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Security Council

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Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 5632nd meeting of the Security Council, held on 20 February 2007, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled »Maintenance of international peace and security: role of the Security Council in supporting security sector reform«, the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

»The Security Council recalls the Statement by its President of 12 July 2005, in which it emphasizes that security sector reform is an essential element of any stabilization and reconstruction process in post-conflict environments.«

»The Security Council stresses that reforming the security sector in post-conflict environments is critical to the consolidation of peace and stability, promoting poverty reduction, rule of law and good governance, extending legitimate state authority, and preventing countries from relapsing into conflict. In that regard, a professional, effective and accountable security sector, and accessible and impartial law-enforcement and justice sectors are equally necessary to laying the foundations for peace and sustainable development.«

»The Security Council underlines that it is the sovereign right and the primary responsibility of the country concerned to determine the national approach and priorities of security sector reform. It should be a nationally-owned process that is rooted in the particular needs and conditions of the country in question. The Security Council acknowledges that strong support and assistance of the international community are important to build national capacities thereby reinforcing national ownership, which is crucial for the sustainability of the whole process. The Security Council also underlines that the United Nations has a crucial role to play in promoting comprehensive, coherent, and co-ordinated international support to nationally-owned security sector reform programmes, implemented with the consent of the country concerned.«

»The Security Council notes that the United Nations system has made significant contributions to the re-establishment of functioning security sectors in post-conflict environments, and that an increasing number of United Nations organs, funds, programmes and agencies are engaged in one aspect or another of security sector reform support activities.«

»The Security Council acknowledges the contribution that non-UN actors, in particular regional, sub-regional and other intergovernmental organisations, including international financial institutions, and bilateral donors as well as non-governmental organizations, can bring in supporting nationally-led security sector reform programmes.«

»The Security Council recognises the need when mandating a United Nations operation to consider, as appropriate, and taking into account the concerns of the Member State and other relevant actors, the national security sector reform priorities, while laying the foundation for peace consolidation, which could, inter alia, subsequently enable timely withdrawal of international peacekeepers. The Security Council notes the importance of close interaction among different United Nations system entities, and other relevant actors, in order to ensure that security sector reform considerations are adequately covered during implementation of Security Council mandates.«

»The Security Council underlines that security sector reform can be a long-term process that continues well beyond the duration of a peacekeeping operation. In that regard, the Security Council emphasises the important role that the Peacebuilding Commission can play in ensuring continuous international support to countries emerging from conflict. The Security Council takes note of the work already carried out by the Peacebuilding Commission concerning Burundi and Sierra Leone and requests it to continue advising the Council on the issue of security sector reform in the framework of its activities related to these countries. The Security Council requests the Peacebuilding Commission to include consideration of security sector reform programmes in designing integrated peacebuilding strategies for its continued engagement with those countries, with a view to developing best practices regarding comprehensive, coherent, and nationally-owned security sector reform programmes.«

»The Security Council emphasises that security sector reform must be context-driven and that the needs will vary from situation to situation. The Security Council encourages states to formulate their security sector reform programmes in a holistic way that encompasses strategic planning, institutional structures, resource management, operational capacity, civilian oversight and good governance. The Security Council emphasises the need for a balanced realisation of all aspects of security sector reform, including institutional capacity, affordability, and sustainability of its programs. The Security Council recognises the inter-linkages between security sector reform and other important factors of stabilisation and reconstruction, such as transitional justice, disarmament, demobilisation, repatriation, reintegration and rehabilitation of former combatants, small arms and light weapons control, as well as gender equality, children and armed conflict and human rights issues.«

»In light of the above, the Security Council acknowledges the need for a comprehensive report of the Secretary-General on United Nations approaches to security sector reform, to foster its implementation in post-conflict environments, and

expresses its readiness to consider such a report within the scope of its prerogatives under the UN Charter. The report should identify lessons learned, core security sector reform functions that the United Nations. system can perform, roles and responsibilities of UN system entities, and how best to co-ordinate UN support for security sector reform with national and international activities in this field, as well as interaction with regional and sub-regional actors. »The Security Council expects the Secretary General's report to make concrete recommendations on the identification, prioritisation and sequencing of United Nations support to nationally-owned security sector reform, with particular emphasis on post-conflict environments. This should include recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness and co-ordination of all UN system entities that support security sector reform.«

»The Security Council invites the Secretary-General to continue to include, in his periodic reports to the Security Council on specific United Nations operations mandated by the Security Council, whenever appropriate, recommendations related to security sector reform programmes in the countries concerned.«

»The Security Council welcomes the joint initiative of Slovakia and South Africa to further discuss this issue with a focus on experiences and challenges of security sector reform in Africa at a workshop to be held in the course of 2007.«

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Security Council

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Letter dated 8 February 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that, during the Presidency of the Slovak Republic, the Security Council is scheduled to hold an open debate on the subject »Maintenance of international peace and security: role of the Security Council in supporting security sector reform«, on Tuesday, 20 February 2007. The Slovak Republic has prepared the attached concept paper to help guide the discussion on that occasion (see annex). I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Peter Burian
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic

Annex to the letter dated 8 February 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations addressed to

the Secretary-General Maintenance of international peace and security: role of the Security Council in supporting security sector reform.

