



Guidelines

UN Strategic Assessment

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Approved on behalf of the Secretary-General

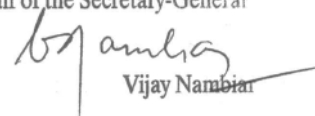

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. INTRODUCTION.....	2
B. SETTINGS AND TRIGGERS	5
C. THE ITF AND THE STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS	6
Convening the ITF	6
Strategic Assessment Terms of Reference and Workplan	7
Organization and roles and responsibilities	7
Duration	7
Desk Review.....	8
Analysis	8
Field visit(s).....	9
Consultations with external stakeholders	9
The Strategic Assessment report	10
Internal Consultations and endorsement of report.....	10
Administration, logistics and budget	10
D. METHODOLOGY OF THE STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT.....	11
E. DECISION AND FOLLOW UP	16
Policy Committee submission.....	16
Approval.....	17
F. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS.....	17
G. GUIDANCE ADMINISTRATION.....	17
H. REFERENCES.....	18
I. ANNEXURES	18
Annex A: Generic template for Terms of Reference for Integrated Task Forces (ITF) and Integrated Mission Task Forces (IMTF).....	19
Annex B: Guide for Strategic Assessment documents.....	22
Annex C: Conflict Analysis Methodologies	24

A. INTRODUCTION

1. **Purpose:** These guidelines outline a process for UN staff to conduct an inter-departmental and inter-agency Strategic Assessment of a political crisis, conflict or post-conflict situation. The Strategic Assessment provides a mechanism for joint analysis and strategic discussions that cut across the political, security, development, humanitarian and human rights aspects of the UN's work. It brings together the key UN departments and agencies in each of these areas and is intended to allow senior decision-makers, in particular the Secretary-General, to consider new or re-oriented forms of UN engagement based on the country's needs. It builds upon existing department and agency analysis and assessment processes as well as relevant outside research.

2. The Strategic Assessment is an assessment tool, not a planning tool. Its focus is strategic rather than operational. Other forms of assessments such as Technical Assessment Missions (TAM) are generally more frequent and more operational in nature. The Strategic Assessment is a major product in itself, while TAMs are tools that contribute to other products.

3. **Scope:** These guidelines are relevant to all UN personnel responsible for, or tasked with, the development of strategic analysis and options for UN engagement in conflict-affected countries where there may be a need for a multi-dimensional UN strategy for peace consolidation. If deemed appropriate, a Strategic Assessment could be repeated in a country

when there are conditions that warrant a re-orientation of the UN's response. All analysts, desk officers, planners, managers and senior leadership in UN departments and agencies should be aware of these guidelines.

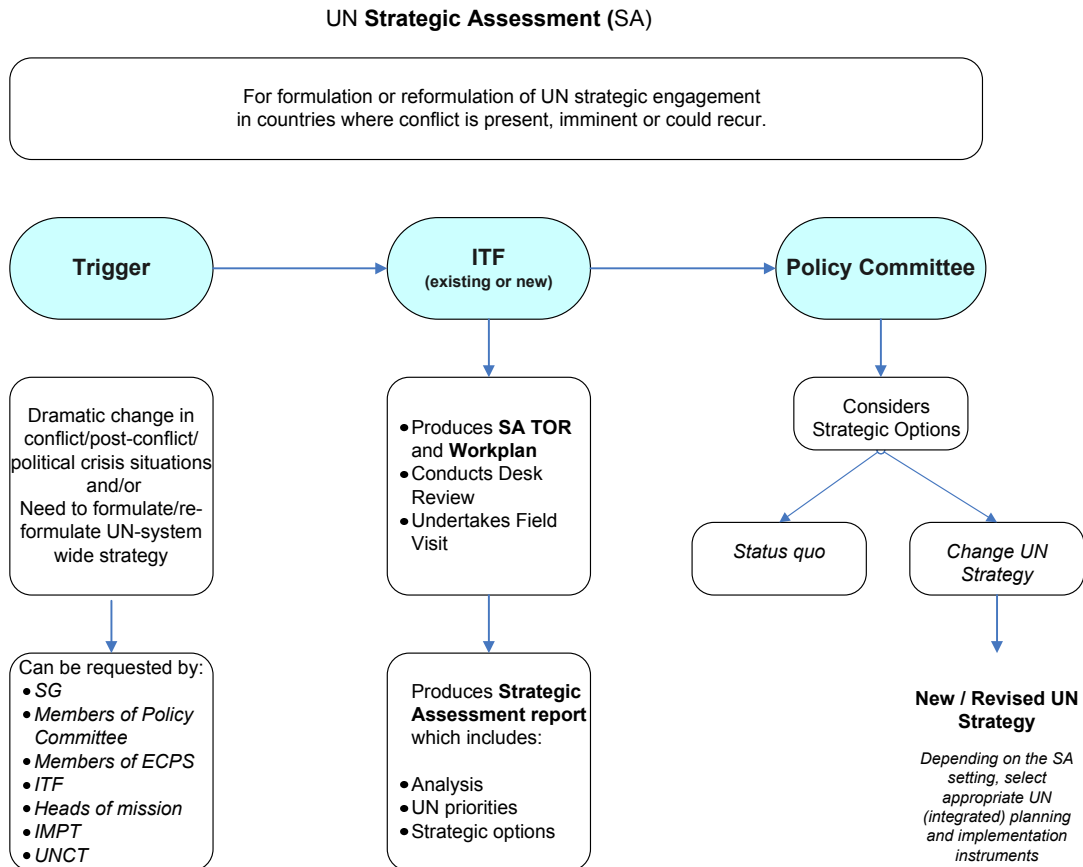
4. These guidelines are written to address **country** situations, not regional issues. However, regional implications will be taken into consideration when there is an intrinsic link with the country-specific situation.

5. *Rationale:* While there are many assessment and planning tools within the UN for conflict and post-conflict situations, there has not been a standardized inter-department/agency tool that assists the UN system to formulate a shared analysis, vision and strategy¹. These guidelines on Strategic Assessments aim to fill that gap.

6. These guidelines have been developed in the context of wider discussions on system-wide integration, integrated planning processes, peacebuilding guidance, and lessons learnt in previous strategic assessment exercises. The Strategic Assessment process may lead to an Integrated Mission Planning Process (IMPP) if a decision is taken by the Secretary-General to initiate integrated planning for a political or peacekeeping mission. However, as noted above, the Strategic Assessment process can be used for a number of other purposes, including in circumstances where a mission/political office already exists or where there is no likely prospect of one being established. Section G of this guidance lists previous guidance and others still in development which shaped the drafting of these Strategic Assessment guidelines.

