

Security Council Open Debate on Security Sector Reform
October 12 2011, Security Council Chamber

Statement by H.E. Susan Rice, Representative of the United States

Let me start by thanking the Government of Nigeria for its leadership in bringing us together today to discuss security sector reform (SSR) in Africa. Let me also thank you personally, Minister Ashiru, for presiding over our debate.

This Council discussion on SSR is long overdue. A State's ability to police its territory, protect its citizens and uphold its laws is central to its ability to exercise its sovereignty and promote regional peace and stability. However, in all too many instances, local security forces lack capacity, or worse, they threaten the very citizens they are meant to serve. All too often, we have had to rely on international peacekeepers to fill temporarily a gap that a nation's people would have preferred to address permanently on their own.

From Liberia to Haiti to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the drawdown of international peacekeepers is now linked to the build-up of indigenous security institutions. At least 11 United Nations peacekeeping operations, peacebuilding offices and special political missions are now mandated to conduct SSR activities, and 10 of them are in Africa. The United Nations and many other actors are making important contributions to SSR in those countries, and that includes the United States.

Over the past several years, for instance, my Government has invested more than \$300 million to support defence and police reform in South Sudan, more than \$280 million for defence, police and justice sector reform in Liberia and some \$110 million for defence and police reform in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The United States also supports SSR programmes in several other African countries emerging from conflict.

Today's Security Council debate on security sector reform and the draft presidential statement we will adopt should spur action, we hope, on four fronts.

First, we should take a more long-term, comprehensive approach to SSR. As the Secretary General pointed out in his 2008 report on the subject (S/2008/39), the security sector is not only uniformed personnel — it involves the entire defence establishment, civilian law enforcement and corrections personnel, intelligence services, institutions dealing with border management, customs agencies and organizations that handle civil emergencies and elements of the criminal justice sector. As the Secretary-General also pointed out, reform of the security sector is not just about providing basic training and equipment for a battalion or formed police unit. It is about establishing a legal and constitutional framework for the legitimate, accountable use of force, via security personnel, in accordance with universally accepted human rights norms and standards. True security sector reform does not mean merely recruiting more security personnel, it means thinking through their overall numbers, determining what is fiscally sustainable and creating mechanisms for their direction and oversight.

Secondly, our approach to SSR has been too narrow. We must broaden it to take into account what host populations time and again demand, namely, a clear recognition that

human rights, good governance and gender equality are inextricably linked with security sector reform. Integrating a gender perspective into the daily work of armed forces, defence ministries and peace makers makes these institutions more inclusive and democratic and improves the overall effectiveness of security sector reform. A defence or law enforcement agency that shuns corruption, advances equality and protects the rights of all, rather than trampling them, is far more likely to command the support and confidence of its citizens. The Secretary General rightly highlighted these issues in his most recent report on SSR. We hope that his next one will suggest concrete benchmarks for measuring progress.

Thirdly, the United Nations needs to strengthen its expertise and enhance the coordination among all actors that play a role in SSR, especially human rights defenders, development agencies, international financial institutions such as the World Bank and regional and subregional organizations. The United States appreciates the work now being undertaken by the Security Sector Reform Unit of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the inter-agency Security Sector Reform Task Force and other United Nations entities such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. We look forward to having them do even more to spread lessons learned and best practices on SSR, inside the United Nations system and beyond.

Fourthly, we must all do more to help build up expertise outside the United Nations system, particularly by regional and subregional organizations working to address the challenges around them. For example, the Economic Community of West African States has helped make important SSR gains throughout West Africa. Regional bodies are increasingly important players when it comes to SSR in Africa, and we support their efforts. We will also need to work at both the national and regional levels to address a range of twenty-first century challenges in the waters off Africa, including piracy, armed robbery at sea, trafficking in persons, illegal or unregulated fishing and environmental degradation. As such, maritime security sector reform will increasingly become critical to overall SSR.

The United States looks forward to working with our fellow Council members to sustain and increase our focus on SSR within the Chamber and beyond. Especially in Africa and in other lands that have known too much suffering, we seek an international approach to SSR that heeds the voices of citizens calling out for a better future and bolsters the capacity of host Governments and regional organizations to help make those hopes real.