Concept paper prepared for the Security Council open debate

Background

1. Security sector reform (SSR) is a concept that has acquired increasing recognition from the international community, with external actors assuming an important role in supporting SSR programmes. For many years now, the United Nations system has also been engaged in a wide range of SSR activities although not necessarily under the label of SSR. What has been absent to date is a comprehensive, coherent and coordinated United Nations approach to SSR. There is, however, *increasing interest within the United Nations system* and strong calls from the field for such an approach, which would serve as a valuable planning, coordination and implementation tool for various United Nations institutions working on SSR and in related areas such as DDR and rule of law.

2. It is against this backdrop that an open debate of the Security Council is being held on 20 February 2007 to provide members of the Security Council and the wider membership of the United Nations with the opportunity to articulate their views and propose concrete recommendations to *enable the Security Council to formulate its role* in the development of a comprehensive, coherent and coordinated United Nations approach to security sector reform.

3. The open debate will be chaired by His Excellency Ján Kubiš, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia.

Security sector reform (SSR)

4. Security sector reform (SSR) is driven by the understanding that an ineffective and poorly governed security sector represents a decisive obstacle to peace, stability, poverty reduction, sustainable development, rule of law, good governance and the respect for human rights. The *security sector* – or the security system as it is referred to by developmental actors – is defined as including all those institutions, groups, organizations and individuals – both State and non-State – that have a stake in security and justice provision:

- *Core security actors including law enforcement institutions*: armed forces, police, gendarmeries, paramilitary forces, presidential guards, intelligence and security services, coastguards, border guards, customs authorities and reserve and local security units.

- *Security management and oversight bodies*: parliament / legislature and its relevant legislative committees; government / the executive, including ministries of defence, internal affairs and foreign affairs; national security advisory

bodies; customary and traditional authorities; financial management bodies; and civil society actors, including the media, academia and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

- *Justice institutions*: justice ministries; prisons; criminal investigation and prosecution services; the judiciary (courts and tribunals); implementation justice services (bailiffs and ushers), other customary and traditional justice systems; human rights commissions and ombudsmen; etc.
- *Non-statutory security forces*: liberation armies; guerrilla armies; private bodyguard units; private security companies; political party militias.

5. The security sector shares many of the characteristics of other service delivery systems (although it has unique characteristics as a result of the central role that the use of force plays in this sector). As the United Nations Secretary-General noted in 1999, the security sector »should be subject to the same standards of efficiency, equity and accountability as any other [public] service«. Thus, the *overarching objective of SSR* is to ensure that the security institutions perform their statutory functions – to deliver security and justice to the State and its people – efficiently and effectively in an environment consistent with democratic norms and the principles of good governance and the rule of law, thereby promoting human security.

6. SSR depends on *national ownership* because reform of the most sensitive sector of the State must be shaped and driven by local actors and supported, if necessary, by external actors. This may be extremely difficult in some countries, particularly those in post-conflict environments, but it is a pragmatic imperative as well as a matter of respect. SSR that is not locally shaped and driven is not sustainable.

7. SSR is *holistic* because (1) it provides a framework for military and defence reform as well as reforms in non-military parts of the security sector such as the police and judicial institutions; (2) it links measures aimed at increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the security and justice institutions to overriding concerns of good governance, rule of law and democratic accountability; and (3) it aims at building State capacity to deliver security and justice and simultaneously engaging non-State actors relevant for security sector governance.

8. SSR is *context-specific* because each country engaged in SSR constitutes a special case and hence a different reform context. Consequently, the way SSR is approached and implemented very much depends on whether a country finds itself in a long-term democratization process, in transition from war to peace or in a postconflict setting. Another important contextual factor is the regional security environment which may be amenable or not to national SSR. Thus, SSR cannot be undertaken in a mechanical fashion and there is no one-size-fits-all.

9. SSR is a *long-term* endeavour that takes place over several years, if not decades, and requires substantial resources. A host of security needs might be urgent but there is never a quick-fix solution. Short-term targets lead to dysfunctional and unsustainable outcomes. Institutional capacity, afford-ability and sustainability of programmes, sequencing, timing and flexibility are all aspects of SSR which need to be balanced against each other.

Towards an United Nations approach to SSR

10. Given its mandate, legitimacy, experience and presence on the ground, the United Nations has a crucial role to play and a special responsibility in promoting comprehensive, coherent and coordinated international support to nationally led SSR programmes, in close cooperation with Member States, regional organizations and other international actors. However, there is *no common understanding,* much less a comprehensive policy framework, that would guide United Nations support to SSR programmes in a coherent, coordinated and thus sustainable way.