¹ As noted in the 2006 IMPP guidelines and the 2008 Secretary-General's decision on integration (2008/24), an integrated approach, including the Strategic Assessment, should take full account of recognized humanitarian principles, allow for the protection of humanitarian space, and facilitate effective humanitarian coordination with all humanitarian actors. It should also be reiterated that the main purpose of integration is to maximize the individual and collective impact of the UN.

7. Overview of the Strategic Assessment process and its tools: The following diagram summarizes the Strategic Assessment process, the range of settings it may be conducted in, and the documents it will generate:



8. *Factors contributing to successful Strategic Assessments*: Based on experience to date, there are a number of factors that contribute to the successful conduct of Strategic Assessments. Conversely, the absence of these conditions may result in processes and outcomes that do not meet the basic purpose of a Strategic Assessment, resulting in a significant waste of human and financial resources and, in some cases, loss of trust among UN entities participating in the process. It is therefore critically important that these factors are taken into account in the planning and conduct of a Strategic Assessment. They include:

- a. A strong focus on substantive and strategic priorities for the UN in the relevant country, **based on the country needs**. The analysis should be needs rather than supply driven. Any discussions about how the UN's presence on the ground should be organized (or reorganized) should be driven by this analysis (form has to follow function) and should not be the primary focus of a Strategic Assessment.
- b. Very close collaboration between HQ and the field throughout the process, as well as between the members of the ITF and the senior leadership of their respective departments and agencies.
- c. A clear understanding on the part of the lead department and all its relevant staff that the Strategic Assessment process is intended to be inclusive, transparent and conducted in a manner that fully takes into account the views expressed by all participants.
- d. A clear understanding by all participants that, while the Strategic Assessment is a joint product, the process is not necessarily intended to generate a consensus or a product that incorporates everybody's inputs in verbatim form. While the lead department is responsible for producing and presenting the final Strategic Assessment report, it also has to ensure a strong sense of joint ownership and participation, including by reflecting any substantive disagreements on the analysis or recommendations of the report.
- e. A concerted effort by all participants to ensure that the best possible expertise is available to the Strategic Assessment process, including personnel participating in the ITF² and at the country level, as well as external resources that should be consulted, particularly by the lead department. Efforts should be made to systematically include expertise on human rights and gender.
- f. The leadership of a senior staff member to chair the ITF and lead the field visit. The leader should have extensive and successful experience with running inter-departmental/agency processes and be highly regarded by the main entities involved. The leader should also be well-versed in the principles of integration and its supporting guidance. If the lead department cannot make a suitable senior staff member available, it should request other ITF members to propose candidates for this role.
- g. A clear understanding by all participants that the Strategic Assessment process involves a critical and honest analysis of the main ongoing UN activities. This analysis should include consultations with non-UN stakeholders such as the government of the relevant country, civil society, including women's groups, donors and international NGOs with a significant presence in the country.

B. SETTINGS AND TRIGGERS

9. A Strategic Assessment can be carried out in any political crisis, conflict or post-conflict situation that may warrant a multi-dimensional approach regardless of the type of UN presence

² Integrated Task Force. For the purposes of these guidelines, the term "Integrated Task Force" and ITF refer to both ITFs and Integrated Mission Task Forces (IMTF).

on the ground (e.g. UN Country Team with a Resident Coordinator and/or Humanitarian Coordinator, a peacekeeping operation, a political office, etc.)³

10. A Strategic Assessment is triggered by the need to formulate (or reformulate) the UN's strategy for engagement in a political crisis, conflict or post-conflict situation in a particular country, especially if there is a recognition that different parts of the UN system may lack a common assessment of the situation and/or common understanding of the UN's strategic objectives. In some cases, this need may arise from a drastic change in circumstances, in others it may arise from a sense that the UN is generally underperforming or is without strategic direction in the relevant country.

11. A Strategic Assessment can be requested by a number of UN entities, including:
- a. The Secretary-General
 - b. A member of the Policy Committee
 - c. A member of the Executive Committee on Peace and Security
 - d. The (Headquarters) Integrated Task Force or Integrated Mission Task Force
 - e. The head of a UN peacekeeping operation or Special Political Mission
 - f. The (field) Integrated Mission Planning Team, or
 - g. The UN Country Team

The decision to conduct a Strategic Assessment is taken by:

- a. The Secretary-General (including through the Policy Committee process); or
- b. The Executive Committee on Peace and Security

12. In situations with existing UN peace operations, the Strategic Assessment could contribute to the **reformulation** of the UN's overall strategy and possible reconfiguration of the UN's presence. A Strategic Assessment may have a particular added value in promoting and fostering joint planning and stronger coherence, where the UN already has a multi-dimensional presence but coordination among the UN actors is sub-optimal.

13. While a Strategic Assessment is primarily a UN instrument, its development must take into account the activities and concerns of other non-UN stakeholders to ensure that the UN multi-dimensional response to a political crisis, conflict or post-conflict situation takes into account, as much as possible, the resources and capacities of all those involved in the response.

14. When conducted in the early phase immediately following a peace agreement, the outcomes of the Strategic Assessment should also inform the UN input in the development of a larger peacebuilding and recovery plan, one that highlights key country priorities and response strategies of the UN and other national, regional and international actors.

C. THE ITF AND THE STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Convening the ITF

15. The Strategic Assessment should be undertaken by an Integrated Task Force (ITF)/Integrated Mission Task Force (IMTF). Depending on the country situation to be assessed,

³ If the Strategic Assessment results in the launching of an integrated peace operation including a Special Political Mission, then the IMPP guidelines should be applied (see guidelines on IMPP responsibilities for the Headquarters and the Field).

an ITF⁴ may already exist or one may need to be established. The establishment of an ITF for the purpose of a Strategic Assessment does not presume a structurally integrated UN presence on the ground. The ITF is chaired by the lead department for the relevant country in the UN Secretariat (DPA or DPKO). Every ITF/IMTF is required to have Terms of Reference (TORs), which will vary from case to case. Generic guidelines for TORs for ITFs/IMTFs are attached at Annex A. UN field presences (i.e. the UNCT and UN peace operation if one is present in the country) should be members of the ITF, therefore heavily involved in the shaping and conduct of the Strategic Assessment.

