

African Perspectives on Security Sector Reform

Final report

New York City, 14 May 2010



Co-chaired by

The Permanent Missions of Nigeria and South Africa to the United Nations

Funded by

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations

Facilitated by

Security Sector Reform Unit
Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions
United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations



High-level Forum on African Perspectives on SSR, 14 May 2010

Experts-level Seminar on African Perspectives on SSR, 13 May 2010

The report was produced in June 2011 by the Security Sector Reform Unit,
Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions, Department of Peacekeeping Operations
Cover photos/Thorodd Ommundsen



"The new opportunities inherent to intra-African SSR partnerships have not yet been adequately explored", says Mr. Dmitry Titov, Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions, UN Photo/Martine Perret.

A word from:

Mr. Dmitry Titov, Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions

Learning From African Experiences in SSR

The international debate around security sector reform (SSR) has become more vibrant in recent years, particularly in Africa, where States and societies have been engaged in SSR for decades. Many African Member States have recognized that SSR is necessary for early recovery from conflict, economic development and sustainable peacebuilding, as well as regional stability and international peacekeeping. This is why the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) is supporting approximately ten African Member States to undertake SSR on the basis of the highest international standards.

The United Nations has also recognized that the legitimacy of our global approach depends on the extent to which it is informed by and responds to the voices of those States and societies the Organization is seeking to serve. However, SSR-related policy discourse, in general, tends not to adequately involve states undergoing reform in Africa and elsewhere. Moreover, the design and

implementation of SSR has evolved considerably over the past few decades. Increasingly, African Member States are not only engaging in this strategic area as "recipients" of external support but they are also "providers" of assistance. Yet, the new opportunities inherent to intra-African SSR partnerships have not

While each context has its own specific history, priorities and dynamics, there are general lessons that can be learned about SSR policy and practice in Africa and elsewhere that we have not adequately explored.

been adequately explored and brought into SSR practice. We also know that while each context has its own specific history, priorities and dynamics, there are general lessons that can be learned about SSR policy and practice in Africa and elsewhere that we have not ad-

equately explored.

To create the space to address these and other critical issues, in May 2010, the Permanent Missions of Nigeria and South Africa jointly co-hosted a High-level Forum on African Perspectives on SSR, informed and guided by an Experts-level seminar the previous day. These events were funded by the Netherlands with technical support from the SSR Unit in the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions (OROLSI), DPKO. The discussions focused around three main themes (national ownership; coordination of SSR assistance; and the regional dimensions of SSR), which served as entry points to address and collectively seek pragmatic responses to a range of challenges and opportunities for SSR in Africa. The events also provided a forum to launch the strategic SSR partnership between the African Union and United Nations.

A year later, we have far from resolved all of the issues raised in these important discussions. However, the outcomes of these two events have served to enrich our thinking and improve our practice. For example, many of the main findings from these events have been integrated into the African Union's draft policy on SSR, which could serve as critical guidance for the African Union, regional organizations, Member States and their partners as they engage in SSR on the continent. Over the past 12 months, this policy has been further elaborated and widely consulted and should soon be presented to African Union Member States for adoption.

The usefulness of these two events underscores the need for more vibrant dialogue on SSR between African Member States, regional organizations and the United Nations. Indeed, the importance attached to SSR is not an exclusively African trend – it reflects the global recognition of the need to build effective, efficient and accountable security institutions. The United Nations therefore also provides diverse SSR-related support in many other regions of the world. Thus, as the United Nations, we are committed to fostering this dialogue and, on this basis, improving SSR practice in Africa and globally.

Executive Summary

On 14 May 2010, the Permanent Missions of Nigeria and South Africa to the United Nations, with facilitation support from the United Nations SSR Unit, Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions, and with generous financial contribution from the Permanent Mission of the Netherlands to the United Nations, co-hosted the High-level Forum on African Perspectives on SSR. The event brought together approximately 80 high-level participants from 55 Permanent Missions and 11 United Nations entities.

The High-Level Forum highlighted emerging trends and developments in the field of SSR, including its place within broader institutional reform, the role of intra-African SSR support, outsourcing and the role of private commercial security actors in supporting SSR and the significance of the African Union's SSR Policy as an integral part of the African Peace and Security Framework (APSA). The co-chairs' statement, which is included herein, underscored that these developments are "significant for the success and sustainability of such reform processes moving forward but which, so far, have not featured adequately in the SSR policy agenda".

