



This five-day SSD workshop brought together a cohort of six governmental officials from each of five Indian Ocean littoral nations: Bangladesh, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka.

Security Sector Development: National Priorities and Regional Approaches

The Center conducted a Security Sector Development Workshop entitled “National Security Priorities and Regional Approaches” in Honolulu, Hawaii, December 5-9, 2016.

The five-day Security Sector Development (SSD) workshop was the fifth iteration of a multinational whole-of-government SSD engagement hosted by DKI APCSS. The workshop provided five multi-agency cohorts from selected Indian Ocean littoral countries a platform for enhanced shared understanding of the evolving priorities of national security sectors and the development of a country-specific security sector action plan.

The workshop brought together multi-agency cohorts from: Bangladesh Indonesia; Maldives; Myanmar; and, Sri Lanka. The presence of very senior bureaucrats in the Bangladesh team reflected their SSD project’s importance and urgency. Similarly,

Sri Lanka and the Maldives sent significant military and civilian participants. Overall, there were thirty international participants, one international subject matter expert from Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) Geneva, as well as U.S representatives from U.S. Pacific Command, and the Defense Governance Management Team of the Office of the Under Secretary Defense for Policy. Workshop participants had a mixture of professional backgrounds and included: ministry officials, senior military/defense, law enforcement, foreign affairs, and academia.

The national cohorts were in agreement about the urgency of implementing effective rule of law in their countries. At the same time, they referred to the challenges of maintaining internal stability in fragile democracies undergoing legal transformation. The tendency to over-centralize and over-regulate is an obstacle to an effective rule of law. Parliaments and parliamentarians

in general lack oversight capacity, political will, and even general interests in security matters.

The division of labor between security institutions in the new transnational security environment was the most debated subject. While participants agreed that security should be “everybody’s business,” the security institutions were identified as having a primary responsibility to ensure peace, law, and order. How other actors and key stakeholders could and must contribute remains perhaps the central challenge in this area.

Overall, the workshop enabled creation by each country cohort of a country-specific plan related to an important national SSD issue, as well as creating a networking mechanism for enhanced security sector collaboration within and between each participant country.