Strategic Assessment Terms of Reference and Workplan

16. The Strategic Assessment TORs articulate the objectives for the Strategic Assessment as well as how and when it is to be carried out. In particular, the objective/aim of the Strategic Assessment is critical, as it frames the entire exercise. As noted later in Section D, the Strategic Assessment is not a comprehensive country analysis. The objective/aim in the TORs should include: a) a brief articulation of the situation and the necessity/opportunity it presents for a potential change in the UN strategy; b) the identification of specific areas of concern; and c) consideration of prior engagements/actions in the country. A guide for drafting the Strategic Assessment TOR is at Annex B. The ITF should develop a Strategic Assessment Workplan as soon as possible. This should be a working document, with a matrix of activities, timeline and division of labor. New versions should be distributed regularly to ITF members including field-counterparts. The minimum components of the workplan should include:

- a. A statement of the objectives and outputs of the Strategic Assessment, derived from the TORs
- b. A matrix of indicative working timeline and activities

Organization and roles and responsibilities

17. An ITF conducting a Strategic Assessment should ensure senior participation for decision-making. ITF members should be empowered to represent their respective department and agencies in the assessment. They should possess the requisite analytical skills and have an expert understanding of the assessment and planning modalities of their department or agency, as well as a thorough understanding of the principles of integration. The ITF could also consider consultant expert advisers and/or one or two dedicated lead writers. The ITF should also consider bringing in specific thematic expertise from non-resident and specialized agencies not represented in the ITF, when a particular thematic issue is salient for the country situation.

18. The ITF may decide to create a sub-group or task team to develop an initial draft, using the full ITF for consultations, revisions and sign-off on a final draft.

Duration

19. There is no strict guideline on the duration of a Strategic Assessment and each case will be determined based on its merits. At the same time, the ITF should ensure the substantive nature of the Strategic Assessment by dedicating at least 2-3 months from inception to conclusion. The ITF also needs to bear in mind any external deadlines, such as requests from the Security Council for recommendations/reports. The ITF should contact the Policy Committee

⁴ As noted previously, for the purpose of these guidelines, the term “ITF” covers both ITF and IMTF.

Secretariat as soon as the Strategic Assessment is initiated to ensure timely consideration of the strategic options.

Desk Review

20. The Strategic Assessment, to the extent possible, should draw upon existing UN analyses and country strategies. The following is an indicative list of the possible existing analyses and the on-line links:

Secretary-General Reports and Security Council Resolutions ([Security Council](#) on-line)
UNDAFs and CCAs ([UNDG](#) on-line)
PRSPs ([IMF](#) and [World Bank](#) on-line)
PCNAs ([UNDG](#) on-line)
Peacebuilding Commission reports, Peacebuilding Strategic Frameworks ([PBC](#) on-line)
Peacebuilding Fund documents ([PBF](#) on-line)
CAPs ([OCHA](#) on-line)
Previous Strategic Assessments (contact relevant desk officer)
UN human rights reports ([OHCHR](#) on-line), reports by special mechanisms of the Human Rights Council ([on-line](#)) and concluding observations by treaty bodies

21. In addition, the Strategic Assessment should draw upon relevant non-UN analyses. This should include analyses provided by important players on the ground, including Member States, regional organizations and NGOs, in order to ensure coherence with their action. An indicative list of documents to be considered includes reports produced by:

Think tanks, academic institutions, research organizations
Human Rights organizations
Women's organizations
Member States documents

22. Each member of the ITF should bring to the attention of the Task Force any relevant analysis that should be considered within the framework of the Strategic Assessment. In particular, the field presences (i.e. UNCT and a UN peace operation if there is one in country) could contribute significantly to the desk review exercise by providing all relevant analyses and assessments. While the Strategic Assessment should not repeat the analyses contained within these documents, it should list the documents that were considered.

23. As part of the desk review, a stakeholder mapping exercise should be undertaken. This would ideally be conducted by the field presences and would map the various actors (national/sub-national government, donors, UN, international and national civil society groups, women's groups, regional actors etc.) and their activities as they relate to peace consolidation in the country. This mapping will assist the Strategic Assessment at a later stage in determining the UN's comparative advantage in meeting certain priority objectives of peace consolidation in the country.

Analysis

24. Detailed guidelines on the analytical methodology of the Strategic Assessment are contained in Section D. While most of the drafting should take place during the field visit, the following steps should ideally be completed at Headquarters, with the participation of field presences (UNCT and field mission, if any): articulation of the main objective of the Strategic

Assessment, desk review of existing documents, stakeholder mapping, and an initial understanding of the main conflict factors. This preliminary work should inform the conduct of the field visit when deciding on meetings with UN and non-UN actors.

Field visit(s)

25. Except for exceptional circumstances, a Strategic Assessment requires at least one field visit by the ITF or by the sub-group developing the initial draft. Wherever possible, the field visit should be undertaken early in the Strategic Assessment process in order to foster active engagement of the UNCT and field mission (if present). The field visits should in general be at least 1-2 weeks in length, to ensure proper consultations as well as time for drafting/redrafting of the Strategic Assessment report.

26. In some cases a field trip may not be possible, e.g. during a crisis when it is not permitted to travel or there is not the time. When a field trip is not possible special measures should be taken to fully capture field-based assessments from all appropriate national, regional and international actors. In all cases, the UNCT and the mission (if present) must be members of the ITF, as indicated in paragraph 15. Where a field trip is not possible, special efforts should also be made to involve country-based UN leadership in the development of both UN priorities and UN strategic options.

Consultations with external stakeholders

27. While the Strategic Assessment is an internal UN process, consultations with external stakeholders and other actors are essential for a number of reasons:

- To ensure that the Strategic Assessment is developed on the basis of the best available expertise and information (including from relevant academic institutions, think tanks, women's groups and NGOs).
- To ensure that the recommended options for UN engagement are properly aligned with national, regional and international initiatives, and that they have the support of key stakeholders (notably Members States, including TCCs, PCCs, UNSC members, neighboring countries, and national authorities as well as relevant regional organizations).
- Close involvement of international financial institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), and regional development banks, as appropriate, as well as bilateral donors, are also important to closely align options for UN engagement with funding and resource mobilization discussions.
- To ensure that local civil society leaders, including women, as well as private sector associations are engaged.

