

Third, National Support Elements (NSEs) were problematic during UNMEE because they were deployed rigidly rather than in a manner specific to the needs of this particular mission. Thus, it was suggested that common elements such as movement control and transport could benefit from common standards and procedures. There were further problems when the relatively cohesive UNMEE force handed the mission over to the new force commander after the initial six months. It was recommended that the 'first-in' officers should stay longer to ensure a smoother transition from the SHIRBRIG to a regular UN force.

Fourth, it was determined that SHIRBRIG's membership must be enlarged to provide a sufficient and effective operational pool from which to draw resources. When on the ground, SHIRBRIG needs to work more closely with the UN, observers and the civilian community in question. Work on this level will ensure a more coherent peace-building and development process, in the post-conflict phase.

Finally, it was pointed out that SHIRBRIG's steering committee meets only twice yearly. It was suggested that another committee could be created that would be able to meet more frequently to ensure high levels of communication and understanding regarding practical elements of brigade deployments.

### Discussion

Some participants commented that SHIRBRIG seems to act as a 'fig leaf' so some member states can say they are doing something when in reality they are not. Nevertheless, it was repeated that the lead departments within the UN are very supportive of SHIRBRIG because it provides coherence and accessible leadership. Many participants felt that SHIRBRIG itself is a useful tool that is improving as we learn from experience.

When asked why SHIRBRIG succeeded in UNMEE, it was explained that the forces were able to work together as a coherent team due to previous experience training together. All but one SHIRBRIG member, (which had observer status only) participated in Partnership for Peace training sessions and deployed to Kosovo together.