"Building a strong Platform for Stability, Democracy & Rights",

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Workshop report

PLATFORM FOR

STABILITY, DEMOCRACY & RIGHTS

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1. INTRODUCTION

WELCOME

Jens Seeberg gave the welcoming speech. He especially thanked the people from South for travelling the long distances to participate in the workshop and contributing to the initiative. He mentioned two aspects of the Building Stronger Universities (BSU) initiative that make it unique. Firstly, it is unique that the Danish universities attempt to set up a structure that values mutual collaboration over competition. It is a primary task for the Steering Group of the Platform to oversee that this collaboration develops and is strengthened over time. Secondly, it is new that the universities engage in a close and direct contractual relationship with Danida / Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA). There has never before been a similar agreement that draws research and the Danish development agenda into a close dialogue. He also stressed that is was the responsibility of the relevant research communities in North and South within each platform to now develop the content and activities within the overall framework. Seeberg mentioned the selection of countries within the Stability, Democracy and Rights (SDR) Platform that differs from the other three platforms since long-term collaboration must be based on the existence of a critical mass of researchers that have research interests that make it meaningful for them to be part of the platform. People, he stressed, are far more important than money, since additional financial resources can be identified more readily from sources such as EU than can additional experienced researchers with interests in a specific field and/or country.

Seeberg noted that the platform concept is vulnerable for the same reasons that all other research activities are vulnerable – for lack of time in the busy everyday schedule where all struggle to find time for 'own research' besides the teaching and administrative responsibilities. Especially during the preparation phase, the platform depends on the common interest to be among the architects of the content-to-be, so that the activity plans eventually also come to reflect the kind of work that the research communities in North and South like to see under the label of 'own research' – in alignment with the themes of the platform and the priority needs of the participating countries. Match-making between the interests and needs of all partners, both

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in South and in North, is a main theme of this workshop, he said. The co-financing structure agreed by the Danish Vice-Chancellors means that the activities researcher are part of in the Platform must reflect existing research interest, and the platform will develop to provide a good framework for researchers to work on this research in partnership with others. It was up to the workshop participants to demonstrate the ability to develop this framework and its contents in such a way that it creatively translates what is offered into important research agendas and capacity strengthening activities that make equal sense in North and in South.

PLATFORM STATUS

Platform for Stability, Democracy & Rights, its background and objectives were briefly introduced by Jens Seeberg.

See appendix 1 – Status for Platform for Stability, Democracy & Rights, and List of Participants.

WORKSHOP FORMAT

Anna Leander addressed the workshop format and objectives, where the question in focus should be "How can our interest be incorporated in the themes and how is it going to fit together?" The main aim of the workshop is a develop content for a common activity plan.

2. PERSPECTIVES

CAPACITY STRENGTHENING NEEDS AND PRIORITIES: PANEL DISCUSSION
Representatives from potential cores partner institutions

MASENO UNIVERSITY
Catherine Muhoma from Maseno University presented the Concept Paper distributed prior to the Workshop. Maseno University along with Moi University are located in areas affected during the post 2007 election riots.

The activities of the Platform for Stability, Democracy & Rights are especially relevant within School of Development and Strategic Studies, and Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

The Strategic Plan of Maseno University focuses on: 1) enhancing access to relevant quality university education; 2) supporting and undertaking collaborative and multidisciplinary research and development; and 3) strengthening linkages for community services, extension and outreach. The Platform activities support these strategic focal points.

The identified needs of Maseno University are:

- To strengthen research capacity and academic infrastructure;
- To increase capacity to do research of international standard;
- To offer high quality Master and PhD programmes;
- To improve coordinated and collaborative multidisciplinary research;
- To establish a strong programme in gender studies.

See appendix 2 – Maseno Concept Paper "Towards a Partnership between Maseno University and Universities Denmark: A Regional Concept Paper".

MOI UNIVERSITY

Eunice Kamaara from Moi University briefly presented the important role universities play in national development in Kenya in relation to the national goals stated in the Kenya Vision 2030 and in the context of the MDGs by 2015, in which Kenya is not doing well. The key to achieving the MDGs is stability, democracy and rights, which is why these are central issues for the initiative in Kenya.

The departments involved in the activities of the Platform for Stability, Democracy & Rights at Moi University are: School of Arts and Social Sciences, and School of Human Resources.

Eunice Kamaara suggested the establishment of a Centre of Peace at Moi University - MUCCeP. Stability is a priority for Moi University given the regions violent situation during post 2007 election riots and the geographic placement of the Moi University in the North Rift Region.