11. Although a comprehensive, coherent and coordinated United Nations approach to SSR has been lacking to date, security sector reform is very much on the agenda of the United Nations system. United Nations support to SSR cuts across a *wide range of policy* areas from peace and security, to poverty reduction, economic and social development, human rights, rule of law and democratization. There is a strong consensus that SSR is *particularly relevant in post-conflict environments*, and that it is key for ensuring transition from peacekeeping to longer-term reconstruction and development. It is also agreed that SSR is inextricably linked with other stabilization and reconstruction priorities such as transitional justice, rule of law and human rights; disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration and rehabilitation (DDR) of former combatants; equal and full participation of women; and children in armed conflict, among others.

12. An *increasing number of United Nations organs, departments, programmes, funds and agencies* are involved in one aspect or another of SSR support activities – even if they do not explicitly recognize them as such. For example, the United Nations system has been involved in SSR through the provision of funds; stimulation and facilitation of dialogue and transformation; technical advice on security issues; training and education activities; and generation of lessons learned and best practices. The United Nations system's record of SSR related activities is particularly extensive in the context of multidimensional peacekeeping operations and development programmes.

13. In this sense, it is self-evident that the United Nations is closely involved in SSR and related activities, even if it does not necessarily carry them out in a coordinated fashion or refer to them as such. Various United Nations entities – including the Security Council – repeatedly, and increasingly, refer to SSR. The absence of an adequate system-level capacity for planning, coordination and implementation is likely to hinder United Nations efforts to support nationally led SSR programmes in an effective, efficient and accountable way. All this calls for the *development of a comprehensive, coherent and coordinated United Nations approach to SSR.*

14. The predominant role of the United Nations in the maintenance of global peace and security implies that such an approach should be commensurately broad but, at the same time, give special attention to the distinct features of SSR in post-conflict environments. This view has been vindicated by a number of *recent developments* such as:

- In July 2005, the Security Council acknowledged »that SSR is an essential element of any stabilization process in post-conflict environments« and stressed the need for more coherent approaches by the United Nations and the international community.

- The annual report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations of the General Assembly, adopted in February 2006, acknowledged the significance of SSR in peacekeeping and requested that the Secretariat conduct »a process of joint policymaking on security sector reform best practices«.

- SSR has become an important item on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission, as illustrated by the central role SSR plays in Burundi and Sierra Leone.

- With the establishment by the Secretariat of the inter-agency working group on security sector reform, there is another opportunity to take forward the development of a policy framework for United Nations system support to nationally led SSR.

15. In promoting comprehensive, coherent and coordinated international support to nationally led SSR programmes, the *immediate priorities* for the United Nations are as follows:

- To reach consensus on a concept of SSR;

- To determine an appropriate allocation of roles and responsibilities for SSR among the various United Nations entities;

- To generate lessons learned, norms, standards and best practices;

- To establish coordinating mechanisms within the United Nations family;

- To establish coordinating mechanisms with other external actors and with internal actors in partner countries.

Open debate

16. In dealing with these priority themes, some of the following key issues and specific challenges could merit special attention and may be considered during the open debate:

(a) The potential role of the United Nations in helping to frame and articulate *norms and standards for SSR*; in this domain, while drawing on the work carried out by other international actors such as the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the United Nations has a special role to play by virtue of its operational experience, global outlook and resulting legitimacy.

(b) Importance of developing *system-wide United Nations guidelines and best practices* for SSR support, which can be tailored to specific country and regional contexts, particularly post-conflict contexts, given that the point of departure and reform trajectory may differ substantively from one SSR-implementing country to another.

(c) The need for the United Nations to ensure **consistency** of its approach to SSR *with related areas of activity* such as DDR, rule of law and transitional justice, and with cross-cutting issues such as human rights, humanitarian law, gender balance and equal participation of women, and children in armed conflict, among others.

(d) The *role of the Security Council*, through its mission mandates, in setting the parameters for SSR in post-conflict countries, particularly in the transition from an initial peacekeeping activity to long-term peacebuilding anddevelopment programmes.

(e) The important *role that the Peacebuilding Commission* can play in ensuring continuous international support to countries emerging from conflict.

(f) Importance of ensuring *sufficient United Nations capacity for supporting SSR*; establishing a dedicated support capacity to facilitate and coordinate United Nations assistance in this area; and creating an inter-agency coordinating mechanism.

(g) Need to take into account the different rules and regulations that govern the United Nations Secretariat on the one hand, and funds and agencies on the other, and consequently, the extent to which a *coordinated approach to SSR* is feasible or can be improved upon. In this context, it may be worthwhile to explore the relevance for a United Nations approach to SSR support of the recommendations concerning »Delivering as One« put forward by the report of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment.

(h) The potential role of the United Nations in leading efforts aimed at minimizing duplication and competition; enhancing cooperation and synergy, and ensuring *proper coordination among intergovernmental organizations* and other international actors involved in SSR assistance. This is clearly vital but often remains poor in practice, whether because mandates of international actors cover SSR only partially or because other actors are reluctant to coordinate.