The High-Level Forum and co-chairs statement were informed by findings from the Experts-level Seminar on African Perspectives on SSR, which was held the previous day on 13 May. This event brought together representatives from 15 African Permanent Missions, the African Union SSR advisor and high-ranking officials from the Burundian National Defense Forces and the Embassy of the Netherlands in Bujumbura. The discussions, focused on three main themes: 1) national ownership; 2) coordination

of SSR assistance; and 3) the regional dimensions of SSR. The discussions highlighted the following issues:

On national ownership of SSR:

- "National ownership" is a contested concept that requires careful unpacking.
- It consists above all of the ability of national actors to exercise political leadership of the process, including through the commitment of national resources to the process.

On coordination of SSR assistance:

- Coordination and national ownership are intimately linked. Coordination should be the primary responsibility of the national authorities and is in itself a manifestation of ownership.
- National authorities and donors often have different priorities. This underscores the need for national authorities to commit their own resources in order to make decisions independently.

On the regional dimensions of SSR:

- There is a need to use regional mechanisms to encourage and support countries to undertake sustainable SSR. The African Peer Review Mechanism may be useful in this regard because it is African-led and provides considerable scope through which to consider SSR.
- It is critical to recognize the challenges and limitations to regional approaches given that many neighbouring countries are in conflict or have a history of conflict, which underscores the importance of engagement at the international level. To provide the required support, the United Nations needs to speak with a coherent voice.

High-level Forum on African Perspectives on SSR

14 May 2010

The lack of a dedicated space to articulate African perspectives on SSR served as the genesis for the High-level Forum on African Perspectives on SSR held on 14 May 2010. An Experts-Level Seminar was held the previous day on 13 May, to discuss central themes and inform the core messages and co-chairs' statement of the High-level Forum. Both events were co-hosted by the Permanent Missions of Nigeria and South Africa, with financial support from the Permanent Mission of the Netherlands to the United Nations and with facilitation support from the United Nations SSR Unit, DPKO.

Speaking on behalf of the two co-chairs, H.E Prof. U. Joy Ogwu, Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations, opened the High-level Forum by underscoring that the vast majority of SSR processes supported by the United Nations takes place in Africa. As such, there is therefore a need for a more direct and prominent role for African states and societies to contribute to the SSR policy agenda. Moreover, African countries are not only recipients of SSR assistance, they are increasingly providing this support. Countries as diverse as Angola, Egypt, Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania and many others, are offering horizontal SSR assistance. Such intra-African SSR support is largely not

captured in the current SSR policy discourse. Yet, experience has consistently shown that success in SSR depends to a large extent on the perspectives and energies of the "recipients" of SSR assistance, which according to Ogwu is "the basis of national ownership".

Ogwu recalled the summit of African Heads of State which in February 2008, called on the African Union Commission to develop a comprehensive African Union policy framework on SSR. In this regard she hoped the core messages of the High-level Forum would be integrat-

African countries are not only recipients of SSR assistance, they are increasingly providing this support.

ed into the African Union's continental SSR policy framework, which is currently being developed with the support of the United Nations SSR Unit. Ultimately, Ogwu reiterated, "the success of the United Nations and its regional partners are mutually interdependent".

At the same time, Ogwu stressed that it was important to be realistic in appreciating the diversity of states of which the

African continent is composed. Some are still plagued by active conflict, while others are undergoing post-conflict transitions and early recovery. Many are at various stages of the consolidation of good governance. As such, Ogwu reminded the participants that the position of African states on SSR "cannot be homogenous and must necessarily reflect these multiple contexts".

Relatedly, while appreciating the strategic importance and relevance of SSR for post conflict transformation, Ogwu also emphasized that "SSR is no less important in conflict prevention". In this regard, she concluded that "our policy agenda should not solely focus on the reform of the security sector after conflict but also on the governance of the security sector which is predicated on accountability, transparency and broad participation."

H.E. Herman Schaper, Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations, noted that the United Nations had made great strides in recent years in developing a common approach to SSR and in building its capacity to deliver "as one". At the same time, he stressed that a lot remained to be done.

