AU and UN standards.
- f. To implement the objectives of the SIPO and SADC Development Agenda related to peace and security.

RPTC is therefore the hub of all PSO training needs.

Sovereignty is often understandably dear to the heart of most SADC countries, because it was hard-won through liberation struggles. However, Gavin warns that there can be no progress beyond a certain point if states are not prepared to cede or transfer some of their sovereignty to the collective¹⁴.

This paper, therefore, focuses on training needs for PSO in relation to SADC structures, its policy frameworks and institution to determine the training gaps and the way forward.

3.1 Examination of policy frameworks

According to the vision of SADC as stipulated in Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP), the future being envisaged is the one that brings the countries to a common future, a future that will ensure economic well-being, improvement of the standards of living and quality of life, freedom and social justice and peace and security for the peoples of Southern Africa. Together with the Strategic Indicative Plan of the Organ (SIPO)¹⁵, the two documents form the basis for broad guidelines for achieving the long term goals while ensuring direction for the development of the organisation's policies and projects. The SIPO, which was approved in August 2003 by the Summit and was officially launched in August 2004, seeks to provide a five-year strategic plan for implementing the protocol of the Organ on politics, defence and security. Political, defence, state security and public security are its four main sectors.

A quick analysis of SIPO shows that it lacks the accompanying implementation frameworks, although the implementation workshops identifying specific priority areas are being done on a bi-annual basis. It is common knowledge that the first five year activity span stipulated in the SIPO guidelines is almost elapsing; this should raise questions on how useful the implementation frameworks shall be in terms of synchronisation of timings. It must be noted, however, that the activities of SADC Brigade which can be said to be generally in line with the AU Roadmap, shall continue to test the spirit of SIPO in terms of regional collective security. This should in turn reflect upon the activities of the RPTC in terms of how valuable the institution has been in contributing to the cause.

¹⁴ See Gavin : Key Challenges for SADC Security Cooperation – FORPRISA Annual Conference Proceedings 2006, p 95

¹⁵ Ibid p 125; See SADC MOU on the establishment and maintenance of SADC BRIG, Article 19. See Strategic Indicative Plan of the Organ, 2003, SADC Secretariat; See Gavin Cawthra's article 'Key Challenges.

Article 13 of SADC Brig MOU will certainly be put to test when examining the commitment of the state parties in term of their responses through pledges and participation¹⁶. The trickle down effect should help in the deeper analysis by examining the levels of commitment by which states relate and view the RPTC in its present status. The next question is whether the RPTC has any levels of cooperation with staff colleges and academic institutions in the region.

It is important to start by looking at the question of how the MOU should be operationalized. The authors made the following observations on this question.

- a. That any MOU enters into force on the day of signing or some days after signing as per agreement. In this particular case the date was2005. One would hasten to add that no consideration was given to the actual mechanism for operationalization other than attaching the importance of the document to the AU Roadmap which has time lines for the full operationalization of the Standby Brigades themselves.
- b. That SADC Brig MOU differs remarkably from other policy frameworks such as the SIPO because the MOU was supposed to be in place to regulate and cover all the envisaged six scenarios of the African Standby Force upon its launch. This entails that upon the official launch of SADC Brig (17 Aug 2007), the unit was supposed to be ready for any sizeable deployment if required with its relevant binding documents in place.
- c. That the pending three SADC Brig Exercises (Map Exercise (MAPEX) in Angola, Command Post Exercise (CPX) in Mozambique and the Field Training Exercises (FTX) in South Africa¹⁷ in 2009 would have provided a perfect platform to fine tune any aspects of MOU that would have required re-alignment with reality perspectives.
- d. That the criteria for the appointment of the Force Commander which was based on the approved Roster Model may not work properly when a particular nation's contribution to the force is seen to be very insignificant or clearly non-existent.
- e. That the issue of training (in-country) need close liaison to be established between the Planning Element (in Botswana) and standardisation efforts by RPTC (in Zimbabwe). Indeed, there is a need for a proper synchronisation which may affect the existing MOU arrangements.
- f. That the region consists of landlocked countries, littoral and island states which may have their own priority risk areas. How does the region rank these threats and the manner in which they must be tackled?

Having made the above observations, the authors discerned the following as the points which can help in the operationalization of the MOU.

- a. That despite obvious uncertainties and implications, the date of operationalization of the SADC Brig MOU should remain the date that it was

¹⁶ Challenges for SADC Security Co-operation FORPRISA Annual Conference Proceedings '06 pg 95.

