

**Security Council Open Debate on the Maintenance of International Peace and Security,
Security Sector Reform: Challenges and Opportunities, April 2014, Security Council Chamber**

Statement by Ms. Mxakatop-Diseko Permanent Mission of South Africa to the United Nations.

My delegation wishes to congratulate the Federal Republic of Nigeria on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We are grateful to Nigeria for its foresight in choosing to focus on security sector reform (SSR) as a key topic for this month. We thank Nigeria for sponsoring the first draft resolution on this topic, and pledge South Africa's support for it.

We wish to thank the Secretary-General for his statement, welcome his second report on SSR (S/2013/480) and look forward to playing an active role in implementing its recommendations.

South Africa attaches great importance to SSR. Nigeria, together with South Africa, co-hosted a high-level forum on African perspectives on security sector reform in May 2010. Building on the outcomes, a follow-up high-level forum was held in October 2012 on building partnerships for security sector reform in Africa. Both outcomes were submitted to the Secretary-General.

Furthermore, in November 2013, South Africa and Slovakia co-hosted a high-level meeting of the United Nations Group of Friends of SSR to launch the latest report of the Secretary-General on SSR and to discuss the way forward in implementing the second report of the Secretary-General.

We have noted several achievements in the report, such as the provision of support to countries in the development of national security policies, strategies and plans, facilitating national dialogue on issues related to security sector reform, assisting national authorities with the development of executive and oversight mechanisms and supporting countries in coordination and resource mobilization, which is a step welcomed by my delegation. While we welcome those positive developments, we believe that more can still be done, especially in the light of the noteworthy setbacks that have been experienced in countries such as the Central African Republic, South Sudan and Somalia.

Drawing on the lessons learned on the African continent and South Africa's own homegrown experience undergoing SSR, we can attest to the fact that each country faces its own unique challenges, and therefore, whatever approach is adopted, it has to be context-specific.

A key political and practical challenge in supporting SRR is facilitating national ownership. We welcome the development of the Integrated Technical Guidance Notes on that important issue by the inter-agency Security Sector Reform Task Force, which recognizes that national ownership requires countries to develop their own national vision for their security sectors that is informed by their own circumstances, to commit sufficient resources to ensure the long-term sustainability and viability of reforms and to review the progress in their implementation.

SSR challenges and opportunities are regional in nature. Cooperation with regional and subregional organizations is therefore important. We appreciate the cooperation between the African Union (AU) and the United Nations. The strategic partnership developed between the United Nations and the African Union on SSR is an expression of the important role that the United Nations could play in advancing security sector reform on the African continent.

Therefore, we welcome the African Union policy framework recently adopted by the African Union

Heads of State and Government and the ongoing capacity-building programme by the AU, United Nations and European Union. South Africa is committed to the implementation of that framework.

We also recognize the important role United Nations peacekeeping missions play in security sector reform, where they have become increasingly multidimensional. The importance of SSR and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes are essential elements for peacebuilding, and we welcome the increasing involvement of the Peacebuilding Commission in that regard. The Peacebuilding Commission should continue to intensify its efforts to mobilize resources, including by supporting national aid coordination and resource mobilization efforts by countries under its purview.

The inter-agency Security Sector Reform Task Force and the Security Sector Reform Unit have emerged as important sources of expertise on SSR. The 2013 report of the Secretary-General outlines the increasing complexity of mandates and activities in support of national SSR processes. It also concludes that a number of steps need to be taken in order to strengthen the United Nations delivery on the ground. We must support that.

In conclusion, the legitimacy and global character of the United Nations gives it a particular responsibility in facilitating a coordinated approach to security sector reform based on the principle of national ownership and inclusivity. That all-inclusive process must always have a capacity to address the needs of the people, including in particular the role that women and youth can play. We are optimistic that the debate today will move us a step closer to further enhancing and coordinating our approach to SSR.