Schaper observed that the role of the



Opening of High-level Forum. From left: Mr. Dmitry Titov, Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions, H.E Prof. U. Joy Ogwu, Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations, Mr Adedeji Ebo, Chief Security Sector Reform Unit, H.E. Baso Sangqu, Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations, and H.E. Tete Antonio, Permanent Representative of the African Union to the United Nations. SSRU Photo.



The viability, legitimacy and sustainability of the United Nations' SSR approach to a large degree depends on the extent to which it is based on regional SSR dimensions. Above, Major General L.K.F. Aprezi (right), Force Commander of the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS), is shaking hands with Marthinus Vanstaden, South African Officer leading UN military and police officers, on arrival in Darfur, Sudan. UN Photo/Fred Noy

international community in SSR is evolving, not only through the framework of the United Nations, but also through regional organizations. He recognized the cardinal role of African States in shaping this evolving agenda and welcomed the High Level Forum as a timely event.

Emphasizing that the regional dimensions of SSR are particularly important, Schaper reiterated that “the viability, legitimacy and sustainability of the United Nations SSR approach to a large degree depends on the extent to which it is based on regional SSR dimensions.”

To that end, Schaper underlined the importance of the African Union’s initiative to develop a policy framework on SSR and emphasized that the United Nations was well positioned to provide support given the Organization’s normative, strategic and operational experience in SSR activities.

H.E. Tete Antonio, Permanent Representative of the African Union to the United Nations, began by welcoming efforts to elaborate a partnership between the African Union and United Nations in the area of SSR, He thanked the United Nations for its on-going support for the elaboration of the African Union’s

SSR policy and capacity-building for its implementation.

He noted that the African Union SSR policy will be an important tool to guide all stakeholders with the implementation of SSR on the continent. He stressed that African Union Member States and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) will continue to have primary responsibility for SSR initiatives in their respective countries. He noted that the aim for the SSR policy is therefore to empower and assist Member States to implement national SSR activities.

In order to achieve this objective, he underlined that the African Union will undertake several processes in the near future: consult with all stakeholders on SSR processes; build capacity of its SSR staff at the African Union Headquarters and Liaison Offices, as well as the RECs; and develop SSR implementation tools and best practices.

Mr. Dmitry Titov, Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions, stated that the High-level forum and the preceding Expert-level event offered an excellent opportunity to inform the work of the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions and to

collaborate more closely with Member States on SSR.

Titov noted that SSR-related policy discourse and general literature covering this field of activity had not always adequately reflected these views of States undergoing reform. Altogether, he said that there has been limited dialogue among countries receiving external SSR support and few opportunities to openly discuss the dynamics of this crucial assistance, including donor coordination, and conceptual issues.

As noted in the co-chairs’ statement, Titov recalled the wide consensus among practitioners that SSR processes must be based on national ownership. This is a core principle of the 2008 Secretary-General’s report on SSR: Securing peace and development. Titov reiterated that “this is not only a moral imperative; it is also a pragmatic necessity linked to legitimacy and sustainability”.

Titov finally noted that given its transparency and global mandate the United Nations may be well positioned to assist national authorities with strategic SSR support at the sector-wide level by providing technical assistance; assisting in drafting security sector legislation; conducting security sector reviews; helping prepare national security sector development plans; facilitating national dialogue on SSR; and assisting in national management and oversight capacities.

The viability, legitimacy and sustainability of the United Nations SSR approach to a large degree depends on the extent to which it is based on regional SSR dimensions.

Experts-level Seminar on African Perspectives on SSR

13 May 2010

Opening Session

H.E. Joy Ogwu, Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations, opened the Experts' seminar by pointing to the fact that "while many African Member States are receiving external SSR support" and an increasing number of Member States are also providing this support on the continent through training, mentoring and other initiatives, "too often the African voices are not adequately captured in the prevailing policy discourse on SSR." The Permanent Representative suggested that the four main objectives for the event were to:

- Shape the content of the co-chairs' statement, which was to be presented at the subsequent High-level Forum on African Perspectives on SSR and intended to inform the African Union's emerging SSR Policy Framework.
- Share experiences and best practices from various SSR planning and implementation processes in Africa.
- Develop a shared understanding of the complexities associated with SSR policy and programming, particularly focusing on national ownership of SSR processes and programs; coordination of SSR support; and the regional dimensions of SSR assistance.
- Identify opportunities to integrate African perspectives into the United Nations approach to SSR.