SADC Brig MOU signed 2006, Article 13

¹⁷ See Proceedings of SADC Ministerial Committee of the Organ held in Durban from 16th to July 2008

agreed to enter into force which is the date of its adoption2005. The issue of MOU should be looked into holistically as part of several mechanisms towards the operationalization of the AU Standby Force. Since it is stated that SADC Brigade can be deployed with a mandate of the SADC Summit, the AU or the UN, it is imperative that any arrangements be consistent with the operationalization of each structure set.

- b. Recognising that different nations have different legal systems, legal experts need to be consulted at every stage of decision making process to avert possible contesting issues of the spirit of SADC BRIG MOU and those of national interests.
- c. That any decisions to expand the management structure of RPTC and its structure should naturally lead to re-examination of the present location of the Institution in Zimbabwe and re-alignment with the changes will require to be done.

3.2 Organisational structure

The structure of RPTC as approved by the SADC Ministerial Committee of the Organ (MCO) has the post of Commandant, Deputy Commandant, Three Training Officers (Civilian, Military and Police), Administration and Finance Officer, Research Officer, Information and Technology Officer and a Librarian¹⁸. In line with the Agreement between the Government of Zimbabwe and the SADC, there are additional Junior Ranks support staff totalling to thirty three and their recruitment is done in accordance with the SADC Rules and Procedures.

The conclusive observation of the paper is that, RPTC shall remain the training hub for SADC and as such it is important to also evaluate whether it has the capacity to handle all the PSO needs for the Region.

What are the other institutions in the region that also conduct PSO training? Are there mechanisms for RPTC to evaluate that training? Is RPTC able to know which courses are run by such institutions?

Several investigations revealed that there is no collaboration between RPTC academic institutions or military colleges in the region except RPTC's relationship with Zimbabwe Defence Staff College and few notable academic institutions in Zimbabwe.

3.3 Training needs analysis: The issues

There are quite a wide range of courses that the RPTC conduct and there are also various PSO courses and seminars that staff colleges and other academic institutions in the region run. While the focus of such training in SADC countries may only be to satisfy the national goals, the RPTC seeks to breach that gap in the spirit of collective good, and that linkage needs to be exploited further.

^s See *ibid*, RPTC Brief Information

In the context of policy, RPTC needs to be guided on what percentage of training effort it should devote to other mother organisations such as AU and UN recognising that some of the mandates emanate directly from these. In the training the Brigade, it will equally be important to determine what percentage of specific training needs should relate to the 'generic' support of training needs. The ability to determine likely priority missions will certainly go a long way in deciding what courses should be conducted: in what order and at what levels.

The issue of all the components (the military, police and civilian) getting involved, should also be taken into consideration and if possible, determine percentages of involvement in the context of mandate and/or training required whether be it peacekeeping, peace building, gender, human rights or child protection endeavours etc. The general observation is that most courses have been hugely military oriented¹⁹ and hence running counter to the spirit of an all inclusive endeavour in multi dimensional setting.

The other question that also needs to be addressed is the one on the levels of training that RPTC should offer vis-à-vis those that national peacekeeping centres conduct. Should these be strategic, operational or tactical? So far there has been no co-ordination and no efforts to bring them into the structure for standardisation purposes. It follows therefore that the RPTC assumes the role of offering courses at the tactical and operational levels. There is a need to occasionally exercise or hold seminars to test the theories taught at strategic levels in other academic institutions.

3.4 Funding challenges

Since its inception in 1995, the RPTC has received considerable support in terms of funding with the UK and Denmark. The Royal Government of Denmark signed an MOU with Zimbabwe in 1997 and such financial assistance saw the RPTC being funded up to 2001. SADC Secretariat has since taken over the funding responsibility. Since there are no specific number of courses that RPTC is mandated to run per year, it is difficult to predict and come up with a standard budget since the courses are almost on ad hoc basis.

SADC in general has been experiencing financial constraints in trying to fund all its programmes and it can be concluded that RPTC funding is nowhere near its desired mark. Should the organ decide to give the RPTC a wider responsibility as the custodian of all SADC PSO training needs, the issue of funding will certainly need a critical re-look. Giving RPTC a wider responsibility as advocated by the authors shall mean more activities, increased staff, increased resources and hence increased expenditure.

The spirit of contribution by member states which should be encouraged but did not seem to yield instant results in 2002 when RPTC needed some bail out, should be re-emphasised and re-ignited through re-affirmation by highest political decision

¹⁹ See Report on Independent Study Commissioned by the Directorate of SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security, 25 Feb 2008.

making body – the Summit. Ideally, the International Co-operating Partners (ICP's) could then be engaged to assist by augmenting the efforts.