The World Bank is given a standing invitation to join a Strategic Assessment. The ITF lead entity should formally contact the World Bank when the Strategic Assessment is being developed.⁵

28. In situations where the Strategic Assessment is undertaken along-side broader consultations between the national and international community (including the UN) on post-conflict priorities (including, for instance, the Post-Conflict Needs Assessment Process (PCNA),

⁵ This is based on the UN-World Bank Partnership Framework for Crisis and Post-Crisis Situations of October 24, 2008 in which agreement was reached on, among others, closer strategic dialogue and engagement through integrated joint assessment and planning, and the use of shared benchmarks/results frameworks.

or discussions within the Peacebuilding Commission), it is critical to make all efforts to ensure that these different processes are linked and coordinated, in order to avoid lack of coherence and fragmentation of efforts.

The Strategic Assessment report

29. Following the field visit(s), the ITF (or sub-group) finalizes the draft Strategic Assessment report. The report should be structured along the following lines (an outline is provided in Annex B):

- Background and objective of the Strategic Assessment;
- Key conflict factors;
- Analysis of priority objectives;
- [Existing capacities];
- Strategic options, including one recommended option (if there is agreement), or a limited number of options (if there are dissenting views) and recommendations on UN configuration (if any).

Internal Consultations and endorsement of report

30. Following the development of a draft Strategic Assessment report, the ITF as a whole should review the document and make any necessary changes. The draft should then be circulated for comments within each ITF member entity, keeping in mind paragraph 8 (g), which stipulates that members should keep their respective entities informed throughout the process, with inputs consolidated by the relevant ITF representative. These internal consultations on the draft facilitate institutional buy-in to the conclusions of the Strategic Assessment exercise. These consultations shall also be mindful of the need to consolidate views between field and Headquarters, which is the responsibility of each entity in the ITF.

31. The Strategic Assessment is a collective product of the ITF. Therefore, the ITF has a collective responsibility to ensure that consultations are undertaken with sufficient time and care to promote substantive improvements in and institutional commitment to the Strategic Assessment. The ITF should budget several weeks for the consultation process. Following these consultations, the ITF prepares a revised draft, which is then endorsed by the ITF at the directors' level.

32. The ITF, through the lead department, should ensure that the country is scheduled on the Policy Committee agenda at an appropriate time to meet any external deadlines. The ITF, through the lead department, should also consult the Policy Committee Secretariat from an early stage of drafting to ensure that the final report (which will inform a Policy Committee submission paper) complies with the requirements of the Policy Committee.

Administration, logistics and budget

33. Each participating entity shall cover the cost of its representative for the Strategic Assessment, including field visits. The hiring of consultants should be undertaken by the lead department.

D. METHODOLOGY OF THE STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

34. The following is a **suggested** methodology and process for drafting the Strategic Assessment report (see Annex B for additional guidance). The Strategic Assessment TORs may modify this outline or the ITF may decide on a more appropriate format. Annex C provides a non-exhaustive list of conflict analysis approaches that could be applied in addition to the assessment outlined below.

35. Drawing upon previous assessment and analysis where appropriate, the Strategic Assessment should propose an integrated UN response to the situation prevailing in the country. To this end, the Strategic Assessment should (1) present a shared UN analysis of the conflict situation including its key factors and dynamics, (2) identify the main priority objectives to address those key factors (3) identify the strategic options for the UN in order to respond to the situation on the ground (and potentially revisit the UN's configuration).

36. The Strategic Assessment should therefore be based on the following components:

(a) Articulation of the aim of the Strategic Assessment in the context of the country;

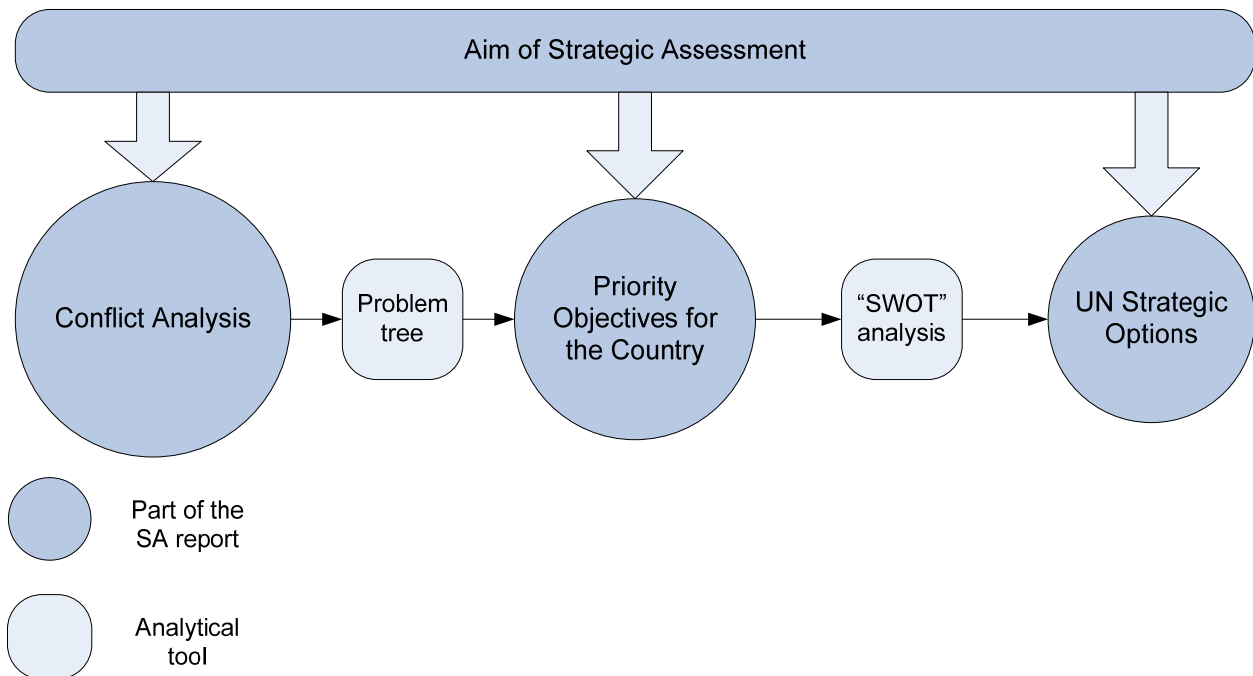
(b) *A conflict analysis* centered around the aim of the Strategic Assessment, including key conflict factors, their dynamics and risks including, as appropriate, the development of scenarios;

(c) *The analysis of priority objectives* for peace consolidation;

(d) *The articulation of UN strategic options* to address the situation in the country (including, where appropriate, proposals for reconfiguration).

