

**Security Council Open Debate on Security Sector Reform**  
**October 12<sup>th</sup> 2011, Security Council Chamber**

*Statement by H.E. Mr Sanqu, Representative of South Africa*

My delegation wishes to commend Nigeria for organizing this important open debate. We align ourselves with the statement to be delivered later today by the Permanent Representative of Egypt, who will speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. We are particularly pleased, Mr. President, that this debate is being presided over by your good self, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nigeria, whom we welcome to the Council.

Nigeria, together with South Africa, co-hosted the High-level Forum on African Perspectives on Security Sector Reform, held on 14 May 2010, the outcome of which was submitted to the Secretary-General. We thank the Under-Secretary-General Ladsous for his briefing to the Council and for apprising us on the work being done by the Secretariat on security sector reform (SSR).

Given our own history, South Africa attaches great importance to SSR, as the reform and transformation of our security sector was both a constitutional and political objective. South Africa's approach to security sector reform is a holistic one aimed at creating effective and accountable security institutions, which are absolutely essential for the building of sustainable peace, development, reconciliation and the culture of human rights.

South Africa believes that building accountable and democratic security institutions is important in countering the potential destabilizing effect that unregulated security forces might play in the political life of any country. The role of the United Nations in working with national Governments in strengthening SSR is therefore crucial in the area of conflict prevention. The legitimacy and global character of the United Nations gives it a particular responsibility to facilitate a coordinated approach to SSR.

The assumptions and principles on the role of the United Nations in SSR contained in the Secretary-General's 2008 report (S/2008/39) remain valid today. We also recognize the important role United Nations peacekeeping missions play in SSR where peacekeeping missions have become increasingly multidimensional. The importance of SSR has also been recognized as an important element for peacebuilding. We have seen the increasing involvement of the Peacebuilding Commission in this regard.

South Africa recognizes the importance of close partnerships between the United Nations in particular and regional, subregional organizations and other intergovernmental organizations, including the international financial institutions, in the area of SSR. The multiplicity of actors involved requires greater coordination among donors to facilitate synergy and avoid duplication.

At the regional level, the African Union (AU) is in the process of developing a policy framework document for SSR that refocuses emphasis from military security to human security by defending and protecting all citizens from all forms of violence and insecurity, including gender-based violence. The rationale and scope of this policy framework stresses the importance of African ownership in the SSR process. The many externally generated

narratives on SSR do not fully address African approaches, as it is preferable to refer to African-originated references. The policy framework has been adopted in principle and will be presented to the AU Assembly during the AU summit in 2012.

The experience of SSR on the African continent indicates that SSR is not an event but a process that requires continuous attention and political will. Throughout our involvement in security sector reform in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, and in our own experiences in South Africa, it has become clear that each country faces its own unique challenges, and therefore, whatever approach is adopted has to be context specific.

We have also learned from those experiences that SSR can only be sustainable if the principle of local ownership is upheld. There can therefore be no one-size-fits-all solution to security sector reform. The international community should therefore work in close collaboration with countries emerging from conflict, including in recognizing the important role that women and vulnerable groups can play as agents of change.

In conclusion, as we have said, the legitimacy and global character of the United Nations gives it a particular responsibility to facilitate a coordinated approach to SSR based on the principle of national ownership. Fundamental in the assistance and expertise that the United Nations can provide is the cooperation and consent of the States involved. Additionally, the strategic partnership developed between the United Nations and the African Union on SSR is an illustration of an important role that the United Nations can play in advancing SSR on the African continent.

We hope that the discussion here today will move us a step closer towards further enhancing and coordinating our approaches to SSR. South Africa supports the draft presidential statement that will be adopted later today.