

SIPRI SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM MEETING

Solna, 17 March 2020

MINUTES

Participants

Sibylle Bauer, Helena Berger (present for item 3), Stephanie Blenckner, Luc van de Goor, Maria Kaemmerle, Sigrún Rawet, Dan Smith

Note-taker Elena Haapaniemi

The meeting was conducted via Zoom.

1. MoM approval

- The minutes from the SMT meeting on March 3 and on March 10 were approved.

2. Matters arising

- On the building, Dan is in touch with two specialists who have agreed to visit SIPRI premises on Friday to assess the possibilities of transforming the attic into additional office space. Whether they do is subject to the rapid development of the situation.

3. Corona virus

- The SMT had a long discussion on ways to address the current situation and to formulate additional guidelines. Helena joined the discussion. Dan will send out a new guidance to all staff members at the earliest. It will focus on the need to maintain contact, on the possibility of schools closing and on sources of information in English about the situation in Sweden.
- The main points in the discussion were:

Virtual check-ins

- There should be a daily status check where the employee contacts her/his line manager each working day before 09:30, by e-mail, with the relevant SMT member in cc.
- There should also be a weekly phone call from the line manager to the employee.
- Programmes should meet. Virtually once a week.
- Project teams will work together as normal except virtually.
- Other options discussed included creating team WhatsApp groups.
- Checking how staff are feeling emotionally is also important, especially for those who do not have any family in Sweden. SMT discussed and decided who among them should maintain contact with the new interns and the guest researchers.

Incoming new staff members

- We have recently appointed two RAs for the MENA program, two RAs for the Emerging Technologies programme and a new Partnerships Manager. Three are awaiting a work and residence permit and none has arrived in Sweden. Helena will inform them that SIPRI is not in a position to bring any new staff member to Stockholm at present and also warn them that there may be delays in obtaining work and residence permits. Luc informed the SMT that both MENA RAs can start working remotely. Dan told the SMT that our new Partnerships Manager is also working remotely from Toronto.

Effect on projects

- SMT agreed to initiate a systematic review of projects to identify the effect of reduced international travel and travel bans on implementation. Maria will ask Lena to generate a list of all projects that are underway; this list will be shared with the DoSes. The project leader bears the primary responsibility to do the assessment.
- SMT will also assess the impact on fulfilment of the first year of MFA strategic grant.
- Sibylle suggested having a systematic cross cluster exchange on alternative approaches to project implementation so as to be able to identify and to share best practices.

B-team in case some or all of the SMT members get sick

- Sigrún stressed the importance of having a backup for all key functions at SIPRI starting from the SMT. The SMT identified replacements to step up should the need arise. Names will be available within clusters after all have been approached and have agreed.

Support to parents, including single parents, in case the schools are closed

- SMT agreed that nobody should be penalized because they have children whose school or nursery is closed. SMT expects project and programme teams to work cooperatively and flexibly so that everything is done as well as possible. Helena will check the applicable national rules (as modified by recent government decrees) and share the updated information with the staff.

Useful information from Swedish authorities

- Sigrún will share some links to sources of information in English for our non-Swedish staff so as to ensure that everyone is up to date with all developments and governmental measures relating to the coronavirus. Dan will circulate this information.

Possibility of working from home country

- Several staff members have raised this issue in informal discussions with the management. The SMT agreed that this should be decided on a case by case basis. A written request to this end should be submitted to Helena or to the line manager. Concerned staff members will be contacted by Helena individually.

Internships, including remote internships

- The SMT acknowledged that travel restrictions mean new interns will find it hard or impossible to move to Sweden and that, in general, interns should be working at SIPRI in order for them to gain the benefits of their internship. Accordingly, SMT agreed that all internship applications, including those already approved, should be put on hold. The only exception is made for the intern from Italy that has been selected to work in Mark's program prior to the corona crisis. This is due to the very specific nature of the project and to the fact that Mark has experience working remotely with an intern.

Reporting on potential cases of Covid-19 among staff members.

Personal integrity vs transparency

- The SMT reiterated that sicknesses shall be reported to both the line manager and Helena.
- Helena stressed that the HR is not allowed, by virtue of law, to share confidential information on the nature of sickness of any individual staff member.

Technical solutions – Zoom, Skype for business

- Sigrún stressed the need for adequate tools for virtual communication. SIPRI is working with Zoom but the Swedish MFA cannot use Zoom. Virtual meetings with the MFA staff in Stockholm and in embassies requires Skype for Business. The SMT endorsed exploring

the possibilities of SIPRI acquiring licenses for Skype for business. Sigrún will follow up with Magda.

4. Report back

- Sibylle reported back on a Skype call she had with two researchers at IFSH in Hamburg who work on bio issues and pandemics. She is exploring prospects for a funding proposal to the German MFA for a joint project. Sibylle will discuss including bio and pandemic risk in SSC 20.
- Steph informed the SMT that the arms transfers data launch was picked up by over 1900 media outlets. The military expenditure data launch is next in line. The outreach team is going ahead with the preparations for the launch as planned. Siemon is drafting a piece on Russian military expenditure that will go public prior to the data launch. Steph will share the draft text with Dan and the rest of the SMT.
- Steph also reported that the contract with the venue for the SIPRI Lecture has not been signed yet. This is put on hold.
- Sigrún informed the SMT that the MFA has postponed the adoption of the formal decision to approve Ramtane Lamamra as SIPRI Board member; it had been due on March 19.
- Sigrún reported back that the information on our Forum moving to the online mode has been very well received. Sigrún has already received positive feedback from the partners.

5. Reporting deadline for the MFA grant

- Sigrún updated the SMT on the status of reporting on the implementation of the previous MFA grant. All reporting will be done on time but some implementation in the form of publications have been delayed too much. Sigrún stressed that these delays might affect us quite negatively. Dan agreed with Sigrún, adding that this situation is quite concerning. All project leaders need to take this very seriously. The new Project Management Guidelines will play an important role when they are finalised.

6. Staffing and projects

- All ongoing recruitment processes are continuing as planned but procedures for virtual interviewing will need to be worked out.
- The SMT endorsed going ahead with the recruitment of a temporary replacement for Mark during his parental leave.
- Luc updated the SMT on the status of cooperation with KINAC. The latter approved funding of a small project that will cover a few months of Vitaly's work.
- Luc flagged the need to include a reference to the corona virus situation in the SSC save-the-date message. The SMT agreed that such reference should be added.
- The SMT endorsed granting an Associate Fellow status to Jason Mosley. Luc will follow up with Helena who will develop a contract.
- The SMT endorsed entering a partnership with the Centre for Democracy and Development, CDD, in Nigeria. Luc will follow up.

7. Safeguarding policy

- Luc presented this agenda item. Having a safeguarding policy is one of the conditions under the DFID/UKRI (UK Research and Innovation) grant. The lack of this policy has been holding the donor back from approving the grant. SIPRI needs to have such a policy in place within the coming six months. Elena will do a first draft.

8. AOB

- NTR.

Action Points

- Guidance on working from home and other related issues – Dan
- List of all ongoing projects – Lena, with follow up with all project leads
- Skype for Business – Sigrún and Magda
- Siemon's piece on Russian military expenditure – Steph will share with the SMT for feedback prior to publishing
- Save-the-date SSC, add a reference to the corona virus situation – Steph
- Associate status for Jason Mosley – Luc and Helena
- Draft safeguarding policy – Elena

Items carried forward

- Indicators and benchmarks for the institute strategy
- Candidates to deliver SIPRI Lecture 2021