37. Ideally, two to three strategic options should be presented at the end of the Strategic Assessment. Of these, one strategic option for a UN approach to peace consolidation in the country may be recommended, based on possible scenarios and timelines for future developments (if there is agreement on the recommendation). It should be kept in mind that the status quo could be one of the strategic options presented.

38. The following diagram gives an overview of the analysis process, with the tools allowing to move from one part of the process to the other:



Each of the components and tools is described in detail below:

(a) Aim of the Strategic Assessment in the country situation

39. The Strategic Assessment is not a comprehensive country analysis, but an exercise to articulate a limited range of UN strategic options to contribute to the consolidation of peace in an integrated manner. Therefore, a limited aim, tailored to the country situation should frame the ensuing analysis, to ensure that the Strategic Assessment exercise remains focused and articulates options for an integrated UN response in the short to medium term. This aim should be clearly articulated in the Strategic Assessment TORs. It is essential that all members of the ITF accept and commit to the aim throughout the exercise.

(b) Conflict analysis

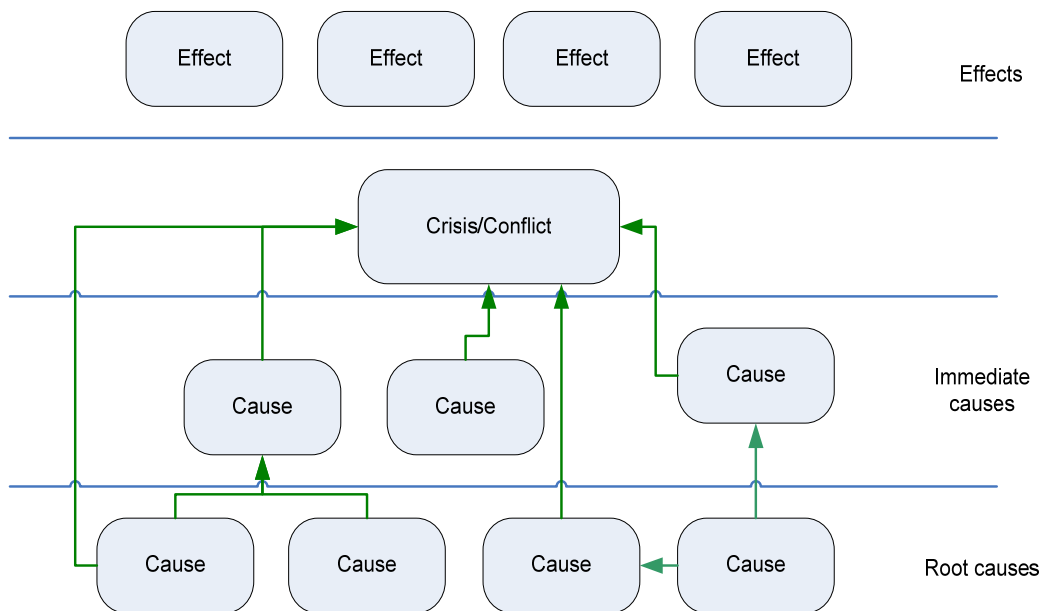
40. The development of a shared analysis of causes, dynamics and consequences of a given conflict provides an important basis for determining the appropriate form of UN support. The key factors (both underlying causes and near-term effects) driving the conflict situation in the country should first be surveyed and their dynamics analysed. The only criteria to identify factors to be included should be their relevance to the overall country-specific aim of the Strategic Assessment (e.g. a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS may be a problem for the country but often does not enter the scope of a Strategic Assessment). The analysis should aim at identifying the factors most salient for addressing the conflict through a multi-dimensional UN strategy. *The following is an example list of factors: unequal access to resources, poor governance, inter-ethnic strife, separatist ambitions, rising food insecurity, lack of national strategies, incomplete reintegration of ex-combatants, displacement, inconclusive elections, gender inequalities in accessing resources, high levels of sexual and gender-based violence including when perpetrated as a warfare tactic.* The analysis of these factors should include the rights of individuals and obligations of authorities based on the applicable international human rights standard.

41. A “Problem Tree” approach may be useful in mapping the links between key conflict factors (see diagram below).

Analytical tool : Problem tree

The problem tree methodology allows the visualization of the links between conflict factors. It can help translate the analysis into strategic priority objectives for the country.

Diagram 1: Problem tree



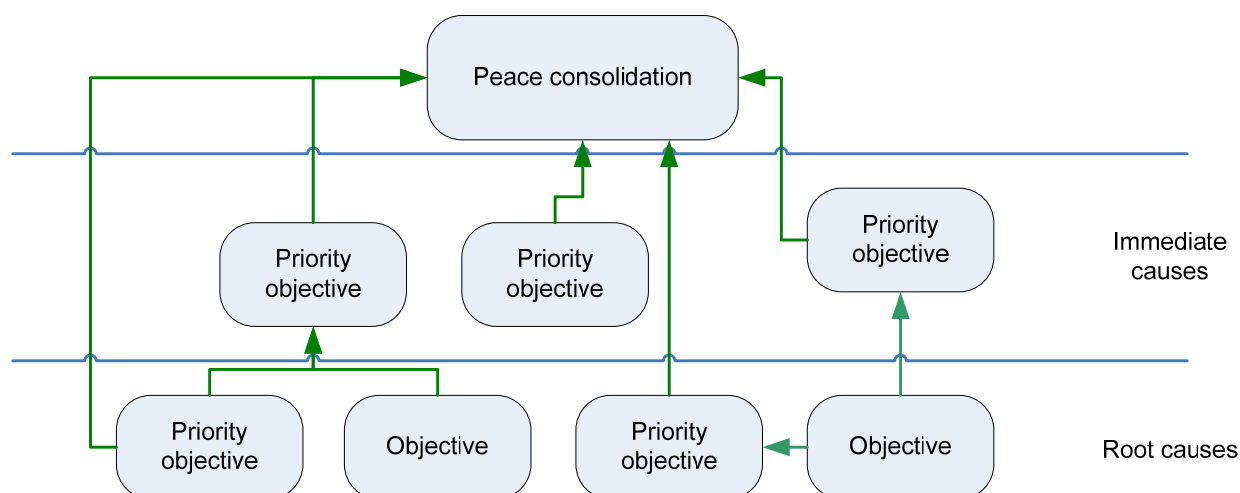
(c) Priority objectives for the country

42. The conflict analysis should provide the team with a comprehensive overview of key conflict factors that need to be addressed in any attempt to promote peace consolidation. From the conflict analysis, the Strategic Assessment should then identify the key factors that need to be addressed as priorities in the near term and state these as priority objectives for an integrated effort by the UN system. The priority objectives should reflect fully relevant international legal obligations of the State, including human rights obligations. These key conflict factors are then transformed into priority objectives. These priority objectives are linked to one another according to the initial conflict analysis. Taken together as a whole, the priority objectives should present a map that would highlight the most important elements to be addressed in order to consolidate peace in the country. It should be kept in mind that the priority objectives should not be limited to the scope/mandate of one UN entity.