The goals for the MUCCeP include:

- to be a centre of excellence in international collaboration for peace;
- to provide academic programmes related to stability and fragility;

- to develop outreach programmes in order to meet the needs of local and international communities, which is essential for peace and stability;
- to engage in international collaborative research to identify, document and analyze discourses on social dynamics, history and culture.

Some of the needs of Moi University / MUCCeP are:

- To establish collaborative structures and guidelines;
- To review and develop academic programmes on stability and fragility;
- To develop community outreach programmes;
- To engage in collaborative research with partners in North and South;
- To strengthen knowledge and information sharing.

See appendix 3 – Moi University presentation and "Concept Paper for Establishment of the Moi University Collaborative Centre for Peace (MUCCeP) under the BSU Initiative".

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

Isaac Nyamongo from University of Nairobi briefly introduced the history of the university and emphasized University of Nairobi's weak funding base, which has resulted in the university not being at the level where it aspires to be. The university has not been able to attract competitive research funding, which means that the research activities are not at a competitive level.

Institute of Development Studies, and Institute of Anthropology, Gender and African Studies are the two departments involved in the activities at University of Nairobi.

University of Nairobi focuses on developing capacity for the next generation. Areas of research interest and other needs include:

- Research on governance;
- Research on gender and centralisation;
- gender and culture-related rights;
- North-South faculty and student exchange;
- PhD programme.

Dr Nyamongo said that girls are outperforming boys, and gender research has to focus on both sexes. It is important to look at the whole and focus on empowerment of youth. Collaboration between Nairobi, Moi and Maseno Universities is suggested to strengthen capacity building and to create synergy.

Q & A SESSION

A brief Q & A session following the contribution from the three representatives from the Kenyan universities clarified that they regarded the possibility of working together as highly welcome.

The subject of the existence of a national plan for development of higher education and institutions of tertiary educations in Kenya was discussed during the Q & A Session. This issue must be further investigated for clarification.

GULU UNIVERSITY

Ambrose Okot from Gulu University provided a brief introduction to the university history, size and relevant faculties in terms of collaboration with the Platform. Gulu University is strong in Northern Uganda and the proximity to South Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo is strategically significant. He mentioned the Institute of Peace and Strategic Studies, which given the strategic placement of the university in Northern Uganda can transcend beyond Uganda into areas like Southern Sudan and Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, where issues of peace-building and strategic studies are of high relevance. The Institute also offers post-graduate diploma courses in conflict and peace studies and a Masters degree in Applied Conflict Transformation, which are quite relevant for collaboration with this Platform for Stability, Democracy & Rights.

There are also programmes, like Master of Public Administration and Master of Development Studies in the Faculty of Business and Development Studies, in which courses relevant to stability, democracy and rights issues could be strengthened, as they have direct relevance to promoting good governance and community transformation.

In the Faculty of Education and Humanities, a cross-cutting course – Ethics and Peace Studies – coordinated by Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy deals with issues of moral-building that traverse stability, democracy and rights concerns and affect among others, the educational system, given the region's violent history.

Many children are severely traumatised, some of which begin manifesting at early ages that needs early intervention, but we do not have trained teachers in special needs education. This is why Gulu University's Faculty of Education and Humanities proposes to introduce teacher training programmes in special needs education and early childhood education, where teachers will have been trained specially to detect symptoms of trauma and to handle traumatised children.

To consolidate the BSU efforts under this platform, a centre is proposed to be located in Gulu University, which would coordinate academic, research and humanitarian issues relevant to stability, democracy and rights surveillance in Uganda. There are also some priority areas relevant to other platforms that will be presented in the country concept paper.

See appendix 4 – Gulu University presentation and paper "Integrated Special Needs-Early Childhood Education Rights (I-SNECER) Project: A Concept Note".

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Yagya Adhikari and Lekhnath Sharma from Tribhuvan University (TU) strongly emphasised Tribhuvan University's size with more than 300.000 students distributed across more than 60 constituted campuses and a large number of affiliated campuses all over Nepal. Most of the campuses outside of Kathmandu do not have access to international and national organisations and donors, which is a disadvantage in comparison with the campuses placed in Kathmandu. The university's infrastructure needs strengthening in many ways. One main problem for TU is that it is surviving based on its teaching rather than research activities and further that much of the research does not get into teaching due to a rigid process of curriculum management. It is also a problem that many academicians leave Nepal after completed education. In the near future, severe staff shortages will occur because most current staff which is educated outside of

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Nepal will retire within the coming five years and only few staff are available as replacements. TU has not formulated an HR plan to address the coming shortage of academic staff. The main priorities of Tribhuvan University include:

- Development of academic staff;
- Research activities within the areas of the Platform;
- Development of PhD and MA programmes at faculties outside of Kathmandu.

