

International Day of UN Peacekeepers Conference

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Address

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Stabilisation Unit

Mr Carver introduced the UK government's [Stabilisation Unit](#), explaining the principal reasons for its creation. These had developed through experience in Iraq, following the military invasion in 2003, where it was clear that cross-sectoral cadres of expertise, from both inside and outside government, were needed to be formalised to deal with conflict. The proposed unit would not be a policymaking body, rather one to deliver that policy.

In reviewing the considerable evolution that has taken place over the intervening decade, he cited continuing work in Helmand which has been a key focus of activity for much of that time. But new necessary areas of activity have been identified, including a focus on security and justice. The purpose of the Unit is now currently defined as **"To help HMG respond to crises & tackle the causes of instability overseas"**, and it supports the [Building Stability Overseas Strategy](#) (BSOS) which underpins the UK Government's work on conflict prevention and in conflict-affected and fragile states. It is founded on three mutually supporting pillars: Early warning; rapid crisis prevention and response; and Investing in upstream prevention. SU is currently supporting this work in around thirty countries across the world, including Pakistan, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Palestine and Kosovo. In May 2011, it deployed an international Stabilisation Response Team to assess Libya's interim stabilisation needs.

It serves to champion an integrated approach and encourage closer civilian-military working. Also, it seeks to capture and promote lessons and be a Centre of Excellence for HMG on Conflict, Stabilisation, Security & Justice.

Mr Carver then turned to the Stabilisation Unit's work in International Policing Assistance in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States (FCAS). This involves supporting the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding, as witnessed in Liberia, Sierra Leone and now Afghanistan. He cited the proposals outlined in the recent [World Development Report](#) to support political settlements, and the delivery of security and justice as key components of this, with policing often providing the public face of the state. The Stabilisation Unit sets out to be the "one-stop shop" on international policing for the British government. In seeking to professionalise the supply of serving officers, the Unit supports the deployment of policing expertise, both retired officers & serving officers. Currently forty-nine officers are serving overseas, the vast majority serving as part of EU missions (Afghanistan, Kosovo, OPTs) and two serving with the United Nations.

Mr Carver then turned to the challenges and opportunities facing the Unit in supporting this work. He explained the complexity of policing assistance, which is highly sensitive in any environment, but particularly in politically fragile environments. We have learnt that seeking to impose blueprints and models from elsewhere has had limited impact, and that there is a need to be very clear about both the context in which policing operates, and what the police are for in that context. HMG often has multiple interests in policing overseas, and it is essential to ensure coordination of effort. And, of course, in the field, there will be other international actors involved as in the DRC, South Sudan and Afghanistan.

But there are real opportunities also, he reassured his audience. A strong partnership between the Stabilisation Unit and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) is helping tackle issues of both demand and supply. He welcomed police leadership in this area, both from ACPO and the new College of Policing, that recognises the benefits this work can bring UK police services. There is also a need to attract more women officers, a challenge recognised by the government.