The following table shows an example of how conflict factors can be translated into priority objectives:

Conflict factor	Priority objective
Unequal participation in political representation or access to power key factor fueling conflict	Support inclusive form of government as key component of a negotiated settlement
Militarization of politics perpetuates violent conflict and impedes peaceful resolution of disputes	Establish comprehensive process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of armed groups following a cease-fire
High level of impunity for sexual violence used as a tactic of warfare or as a means of destabilizing communities	Develop security sector and justice sector strategies to prevent sexual violence
Political and social inequality in access to economic and social rights fuels grievances and conflict	Establish inclusive system of government; provide population with equal access to services and entitlements
Massive population displacement preventing economic recovery and creating new causes of conflict	Protection, resettlement and reintegration of displaced populations in secure areas of return
Weak civil society leading to lack of progress in local reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts	Support strengthening of civil society in conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts

Diagram 2: Priority objectives



(d) Development of UN strategic options

43. The Strategic Assessment should develop a range of one to three possible strategic options for UN engagement to address the identified priority objectives for peace consolidation. In doing so, rather than focusing on activities of individual UN actors, the Strategic Assessment should review clusters of priority actions within priority objectives. It should also take into account the likelihood of scenarios and focus on the needs of the country as well as the UN’s comparative advantage and capacity.

Analytical tool: SWOT analysis

The translation of the priority objectives for the country into a coherent UN strategy can be aided by using a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis. This methodology analyzes the internal and external capacities to address priority objectives. For each priority objective, the Strategic Assessment could list the

strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the UN. The aim of the analysis is to determine the UN’s comparative advantage. The stakeholder mapping exercise as part of the desk review (described in paragraph 23) should be taken into account when conducting the SWOT analysis.

For each priority objective, a SWOT analysis will allow the team to assess whether the UN should be involved, what type of role (lead versus support) it should take, and which key actors it should engage with to ensure that the priority objective is fully addressed. In some cases, it may result in supporting another, better-positioned actor, rather than taking the lead for a given priority objective.

If helpful, the team could include tables for priority objectives. The following is a basic example. In actual cases, there should be more details.

Priority objective : Build local security capability	
<u>Strengths of the UN</u> Some operational capacity in UNCT and field mission Expertise and experience of departments, agencies or funds Standards, values and instruments, including on human rights	<u>Opportunities for UN and non-UN actors</u> Regional organization with readily available expertise, experience and funding Capacities and mandates of government authorities and bilateral actors (e.g. ongoing capacity-building programme jointly organized by donors, regional organization and government).
<u>Weaknesses of the UN</u> Lack of funding for programmes Duration of necessary implementation Lack of fit with mandates of departments, agencies or funds Lack of available human resources, institutions, budgets Likelihood of success low	<u>Threats to the priority objective</u> Rebel group outside of peace agreement Shift in power relations Other priorities of donors and beneficiaries

Based on this table, the UN should probably assume a support role in this priority objective area (i.e. building local security capability) and work closely with lead actors such as the regional organization, donors and national government.

44. The different strategic options can be based on different scenarios or timelines or on differences in the interpretation of the analysis of opportunities and threats for the UN (based on the SWOT analysis). Each strategic option should frame the broad strategic orientation of UN engagement, with the understanding that subsequent planning processes will provide further details on how the strategic option will be operationalised, including respective roles for different parts of the UN system. It should always be kept in mind that the status quo is also a strategic option that could be presented (and in some cases recommended).

45. Each strategic option should include the following elements:

a) Overall approach and expected impact of the UN in helping achieve the priority objectives: This is the main part of the strategic option. It provides the “function” part of

the “form follows function” principle. The overall approach should be developed on the basis of a realistic appraisal of existing UN capacities and expertise, as well as those which can be deployed in short order. It should also take into account the role of other actors (national, regional and international) undertaking related peace consolidation efforts. Finally, the approach should include consideration of key assumptions and risks related to the strategic option and adequately reflect existing obligations of the State, including human rights obligations.

b) Implications for alignment and coordination of the various elements of the UN response: The effectiveness of UN engagement will depend on effective coordination of individual UN entities based on a clear understanding of key priorities. The strategic option should articulate alignment/coordination implications of the UN response, keeping in mind that planning processes and instruments developed by humanitarian, development and other entities of the UN system cover other priorities specific to their individual mandates.

c) Proposals for the form and structure of UN engagement: The strategic options should provide preliminary indications regarding the required form of UN engagement, which refers to how the UN, as a system, could organize its country presence and capacities to implement its overall peace consolidation approach in an integrated and coherent manner. As noted in paragraph 8 (f), this should be driven by the analysis and the resulting overall approach of the UN. Examples of organizational configurations include, but are not limited to, a “normal” UN Country Team (UNCT) configuration, a special political mission, a structurally integrated peacekeeping operation, the deployment of a human rights presence, the reduction or withdrawal of the UN presence.

E. DECISION AND FOLLOW UP

Policy Committee submission

46. Following the endorsement of the Strategic Assessment report by the ITF at the directors’ level (as stipulated in paragraph 31), the ITF develops a Policy Committee submission paper. The strategic options for UN engagement contained in the Strategic Assessment report should yield recommendations for consideration by the UN Secretary-General and the Policy Committee. These may include:

- a. Recommendations on UN integrated strategic options for the country in question;
- b. Recommendations on the form of UN engagement;
- c. Recommendations regarding the appropriate alignment and coordination of relevant UN planning processes necessary within the context of a given strategic option for UN engagement;⁶
- d. Recommendations regarding appropriate actions following a decision on a strategic option. These could include a strategy for approaching member-states for endorsement, mobilizing resources, or initiating detailed planning processes (e.g. the IMPP);

⁶ These can include, for instance, recommendations on aligning planning and operational cycles between relevant political, peacekeeping, human rights, development and humanitarian entities, or even in certain cases recommendations on the adoption of a single planning process, cycle and framework for all concerned UN entities.