Q & A SESSION

During this session it was clarified that currently t good relations between Tribhuvan University and the private Kathmandu University exist, but there is room for development of institutional collaboration. Tribhuvan University as a public university is financed by the government, while Kathmandu University only receives a minor public contribution. Yagya Adhikari stressed the lack of management and the low quality production of manpower at TU.

To the question on ongoing collaboration between Gulu University and universities in Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo, Ambrose Okot clarified that there is no formalised ongoing collaboration. A MoU has been signed – but nothing further than that. Some students from both countries attend Gulu University.

Finally, the representatives from Kenya were asked to clarify the level of national planning / government involvement in tertiary education. It was clarified that there is no national planning and that each university is established under its own act.

In Nepal there is one act for all universities.

3. COUNTRY PRESENTATIONS AND GROUP WORK

3.1. COUNTRY PRESENTATIONS

UGANDA

On the basis of an existing ENRECA-research collaboration between Gulu University and three Danish universities, as well as the Platform fact finding report from Uganda, Michael Whyte

provided an introduction to Uganda and the history of the educational system in the country. An increasing number of particularly private – but also public - universities have emerged in recent decades. It has been a commercialization / demand-driven development structure. Makerere University is the dominating university – in size, infrastructure and prestige. Research at universities is externally funded - often by donors and most post-graduate training is oriented towards "the market" rather than towards research. Gulu University is situated in Northern Uganda and has a commitment to teaching and regional development. Its main challenges are academic and infrastructural problems. The presentation pointed to the need to take the context of commercialization of higher education and research into account when conceptualising the platform initiative and think about the critical needs. In this regard, it is significant that Gulu University has a focus on the development of the North after generations of conflict, and seeks to deal directly with stability, democracy and rights, even if it struggles with academic and infrastructural problems characteristic for new, peripheral, universities. He said that a partnership with a peripheral university can teach all partners much about the possibilities for developing socially responsible teaching and research, and noted that the talent and experience base at Gulu University is well-matched with Danish university capacities.

The group work centred round an approach, which would involve the entire Danish research community. The main interests for Gulu University are: peace, gender, human rights, capacity strengthening activities and a focus on special education needs. Ultimately, Gulu University is interested in establishing a Research Centre as well as developing a postgraduate programme on special needs education.

Proposed activities are: Development of methodological courses, for instance through introducing a Winter School model; courses on higher education pedagogy, didactic and methodological development.

The group collectively is responsible for developing the activities at Gulu University.

See appendix 4 – "Draft Country Concept Paper – Uganda" and brief summary of group work discussions.

KENYA

Preben Kaarsholm gave an introduction to exciting ideas regarding collaboration with Kenyan universities based on the fact-finding mission and already existing collaboration and networks between Kenyan and Danish universities. The three universities (University of Nairobi, Maseno University and Moi University) have been consulted in identifying needs and interests. Some potential focuses for regional themes are: Peace & Conflict, based at Moi University and Gender Studies, based at Maseno University and studies in Democracy & Rights at the University of Nairobi. Various models for collaboration between the universities have been discussed.

The discussions during the group work mainly evolved around three main headings:

a) the structure of a consortium of the three Kenyan universities present, where some consensus for a model with University of Nairobi as "coordinating partner" was achieved. This model was suggested by Eunice Kamaara from Moi University, and was supported by the Kenyan universities. The governance form of the consortium still has to be agreed upon, but should ensure harmonisation. Some warned against the bureaucracy of this model and suggested a flatter network structure, which was centred around activities and have all three Kenyan universities involved as parallel core partners;

b) focus of activities and funding – based on the limited funding within the initiative, there was a degree of consensus within the group, which considered it to be seed money for developing research ideas (PhD, post doc senior researchers) and not funding of research projects. Under this heading, it was discussed with whom/which institution the authority to decide on Danish-Kenyan BSU cooperation and a Danish coordinating partner for the Kenyan consortium was proposed. The contribution of Danish universities was also discussed; and

c) a national PhD programme, which initially did not seem to be a priority of any of the three Kenyan universities and alternative possibilities, such as a post-graduate programme was suggested. Following the group discussion some consensus was achieved regarding a prime focus on a national PhD programme, which will be further explored during the formulation of activities.

Preben Kaarsholm, Bodil Folke Frederiksen, Jens Byskov, Norbert Wildermuth, Lone Lindholt, Catrine Christiansen, Eunice Kamaara, Catherine Muhoma and Isaac Nyamongo will be responsible for developing the proposed activities. The first draft will be the responsibility of the Kenyan potential partners.

