

SAVING LIVES TOGETHER

“A Framework for improving Security Arrangements among International Non-Governmental Organisations/International Organisations and the United Nations”

OCTOBER 2015

Objectives and Principles

Saving Lives Together, or SLT, is a series of recommendations aimed at enhancing security collaboration between the United Nations, International Non-Governmental Organisations and International Organisations (“SLT partner organisations”). It recognizes the collectively experienced security threats and the importance of collaboration to ensure the safe delivery of humanitarian and development assistance.

The objective of SLT is to enhance the ability of partner organisations to make informed decisions and implement effective security arrangements to improve the safety and security of personnel and operations.

To this end, SLT partner organisations commit to:

- Establish security coordination arrangements and forums;
- Share relevant security information;
- Cooperate on security training;
- Cooperate on operational and logistics arrangements, where feasible;
- Identify resource requirements for enhancing security coordination between the UN, INGOs and IOs, and advocate for funding; and
- Consult on common ground rules for humanitarian action.

It is recognised that SLT partner organisations perceive risks and assess vulnerabilities differently, accept different levels of risks, and implement security arrangements which they consider suitable for their organisation and operational conditions.

In this context, SLT partner organisations accept that they remain fully accountable for the safety and security of their personnel in accordance with their ‘duty of care’ obligations as employing organisations. Accordingly, organisations that wish to cooperate under the SLT Framework are required to maintain internal security risk management procedures, contingency planning and adequate and reliable arrangements to respond to security emergencies.

Implementation of SLT in the field will be achieved through the establishment of collaboration mechanisms at two levels: Regular and Enhanced. The arrangements associated with the two levels are designed to differentiate between “low/medium” and “high/very high” risk areas and the related security and operational conditions.

The SLT arrangements in the field will be supported by UN, INGO and IO headquarters security managers and through the SLT Oversight Committee. A feedback mechanism will be maintained for the resolution of coordination issues which may arise in the field.

Although Saving Lives Together is a voluntary engagement by the SLT partner organisations, the success and effectiveness of the initiative is dependent on the commitment of all participating organisations to work collectively towards the mutual goal of improving the security of personnel, operations and assets. Accordingly, organisations that wish to become SLT partner organisations must commit to the adoption of the principles, objectives and arrangements comprised in this framework.

Headquarters Support for SLT

UNDSS and OCHA will work with the headquarters of SLT partner organisations to achieve the following:

- Timely sharing of security incident reports and alerts;
- Timely responses to queries on SLT related issues;

- Supporting the resolution of security coordination problems which may arise in the field;
- Supporting the coordination of security incident response measures in the field;
- Sharing of contact information between security managers of SLT partner organisations;
- Collecting, compiling and cross-checking information for regular security reports and coordinate mutual assistance in maintaining relevant security incident databases;
- Making training events available to security managers of SLT partner organisations, when feasible;
- Organising workshops and conferences to enhance mutual knowledge and understanding of UN, INGO, and IO security collaboration;
- Exploring further areas of security cooperation between the UN, INGOs and IOs; seeking innovation and efficiencies in areas of security management.

To support the effective implementation of this framework with the required leadership and guidance, and to ensure monitoring and reporting, an SLT Oversight Committee¹ has been established to:

- Provide strategic guidance for the implementation of the SLT Framework;
- Monitor the implementation of the SLT Framework;
- Review and approve INGO HQs’ requests for admission to SLT partnership;
- Maintain a feedback mechanism for the resolution of coordination issues in the field;
- Identify and disseminate good practice to enhance security cooperation between the UNSMS, INGOs, and IOs;
- Report on the implementation of SLT to the IASC on an annual basis; UNDSS, on behalf of the SLT OC, will compile regular reports to reflect the status of SLT implementation globally, record new developments and initiatives, and publicise good practices;
- Monitor the application of the SLT Levels to ensure their coherence.

The SLT OC is co-chaired by UNDSS and a representative of an INGO SLT partner organization. UNDSS and OCHA will function as a Secretariat for the SLT OC.

SLT Partner Organisations

The SLT partnership comprises the following categories of organisations:

- United Nations Security Management System (UNSMS) Organisations;
- International Non-Governmental (INGOs)/ International Organisations (IOs) that are implementing or operational partners of United Nations Agencies, Funds and Programmes;

INGOs and IOs may request global SLT partnership status, which will be formalised through an exchange of letters of understanding (LOUs) between the headquarters of INGOs/IOs and UNDSS, upon review and agreement of the SLT OC.

SLT partnership is conditional to committing to implement the principles, objectives and arrangements comprised in this framework.