- e. Recommendations regarding the future of the Strategic Assessment, including whether it will be continuously refined and updated, and the decisions it will subsequently inform.

Significant differences among ITF members should be highlighted in the Policy Committee submission.

Approval

47. The Policy Committee discusses, and enables the Secretary-General to take decisions on the conclusions of the Strategic Assessment. After the Policy Committee meeting, follow-up actions are undertaken on the basis of decisions by the Secretary-General.

48. Depending on the outcome of the decision, relevant parts of the UN system should consider planning implications for their respective areas and make adjustments as appropriate.

F. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Strategic Assessment: An internal UN inter-agency assessment tool to formulate or reformulate UN engagement in a political crisis, conflict or post-conflict situation.

Integrated Task Force/Integrated Mission Task Force: A Headquarter-based inter-departmental and inter-agency mechanism to ensure coherent and consistent support and policy guidance to UN presences applying the principles of integration. The ITF/IMTFs are main bodies to conduct Strategic Assessments. While they are Headquarters-based, field presences (the UNCT and mission) are members of the ITF/IMTF and are heavily involved in the shaping and conduct of the Strategic Assessment. For further guidance on the ITFs/IMTFs, refer to IMPP Guidelines: Role of the Headquarters.

Priority objectives: Objectives that need to be addressed in the short to medium term to promote peace consolidation in the country. These objectives are derived from key conflict factors. If the Strategic Assessment leads to an Integrated Mission Planning Process, these priority objectives should inform the development of an integrated strategic framework.

G. GUIDANCE ADMINISTRATION

49. **Monitoring and Compliance:** Implementation of this guidance shall be monitored by the Policy Committee. Non-compliance with this guidance may result in a reduction in the quality of strategic assessments and a corresponding lack of impact in UN programs to address the symptoms and causes of conflict.

50. **Contact:** The contact for this guidance is Policy Planning Unit, DPA

51. **Dates:** The guidance shall be effective on [xx May 2009] and reviewed no later than May 2010.

52. **History:** This guidance was approved on [xx May 2009] and has not been amended.

53. **Abbreviations:**

CAP	Consolidated Appeal Process
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
DPA	Department of Political Affairs
UNDOCO	UN Development Operations Coordination Office
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
IMPP	Integrated Mission Planning Process
IMTF	Integrated Mission Task Force
ITF	Integrated Task Force
IMPT	Integrated Mission Planning Team
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
PBSO	Peacebuilding Support Office
PCC	Police Contributing Country
PCNA	Post-Conflict Needs Assessment
PKO	Peacekeeping Operation
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SPM	Special Political Mission
TCC	Troop Contributing Country
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

H. REFERENCES

- A. [GA/SC: improved system-wide analysis in the UN; one-UN approach, etc]
 - B. Policy Committee Decision [25 June 2008, Integration]
 - C. Policy Committee Decision [2005, RC/HC]
 - D. OCHA analysis and planning instruments
 - E. UNDG analysis and planning instruments
 - F. Policy Committee Decision [2006, IMPP]
 - G. IMPP Guidance Notes – [in development]
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I. ANNEXURES

- A. Generic Template for TORs for ITFs/IMTFs
 - B. Guide for Strategic Assessment documents – TORs, Report
 - C. Conflict Analysis Methodologies
-

Annex A: Generic template for Terms of Reference for Integrated Task Forces (ITF) and Integrated Mission Task Forces (IMTF)

Integrated Task Forces (ITF) and Integrated Mission Task Forces (IMTF)⁷

ITFs and IMTFs are the principal Headquarters-level inter-agency bodies that ensure a coherent and consistent UN engagement in a given country/region. Following the Secretary-General's decision on integration (decision 2008/24), lead departments are required to maintain such task forces for each integrated UN presence. Task forces may also be formed by the lead department, when there is a need for Headquarters-level coordination, regardless of the type of presence in the field.

The primary role and focus of the task force may shift depending on the situation at hand and/or phase of the integrated presence. For example, the task forces will have a more intensive role in planning at the start-up phase of a field mission, while the focus will shift to a support and guiding role once the field mission is established. Some of the key functions of the task forces include the conduct of UN Strategic Assessments, implementing the Integrated Mission Planning Process (IMPP), and providing support and policy guidance to the relevant integrated UN presence.⁸

The Terms of Reference (TOR) for each task force should be tailored to the distinct needs of the situation/country/integrated presence. The task force should be ready to revise its TOR when the situation changes or the integrated presence enters a new phase (e.g. transitioning out at the end of the mandate).

While each task force will have distinct TOR, the following components should always be included:

Background

This section should describe the legislative basis for the peace operation and the group, including Security Council resolutions, General Assembly resolutions, Policy Committee decisions or decisions by the Executive Committee on Peace and Security, among others. It may also identify the purpose of the task force, using selected language from these key decisions (e.g. aiming at “maximizing the individual and collective impact of the UN’s response, concentrating on those activities required to consolidate peace”⁹). It may also refer to any Strategic Assessment or any other type of assessment undertaken. The section could also include the rationale for an integrated task force, particularly in cases where there are no integrated field presences.

Purpose and principal functions

This section should list the objectives and main functions of the task force. As noted above, these may change depending on the situation and phase of field presence. Each task force should seek to define its own key deliverables. Below are some of the typical functions of a task force:

⁷ In practice, the Department of Political Affairs uses the term “Integrated Task Force” for the inter-agency task forces they chair, whether or not in support of a field mission or office. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations uses the term “Integrated Mission Task Force.”

⁸ Detailed guidance on the Task Forces’ central role in Headquarters-level planning for an integrated mission is provided in the forthcoming “Guidance Note on Headquarters level planning for integrated UN Peace Support Missions” and the 2006 IMPP Guidelines.