H.E. Baso Sangqu, Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations noted in his remarks that the seminar discussions would be focused on three main themes: 1) national ownership; 2) coordination of SSR assistance; and 3) the regional dimensions of SSR.

On national ownership, H.E. Sangqu

asked participants to consider the international community's role in facilitating or impeding efforts by national authorities to reach national consensus on their security vision. How can the international community best assist national authorities in this regard? What experiences can be shared vis-à-vis the approach that some countries have taken in making their vision of security a reality for all people? How can the international community tailor its support to ensure that its assistance adequately responds to implementing the needs of individual countries? What are the potential trade-offs between external financing of SSR and national ownership as well as the challenges of monitoring and evaluating international assistance?

Too often the African voices are not adequately captured in the prevailing policy discourse on SSR.

H.E. Sangqu also invited participants to reflect on the technical and political aspects of international coordination of SSR: What does coordination mean and who should coordinate what? What are the main challenges for effective coordination of SSR assistance? Are there examples of good practices in overcoming obstacles to effective coordination?

On regional dimensions, participants were encouraged to consider the SSR needs and issues that require regional approaches in Africa. They were also asked to identify and explore some of the lessons learned from African SSR recipients and providers on how the African Union and other sub-regional organizations, with support from the

United Nations, can strengthen its capacities in the area of SSR.

In his remarks, H.E. Herman Schaper, Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations, noted that SSR could be a powerful tool for advancing international peace and security and stressed its importance as "one of the most vital aspects of peacebuilding and statebuilding" as well as being integral to the realization of human rights. In his view, dialogue between providers and recipients of SSR support is essential. He identified three areas of particular interest in this dialogue:

- Reform of the defence sector, and greater clarification of national experiences regarding defence sector reform on the African continent.
- Greater understanding of how SSR is best implemented at the micro or field level (a process which includes the training and equipping of troops and police) as opposed to the broader, sector-wide focus that often engages policy attention, especially at the level of UNHQ.
- How, beyond institution-building, one assures transformation of the mindset of security officials in the direction of greater democracy, transparency and accountability, a process that is essential if security institutions are to become sustainable and genuinely democratic.

Mr. Dmitry Titov, Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions in DPKO provided an overview of the evolving United Nations approach to SSR and the actions being taken to implement that approach. The conceptual starting point is the "assumption that SSR extends beyond the necessary but narrow attempts to 'right-size' the



A key objective for the Expert-level seminar was to share experiences and best practices from various SSR planning and implementation processes in Africa. SSRU Photo

security services or ‘train and equip’ uniformed personnel”. The United Nations approach highlights that “SSR involves a set of strategies, policies and activities that are at their core aimed at assisting States and societies to transfer, improve and enrich the sector in accordance with nationally-defined goals and best international practices”.

The United Nations approach to SSR is based on ten basic principles. At the core of these principles is national ownership and the commitment of involved States and societies. The Secretary-General’s report on SSR: the role of the United Nations in supporting security sector reform, underscores that SSR should be nationally-owned and should be undertaken on the basis of a national request, a Security Council mandate and/or a General Assembly resolution, and bearing in mind the principles of the United Nations Charter and values.

Other equally important principles are also guiding the United Nations approach. These include: 1) The goal of the United Nations is to support societies in developing effective and accountable security; 2) A United Nations approach to SSR must be flexible and tailored to the needs of specific environments; 3) A SSR framework is essential at the outset

of a peace process, in early recovery strategies and in post-conflict contexts; 4) A clearly-defined SSR strategy is essential; 5) The effectiveness of international support to SSR will be shaped by integrity of motive, accountability, resources and capacity; 6) The efforts of national and international partners must be well coordinated; 7) A gender perspective is critical in all stages of a SSR process; and 8) Monitoring and evaluation are essential to track and maintain progress. The Secretary-General’s report also makes clear that partnerships with regional organizations are absolutely essential to the United Nations approach to SSR.