¹ The SLT Oversight Committee is comprised of representatives of UNDSS, OCHA, WFP, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, EISF, ICVA, InterAction, and SCHR. Other representatives of UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes, INGO consortia, forums and individual INGOs may be joining the SLT OC per invitation.

SLT Cooperation in the Field – Regular Level

The essential goal at the Regular Level of SLT implementation is to create dialogue and information sharing arrangements to ensure that all SLT partner organisations have adequate access to relevant security information.

Coordination Arrangements

- INGOs and IOs will nominate representatives to interface and engage with the UNSMS. Where feasible, INGOs and IOs will establish a security coordination platform or use a coordination entity to interface with the UNSMS through UNDSS;
- INGOs and IOs may opt to grant observer status to nominated UNSMS representatives to attend relevant portions of the INGO and IO security forum meetings;
- UNSMS may opt to grant observer status to INGO and IO representatives to attend the relevant portions of the United Nations' Security Cell and/or Security Management Team meetings.
- UNDSS will function as the focal point for SLT security cooperation on behalf of the UNSMS, in close cooperation with UN Agencies and OCHA;

Information Sharing

- Obtaining relevant, timely and accurate security information is a critical element of informed decision making, and it is therefore incumbent on all SLT partner organisations to commit to sharing relevant security information with each other.
- Security information shared under the SLT framework is for the sole purpose of enhancing the security of personnel, operations and assets, and must not be used for any other purposes. Participating organisations commit to ensuring confidentiality of shared information and the appropriate use of the information within their organisation. Information received cannot be further distributed to third parties without the prior consent of the originating organisation. All assessments and decisions made on the basis of shared security information remain the responsibility of the individual organisations making those assessments and decisions.
- It is recognised that SLT partner organisations may have

limitations on what information they can share due to internal confidentiality requirements, restrictions applicable to information originating from third parties, obligations to protect the privacy of their personnel, and preserving the credibility and integrity of their organisation. However, SLT partner organisations should make every effort to disclose relevant security information, especially when such information may be critical to mitigate an imminent risk of injury or death.

- Security information sharing comprises the following: incident reports; situation reports; security alerts; security procedures, risk mitigation and contingency measures, as well as lessons learnt related to security incidents.

Operational and Logistics Arrangements

- SLT partner organisations will share logistics to enhance security arrangements and respond to security incidents where feasible, e.g. UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS);
- SLT partner organisations should seek to implement, where feasible, interoperable communications systems, advocate for the provision of frequencies, and assist each other in support and maintenance arrangements.

Security Training

- Recognising that UN, INGO and IO personnel operate in the same environment and that their security is often interlinked, it is advisable that security training is harmonised. Accordingly, SLT partner organisations will collaborate and consult on the development and delivery of security training, and offer participation or observer status at security training exercises, where feasible.
- In areas where the UNSMS establishes a Safe and Security Approaches to Field Environments (SSAFE) training, it will offer participation for INGO and IO personnel, if feasible.

SLT Implementation in the Field – Enhanced Level

When security conditions become more complex and challenging, information sharing and security coordination arrangements between SLT partner organisations should be enhanced concurrently. Accordingly, the goal of the Enhanced Level of cooperation is to achieve stronger and more effective information sharing, security coordination, and operational arrangements.

In areas with challenging security conditions, the elements of the Enhanced level SLT cooperation below should be considered and applied in addition to the Regular Level SLT components listed above.

Coordination Arrangements

Effective coordination mechanisms established and formalised:

- INGOs and IOs will establish a fully functioning security coordination platform to interface with the UNSMS;
- UNDSS will nominate a security focal point for SLT, providing a strong link with the INGO security coordination platform;

When required to provide additional capacity for security coordination with INGOs and IOs, and depending on capacity and availability of funding, UNDSS may establish a security support team.

Information Sharing

SLT partner organisations will:

- support the systematic sharing of security incident reports;
- establish regular security coordination meetings and briefings;
- share operational planning information, where relevant, in the interest of mutual security.

UNDSS and the INGO security coordination platform will:

- cooperate closely and enhance information sharing to enhance situational awareness for all SLT partner organisations;
- cooperate on security analysis, risk assessments, and operational planning, where feasible.

UNSMS Security Information and Operations Centres (SIOC), where established, will function as a central node for coordination and information sharing between SLT partner organisations.

Operational and Logistics Arrangements

SLT partner organisations will:

- Collaborate on security arrangements for jointly conducted operations, where applicable;
- Identify security requirements to be included in Consolidated Appeals (CAP), Strategic Response Plans (SRP), or other joint funding appeals;
- Consult on security coordination with host country authorities and other local actors with a view to achieving a coordinated and/or common approach where appropriate;
- Consult on contracted security services, e.g. security escorts, with a view to achieving a coordinated and/or common approach, where appropriate.