3.5 Recommendations

The overall analysis of this paper is that there are a lot of training needs for PSO whose answer lies in increasing the capacity of RPTC to reflect the multi-dimensional nature of the institution while acknowledging that RPTC should indeed remain the centre for such activities. It is therefore the broad recommendation of this paper that the SADC RPTC should be given wider responsibilities with carefully set mechanisms to provide enduring support consistent with the following specific recommendations:

- a. That the whole current management structure of the RPTC comprising of military, police and civilian components be expanded to embrace the whole spectrum of multi-dimensional nature of the training needs for the whole region. The expansion should be gradual and phased out with short to medium term undertakings put in place.
- b. That the whole expansion process should be fully funded in line with all the PSO activities envisaged, recognising that funding is very important for the success of any mission or undertaking.
- c. That the RPTC be given the mandate to co-ordinate, monitor and evaluate the courses being conducted by the states and institutions in the region so that it may concentrate on the gaps identified and hence leverage and maximise on the region's capacities without duplicating the effort.
- d. That the core functions of RPTC should focus at tactical and operational dimensions of PSO for all components while charging it with the responsibility of planning all major exercises in close liaison with the Planning Element of SADC Brigade in Gaborone, Botswana.
- e. That SADC RPTC be given responsibility to coordinate all exercises with AU and UN while an independent statutory oversight body be identified to ensure that RPTC activities conform to the aspirations of SADC with regard to its PSO training needs.
- f. That because of the widening of RPTC scope, issues of new location for the institution and possibilities of having satellite locations within or outside Zimbabwe, be fully explored.
- g. That in view of economic hardships faced by the region, second line equipment pledged towards SADC Brigade should be concentrated at the Logistics Main Depot (LMD) as a radical move to ensure meaningful operationalization of the standby concept. The present pledges of equipment are far too abstract and may not be readily available should the six AU scenarios begin to pan out. This radical approach, as we approach the 2010 timeline for the ASF, will be necessary since the region's effort for its own LMD is still very much at conceptualisation stage although the area has been identified in Botswana. The human resource pledges should not pose a big challenge although these not need to be concentrated at one place.

- h. That several functions shall need realignment in view of this strategic change and the redefining of relationship with other partners and actors such as academic institutions, African Peace Support Training Association (APSTA), International Association of Peacekeeping Training Centres (IAPTC). There shall be a need to outsource other services as may be necessary while Policy and Research Department shall equally need to increase its capacity.
- i. That SADC Brig MOU should enter into force on the date agreed by the three quarters of all members of the Summit which is the date of its adoption.

The new concept of peace operations in the global politics have complex mandates that cover political, security humanitarian, development and human rights dimensions. In order for SADC region to manage these new multi-dimensional operations it must develop, educate and train competencies of its expected personnel in the RPTC as an integrated force composed of military, police, immigration and other necessary civilian components. Such kind of operations must be supported by a number of civilian components that consist of functional specialists selected to address the elements of the SADC in SIPO and SADC Brigade policy frameworks.

Therefore challenges facing SADC's training needs will be the absence of: trained integrated peacekeeping training centre management structure, that will consist civilians and security sector personnel. Training at this integrated centre must be broken up in three main categories as follows:

- a) Elementary peace support training
- b) Mission oriented peace support operation training and
- c) Peace support training specific to the area of operation.

Member states contribution troops must give the necessary training to their military personnel before sending them to SADC missions. Personnel who participate in peacekeeping operations surely need to use competencies which they do not necessarily acquire in the course of their usual military, police, and civilian training. These basic competencies for peacekeeping training are the same for all peacekeeping operations.

3.6 Conclusion

This paper has sought to highlight the PSO training needs for the SADC Region in line with the SIPO. In the process it has reconfirmed and identified RPTC as the fulcrum for the attainment of such training goals. The paper is therefore strongly recommending that the mandate and scope of RPTC be dutifully expanded to embrace the multi-dimensional aspect of the PSO needs. With such a recommendation, it is hoped that RPTC can be given a much wider responsibility than its current mandate. Obviously, with such an ambitious new programme, the establishment of a new management structure and its relevant activities shall call for unqualified support in terms of political will from the SADC Summit and its subordinate structures to ensure that these are adequately funded.

As a result of the study there are clear and fundamental gaps between the capabilities needed to the current capacity of RPTC. The areas of concern revealed by the research are: lack of political will, financial resources, equipment, standardization of language and indeed lack of training.

This will entail that SADC will be required to over stretch its financial muscle but with the realisation that it will be worth the effort in the long term since PSO has firmly emerged to be an intrinsic part of the meaningful and modern conflict management tool.