See appendix 5 – Brief summary of group work discussions and "Consortium on Stability, Democracy & Rights".

NEPAL

Karen Valentin presented the background for the work in Nepal, where there is a critical need for improving the quality of higher education. Based on existing research collaboration and the fact-finding mission to Nepal, the Tribhuvan University has been identified as potential core partner. TU is a public university with 370,000 students and more than 300 campuses around the country. The Centre for Nepal and Asia Studies (CNAS), which is a decentralized research unit, covers various humanities and social sciences, and a peripheral campus will be the main foci of activities. Kathmandu University (School of Arts) will be an associate partner. The needs of the core partner university include: decentralized education programme; staff development, particularly for staff in remote areas.

The group discussion centred around two main topics: a) Research-based education, which could be defined in different ways, were explored. The group saw it as important to strengthen joint activities between faculty and students. Being engaged in research processes, students would at the same time learn about research methodology and theory. Different models and strategies for capacity building at the university will be discussed and considered among the Danish and Nepalese partners for implementation during subsequent phases of the project; b) central and de-central institutional units were discussed as it is important to ensure that the project not only revolves around units at the central level or located in Kathmandu, but also involves units in different, remote and marginalized regions of Nepal.

The two representatives from TU will be responsible for submitting a revised concept paper from the perspectives of a peripheral campus and a research centre, respectively.

See appendix 6 – "Draft Country Concept Paper Nepal" and brief summary of group work discussions.

3.2. THEMATIC PRESENTATIONS

STABILITY AND FRAGILITY

Amanda Hammar presented the work of the Stability & Fragility Working Group so far. Generally, within the Working Group there is a high diversity of disciplines; high level of engagement; already existing experience, networks, etc; and, a strong desire to work both within and beyond the parameters of the Platform. The key focus areas of the Working Group include collaborative research on issues related to conflict- and post-conflict situations; support to local initiatives; the role of the universities in post-conflict transformation; and capacity building in multiple arenas. Several project proposals have been submitted to the Working Group for further consideration, containing a variety of activities: exploratory and planning workshops; teaching and training; seminars and conferences; publication and support for this; curriculum development; peer review and staff support; and, development of funding proposals.

The discussions during the group work revolved around two main topics: a) Summary of the priorities of the partner countries; and b) identifying proposals for country concept papers, based on the instruction to incorporate proposals for thematic activities into each country according to the specific needs and priorities for each country/institution. The group systematically discussed the various proposals and identified possibilities for merging some of the proposals and for expanding the proposals and activities to cover several countries and partners of the Platform. Based on the discussion, some of the proposals were withdrawn. The group also identified who will be main responsible persons for elaborating each component of the proposal.

See appendix 7 – "Working Group on Stability & Fragility – Draft Concept Paper" and brief summary of group work discussions.

GENDER EQUALITY

Inger Lassen presented the progress of the work of Gender Equality Working Group. Overall the group had identified five main objectives for this theme: capacity building in areas of research, education and knowledge dissemination; long-term cooperation; organizing joint planning seminars and workshops; securing funding; and, addressing gender inequalities through research, education and research communication for social change. The group initially focused on East Africa. Based on identified needs and priorities of potential partners, various research, educational and knowledge dissemination activities have been identified. Specific activities included: joint workshops and seminars; pilot studies; interactive summer (winter) school; and, conferences.

The group work discussions briefly touched upon the planning process; the limited funds available; how to involve / expand activities to cover Nepal; potential support through DDRN, etc. The group discussions identified three main activities to be further developed as input to the overall activity plan. These were: Workshop on gender studies curriculum development; 3-4 weeks Summer (Winter) School, each with a sub-theme from within gender, peace and security; and, research workshop/small conference on topics within gender, peace and security.

To further develop the activities the group agreed that: Catherine Muhoma (Maseno University, Kenya) would send a brief description of the gender programme at Maseno University, as well as the idea of Centre for Gender Studies at the university; Lekhnath Sharma (Tribhuvan University (TU), Nepal) would send a brief description of current gender programmes at TU and how these reflected a need for courses at master level; Inger Lassen would contact DDRN for information about membership in view of preparing an application for financial support; and, based on the written input from partners in South, Inger Lassen would circulate a revised concept paper to the members of the Gender Equality Working Group for comments, prior to the workshop in March.

See appendix 8 – Gender Equality Working Group and brief summary of group work discussions.

FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY & RIGHTS

Marianne Horsdal presented the work and proposals within the Freedom, Democracy & Rights Working Group on the basis of the papers distributed and containing ideas and proposals for specific research collaboration; a specific activity on Education and Citizenship; and a proposal for general inclusion of media and communication.

The focus for the group work discussions was a conference approach, which could be held either in each country or as cross-cutting workshops with representatives from all participating countries and institutions. Various ideas for cross-cutting topics were discussed, but based on articulated needs from partner countries, this was abandoned. The conclusion was that a workshop or conference should be held in each partner country, to be arranged in collaboration between the partner institutions and the thematic group. The aim of the workshops should be twofold: 1) the workshops must address relevant issues within the framework of the thematic group, and 2) the workshops should lay the foundation for development of for research project proposals that would be submitted for external funding.

Arne Wangel, Johannes Dragsbæk Schmidt, Yagya Adhikari, Ambrose Okot, Isaac Nyamongo and Lone Lindholt are jointly responsible for developing the proposal and activities for the overall activity plan.

See appendix 9 – papers presenting proposals for research collaboration and brief summary of group work discussions.

4. REFLECTIONS AND LINKS

EU/EDULINK FUNDING SCHEME & ACP SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMME

Peter McEvoy from Irish African Partnership presented the EU/EDUlink Funding Scheme where the EDUlink programme, the ACP Science & Technology Programme and the Erasmus Mundus programme are introduced.

See appendix 10 – Irish African Partnership for Research Capacity Building – EU Funding Sources for HE Development Partnership.

For further information, see the following links: www.acp-edulink.eu , www.acp-st.eu or www.eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus .

See appendix 11 – Brief introduction to EDUlink and ACP Science and Technology Programme.

REFLECTIONS AND LINKS: PANEL DISCUSSION

Lone Lindholt from Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR) briefly introduced the organisation before she shared her reflections on the workshop and ideas concerning future collaboration. Danish Institute for Human Rights is a part of the Danish Centre for International Studies and Human Rights (DCISM). DIHR focuses on issues such as gender, social inclusion, human rights, informal law and a wide range of disciplines within human rights. In relation to the BSU initiative and the future work of this particular platform, DIHR can serve as a resource base concerning human rights aspects of the work of the Platform and contribute with knowledge, experiences and networking. Lindholt said that the momentum created at the workshop should be utilised and now the main focus was to keep the process going. The keyword was *synergy* between countries, institutions, activities and individuals.

Anne Sørensen from Danish Development Research Network (DDRN) presented the network. DDRN is one of three knowledge network for Danida. DDRN's activities are different from the BSU initiative and much more focused on knowledge management. It can, however, provide network and a web-based research database. DDRN and this platform have their member base and themes in common, whereas the structure is different. There are implications, however, since Danida has decided to close the network by June 2011, which sets limits for future collaboration. The possibilities for collaboration for the next five months would be the Platform's access to staff capacity in DDRN and the opportunity to submit proposals for small activities of relevance to the DDRN mandate within the remaining budget.

Ronaldo Munck from Dublin City University and Director of Irish African Partnership for Research Capacity Building (IAP) gave a brief introduction of the IAP and contributed with

experiences from their process. The IAP is an Irish initiative, which is similar to the Danish BSU. It currently covers Malawi, Uganda, Mozambique and Tanzania. Implementation of the project started three years ago. The IAP focuses amongst others on health and education, with gender and IT as cross-cutting issues. They offer four work packages, which was developed based on needs assessment through stakeholder consultations. Due to the severe current financial crisis in Ireland, the project is currently in a low-budget transition phase.

The south/north partnership focuses on poverty reduction through research and the main theme for the initiative is *helpful research*. The IAP web portal contains a research register, which accumulate research material. This has a very positive networking function. IAP will open a satellite project office at University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, which will function as partner to the Project Manager based in Dublin. IAP has a strong desire to initiate close collaboration between Denmark and Ireland, as both countries are small but generally considered important partners in development – and significant to our partners in South. More information can be found on www.irishafricanpartnership.ie.

Jens Seeberg briefly summarised and commented on the contributions from the panellist. He emphasised the importance of ensuring that the activities of the Platform are strategic and do not duplicate activities already funded by other donors.

5. CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

During the Wrapping Up Session, Jens Seeberg thanked all the participants for coming to the Workshop and participating actively and committed in the discussions. He considered the workshop to be very successful and found that the process of sharpening the focus on specific activities of national and cross-institutional relevance within the overall Platform framework had progressed significantly. Further guidelines for the format for the proposal would be developed and shared during the weeks following the workshop.