⁹ Policy Committee Decision No. 2008/24 on Integration, page 1 (section i, a)

- Serve as the principal Headquarters mechanism for UN inter-agency coordination of strategic guidance, planning support and information exchange
- Support and promote joint and coordinated strategic policy planning processes
- Coordinate a UN Strategic Assessment that conducts joint analysis, identifies UN priorities and recommends strategic options for the UN
- Undertake the various planning activities outlined in the Integrated Mission Planning Process (IMPP)
- Develop the key strategic goals of the UN presence for the Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF). (The remainder of the ISF will be completed by the Field Mission)
- Plan and conduct Technical Assessment Missions (TAMs) as required
- Review planning and policy documents for decisions by the Secretary-General and heads of departments and agencies (e.g. RBB, SG reports, Policy Committee papers)¹⁰
- Provide support, through the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), to the Peacebuilding Commission's (PBC) work [in cases where the country is under consideration in the PBC]
- Monitor political, security, humanitarian, reconstruction/development and human rights developments in the field [the list of sectors will vary from case to case]
- Maintain a dialogue with field-based Integrated Mission Planning Teams (or similar field-based integrated working groups) and provide support to them as required
- Regularly share and review information
- Support coordination with non-UN actors

Composition

This section should define the composition of the task force. The task force should be chaired by the lead department. The chair may draw on the support of the PBSO in cases where the country is under consideration by the PBC. In principle, the membership should comprise all key branches of the UN including political, peace and security, field support, humanitarian, human rights, recovery, development and peacebuilding.

The field integrated presence should also be represented, preferably by the DSRSG/RC/HC, when there is structural integration. In other cases, the field mission and the UNCT should both be represented. Relevant UNCT agencies, funds and programmes should be represented by HQ-based staff according to the "2+4" formula agreed by UNDG/ECHA in 2006.¹¹

All task force members should participate in meetings at the senior officer level and be empowered to represent their entities.

In some cases, the task force may decide to have a "core" membership and an expanded membership that meets less frequently.

Organization of work

This section should describe the working modalities of the task force. It should define who chairs meetings and how frequently the task force meets and at what level. Some task forces may decide to have two tiers by meeting more frequently at the working level and less frequently at the Director level. Information about the development of a workplan, the modalities for formation of meeting agendas, and the production of action points or minutes may also be included in this section.

¹⁰ This is not to duplicate any field-level coordination in preparation for these documents.

¹¹ Under this formula the humanitarian community is represented by OCHA and the development community is represented by DOCO. In addition to these two, four representatives from the UN Funds, Programmes, and Agencies may participate based on their involvement in the country in question.

This section should also describe how the work of the task force is linked to similar field-level groups, such as Integrated Mission Planning Teams. It should describe the modalities for the exchange of information between these groups and note that the task force provides support to field-based working groups as required. For example, the task force could regularly exchange minutes/summaries of meetings with the field.

Annex B: Guide for Strategic Assessment documents

Strategic Assessment Terms of Reference (TORs)

1. A Strategic Assessment TORs **should have** the following:
 - a. Background: why is the Strategic Assessment being done at the time, and which UN body has requested it.
 - b. What: the objectives of the Strategic Assessment. This should include: 1) a brief articulation of the situation and the necessity/opportunity it presents for a changed UN strategy; and b) the identification of specific areas of concern.
 - c. Who: list the participating entities, noting the lead department for the exercise. It is useful to specify that the exercise should be conducted at the senior level.
 - d. How: Reference to these guidelines for how to conduct the Strategic Assessment. Any major deviation from these guidelines should be noted here.
 - e. When: provide a timeline and an indicative report submission date or a strict deadline for the Strategic Assessment Report. The latter will be necessary if the Strategic Assessment is bound by an external deadline such as finalization of a Report of the Secretary-General or a mediation process etc.
 2. While the preference is for the Strategic Assessment TORs to be concise, they **may** provide guidance to additional issues, and may also explicitly refer to:
 - a. A more detailed **summary** of the situation, and an outline of the UN institutional setting
 - b. The type of **conflict analysis** required, and existing UN or non-UN assessments to be used
 - c. The scope of **UN priorities** to consider – UN priorities in existing official UN documents (for example in UNDAFs, Reports of the Secretary-General, General Assembly or Security Council statements or resolutions)
-

Strategic Assessment Report

In general, a Strategic Assessment report should include the following sections:

Background and objective of the Strategic Assessment

Key conflict factors and dynamics

This section could include the problem tree diagram

Priority objectives

This section could include a diagram of the priority objectives as well as SWOT tables

[Existing capacities]

Strategic options

- a. Option 1
- b. Option 2
- c. Option 3

Recommended option

Recommendations on UN configuration

Annexes:

- a. List of people interviewed
 - b. List of references (with hyperlinks)
 - c. Current UN Organizational structure at the country-level
 - d. Tables and diagrams on analysis, UN priorities and strategic options (if not in body of the report)
-

Annex C: Conflict Analysis Methodologies

The following is a list of some existing conflict analysis methodologies an ITF may be interested to explore (courtesy of DOCO):

- CARE Guide to Conflict Assessment
- Common Interagency Framework for Conflict Analysis in Transition (UNDG/ECHA)
<http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=150>
- Conducting Conflict Assessments: Guidance Notes (DFID)
<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Pubs/files/conflictassessmentguidance.pdf>
- Conflict-sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peace-building: a resource pack (2004), Safeworld, International Alert, FEWER
<http://www.saferworld.org.uk/publications.php?id=148>
- Conflict related Development Analysis Tool (UNDP/BCPR)
http://www.undp.org/cpr/whats_new/CDA_combined.pdf
- DAC Guide on conflict resolution
[http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/lib.nsf/db900sid/LGEL-5DTEAJ/\\$file/oeed-guide-1997.pdf?openelement](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/lib.nsf/db900sid/LGEL-5DTEAJ/$file/oeed-guide-1997.pdf?openelement)
- Early Warning and Early Response Handbook (CPRN)
http://cpr.web.cern.ch/cpr/Library/tools/EW-HandbookFinalEn_v2.3.pdf
- Framework for political analysis (UN/DPA)
- Joint Stabilisation Assessment Tool (DFID)
- Joint Stabilisation Assessment Working Draft (DFID)
- Lessons Learned Workshop: Integrating Conflict Sensitivity into UN Planning and Programming (2006)
http://74.125.47.132/search?q=cache:BqoMlcOUiQQJ:www.undp.org/cpr/we_do/integrating_conflict.shtml+-+Lessons+Learned+Workshop:+Integrating+Conflict+Sensitivity+into+UN+Planning+and+Programming&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=2&gl=us
- The Stability Assessment Framework: Designing Integrated Responses for Security, Governance and Development, published in 2005, Clingendael Institute for the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at
http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2005/20050200_cru_paper_stability.pdf
(accessed October 2008)
- Gender and Conflict Analysis (UNIFEM)
http://www.womenwarpeace.org/docs/UNIFEM_Conflict_Prevention.pdf
- Conflict Analysis Framework for Natural Resources and the Environment (UNEP)
http://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/CAF_draft_jan_09.pdf