

**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 Mr. Van Oosterom Permanent Mission of the Netherlands to the United Nations.*

Allow me to thank Nigeria, Sir, for organizing this important open debate and for your excellent concept note (S/2014/238, annex), and especially for your leadership on the issue. The lead role Nigeria has taken is of great importance to my country.

The Netherlands also welcomes the report of the Secretary-General (S/2013/480) and the recommendations made therein. Both documents emphasize, on the one hand, the importance of a comprehensive approach to security sector reform (SSR) within the United Nations system, and, on the other hand, the need to focus SSR efforts on national ownership. We fully support those notions. The Netherlands aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union.

My Government sees a close relationship between security, the rule of law and development. Allow me to note the fundamental formula of the World Summit of September 2005, that there is no peace without development, no development without peace and no lasting peace or sustainable development without respect for human rights. In post-conflict situations that interconnection between the three elements is even more manifest and security sector reform is relevant to all three. In my statement I will address those, as well as the position of women, fighting crime and the role we see for the United Nations.

First, on the rule of law, security sector reform (SSR) cannot be seen separately from the rule of law. Security services must operate within the framework of the law and be accountable to civilian authorities. The civilian perspective should be the main focus of SSR, to make sure that security services deliver human security and not only State security. That will give them legitimacy from a legal perspective and trust from the perspective of society.

SSR must be inclusive at all stages. Governance and national ownership of SSR efforts are crucial for their success and legitimacy. Therefore, the political realities of the countries involved must be taken into account. Substantive roles for the relevant non-State actors and structures, national reconciliation dialogues and activities in the field of transitional justice must be ensured. In that respect I would also like to stress that non-governmental organizations, the media and political parties can play an important role in the accountability component of SSR agendas. By establishing SSR based on national ownership within a rule of law context, a foundation will be laid for sustainable development.

Secondly, on the position of women, the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, must be a principal guideline in programming and reform in the field of SSR. Steps have been taken to implement the resolution but more remains to be done, as the open debate of last Friday (see S/PV.7160), also under the able leadership of Nigeria, made clear. Combating violence against women and promoting the recruitment of female members of the security sector should be at the core of the agenda.

Thirdly, with regard to crime, let me point out another under-estimated aspect of SSR: international crime. Around the world we witness the destabilizing effects of criminal activities attracted by regions with weak governance and poor security institutions. In such situations, the smuggling of drugs, human trafficking and corruption are thriving and criminal networks are able to establish proxy security forces. That should lead us to think about the link with international crime and how to deal with it in terms of security sector reform.

On the role of the United Nations — my fourth point — the Netherlands commends the report of the Secretary-General for developing a more comprehensive United Nations system-wide approach. The relevant United Nations entities involved in SSR and the rule of law and development should cooperate more effectively. That applies both in New York and in the field. The United Nations has a comparative advantage in playing a coordinating role to assist communities in formulating and asking the right questions concerning their SSR processes and to support countries in building a human rights-based security sector and working on sustainable development. The comprehensive approach is therefore crucial.

The last point I would like to make is that the Netherlands has been a strong supporter of security sector reform, both through bilateral cooperation programmes as well as in the context of the United Nations. We supported the development of a system-wide United Nations approach. We are a strong supporter of enhanced cooperation between the United Nations Development Programme and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations through the funding of SSR projects in the field. And we support the activities of the Group of Friends of SSR, where inclusive dialogue, policy development and building bridges between a variety of international, regional and national stakeholders are central themes.

In conclusion, effective security sector reform is a result of synergy among efforts in the field in peace and security, governance and rule of law, as well as sustainable development. The Netherlands is proud to be a partner of many countries in the world as well as of the United Nations in each of those areas. We look forward to our continued partnership to strengthen peace, promote justice and foster development worldwide.