

**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. Murmokaite Permanent Mission of Lithuania to the United Nations.

I would like to begin by thanking the delegation of Nigeria for organizing today's open debate and for preparing its comprehensive concept note (S/2014/238, annex). I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing earlier today.

My delegation welcomes the adoption later today of the first-ever Security Council resolution on security sector reform (SSR), which proves the increasing recognition of the importance of the subject by the Council's membership.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement to be made by the observer of the European Union.

Security sector reform may sound technical, yet its direct impact on both security and millions of lives is obvious. Its need becomes particularly urgent and real when a soldier or a police officer whose only calling should be to serve his country and people with integrity and honour, acts as a thug, using his uniform and weapon to spread fear and extort what few possessions battered civilian populations might have, when security institutions created to ensure safety and security turn into machines of torture, forced disappearances or oppression.

Security sector reform strategies, while often detailed and complex, seek to respond to some very real men in uniform who have just recently spread fear and imposed their will on local communities by raping and sexually abusing women, girls, boys and men? How does one give back a childhood to a child soldier, whose life has so far taught him that killing and maiming others is the way to ensure his own survival? How does one convince a Government propped up by armed militias used to turning a blind eye to graft and other abuses that investing in accountable security sector will bring greater dividends through stability, security, and eventually through the ballot box? Building sustainable peace requires sustainable answers to those and many other questions related to security sector reform.

While originally perceived as an element of peacekeeping exit strategies, security sector reform is now widely accepted as an integral part of conflict prevention, peacebuilding and efforts to avoid relapse into conflict. Security sector reform is also a vital element of the rule of law, which can hardly be achieved without a security sector that is accountable, effective and responsive to the needs of the population.

As noted in the concept paper, linkages between SSR and other related areas, such as countering illicit flows and destabilizing accumulations of small arms, should also be kept in mind. In particular, close links must be established between SSR and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, and former combatants must be offered alternative livelihoods, as for example in the case of the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Programme supported by the United Nations Development Programme, which provides anti-Government militants with an opportunity to give up their arms and become reintegrated into their communities.

While the United Nations has developed an impressive toolbox for assisting Member States,

long-term national ownership remains key for the legitimacy and sustainability of any SSR effort. National Governments should undertake both sector-wide initiatives and reform of individual components, such as armed forces, police, law enforcement, judiciary and corrections, complemented by horizontal measures aimed at fighting corruption, strengthening governance and accountability and ensuring the protection of human rights. As the report of the Secretary-General (S/2013/480) rightly notes, the United Nations must make sure it supports inclusive and accountable SSR that enhances the social contract between the State and society. In order to achieve that goal, it is key to ensure that all parties to a conflict and all segments of society, including women, youth and vulnerable groups, are involved in the SSR process.

As noted in the report of the Secretary-General, success or failure of SSR efforts depends on the broader context of transformative processes in a society, such as national dialogue, reconciliation efforts or transitional justice initiatives, all of which require genuine inclusivity. Time and again, we have seen how exclusion of certain armed groups from SSR leads to continued threats to communities, undermining overall peace efforts. All national stakeholders must be genuinely involved in the reform process, since the trust between security institutions and the society at large can be reinstated only if past abuses do not go untold and if proper accountability is ensured. In that respect, the link between an effective, transparent SSR process and ensuring justice and accountability for past crimes is key.

Also key is the need for the most stringent vetting for those who are reintegrated into security structures during the course of SSR. As my delegation has noted on other occasions, blanket amnesties can undercut the success of SSR and heighten perceived insecurities among local populations if perpetrators of major crimes, including crimes against humanity or mass rape, are included in new security and law and order structures.

In order to maximize the effectiveness of United Nations involvement and tailor international efforts to the exact needs of each country, it is important to know how useful particular measures have been so far, which measures proved to be effective and why in any given situation they have proved to be effective. As the concept paper rightly points out, measuring only the quantitative elements of reform may not be enough, and we may need to find ways to assess and measure deeper change. The complexity of measuring impact should not deter us from trying to do so. We therefore welcome efforts in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia to develop a set of indicators and benchmarks to monitor implementation of national SSR strategies.

The United Nations system should also be constantly reviewing the effectiveness and coherence of its own assistance to Member States and building on lessons learned. In that regard, we are pleased that the draft resolution we will be adopting later today recognizes the need for the inter-agency Security Sector Reform Task Force and United Nations operations to further strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of SSR initiatives, with the aim of ensuring the effectiveness of the support provided to Governments.

To conclude, I wish to commend the United Nations Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform, co-chaired by Slovakia and South Africa, for being a driving force in giving the issue the visibility it deserves. We also acknowledge an important contribution of the inter-agency Security Sector Task Force, now comprising 14 United Nations entities and the United Nations Inter-Agency SSR Support Unit, all of which are working towards an integrated, holistic and coherent United Nations approach to SSR issues. The Council can count on my delegation's support in its further efforts to advance that important issue.