SSR involves a set of strategies, policies and activities that are at their core aimed at assisting States and societies to transfer, improve and enrich the sector in accordance with nationally defined goals and best international practices.

Session One: Enhancing National Ownership: Sierra Leone and South Africa

Sierra Leone

The initial SSR process in Sierra Leone, which began following the end of the conflict in 2002, focused on the defense and police components, and to a lesser extent the area of justice. Hence, SSR support was limited to the formal security sector, although informal and non-state entities had been an important part of the conflict and its resolution.

As the SSR process in Sierra Leone deepened, there was an attempt to address these critical gaps. The three guiding principles were: a) Broadening the definition of the security sector in a more inclusive direction; b) Decentralizing the concept and management of security; and c) Initiating a participatory approach to security. The first two principles were expressed in the establishment of a National Security and Intelligence architecture that involved

Security Committees. These mechanisms were crucial in providing intelligence about border security as well as the real security situation on the ground. The third principle was captured, *inter alia*, in the consultative nature of the Security Sector Review and the representation of civil society in the Justice Sector Task Force.

Security was also defined holistically, particularly in terms of its relationship to development and poverty alleviation, which was articulated in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. Thus, it was designed to capture economic risks, including corruption. At the same time, a generic threat assessment concluded that the main threats facing Sierra Leone are more internal than external in nature, which informed the emphasis on police reform.

commitment of the Head of State. Nevertheless, engineering such a broad-based ownership and realizing the aim of an inclusive and participatory approach proved politically complex and a major challenge in itself, partly because of the prevailing civilian alienation. A key objective of the SSR process was to bridge the gulf between civilians and the security institutions, which had been widened by abuses both before and during the civil war.

A core element of the reform process was the design of a security management and coordination structure. At the top of this structure was the National Security Council (NSC), chaired by the President. It was supported by a Coordinating Group, which also included civilians. An Office of National Security (ONS), located in the office of the President, served as the Secretariat of the NSC and the focal point on SSR management and coordination. There was also a Strategic Situation Group within the NSC, whose function was to ensure that all key actors (including civilian stakeholders) were part of the process and that all the instruments of national power were brought to bear to facilitate the reform process.

This approach had both a diplomatic dimension as well as an information strategy (the National Awareness Strategy), designed to ensure that information flowed top-down as well as bottom-up.

However, none of this could have been undertaken without international partners. Sierra Leone benefited from the support provided by the United Nations and other multilateral partners, including the International Military Army Training Team (IMATT). SSR took place within a framework of a long-term bilateral partnership with the United Kingdom's Security Sector Development Advisory Team (SSDAT) and Department for International Development.



Ownership of the SSR process in Sierra Leone was multilayered and inclusive. Above, Nigerian peacekeepers at the Ferry Port in Lungi, Sierra Leone. UN Photo/Eric Kanstein

civilians and traditional institutions, particularly at the district and provincial levels) including in terms of their membership and participation in the District and Provincial Security Committees (DISECs) and (PROSECs), Local Policing Partnership Boards, and Chiefdom

Ownership of the process was multilayered and inclusive and was captured by the 2005 slogan of the Security Sector Review: security is "everyone's business". Crucially, at the top of the hierarchy, political ownership was demonstrated by the personal involvement and

South Africa

This presentation focused on the process of defense transformation (reflecting in this respect the military background of the presenter) but acknowledged that reform of the intelligence services, police and the criminal justice systems were also key parts of the equation, together with broader governance reforms.

It is important to emphasize that the South African process preceded the coining of SSR by the international community and thus was an innovative and indigenously-driven process that by and large followed its own rules, guided by the peculiarities of the South African context. The key driving principle was the accountability of the security sector to the political leadership and the nation at large.

The defense reform process occurred within the context of integration of eleven statutory and non-statutory forces. This integration process was necessarily lopsided, as it was dominated by the sophisticated ex-apartheid military institution (the former South African Defence Forces (SADF)), which necessitated significant compromises and thus presented many challenges, some of which have yet to be fully resolved. Nevertheless, the process of defense transformation, involving the reengineering of the South African military from an offensive to a defensive role, had a huge impact on the security climate within the sub-region and on regional neighbours (Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Zambia and Tanzania, in particular), who offered important political and moral support. It was only with the growing confidence of the new SADF as this process deepened that it became possible to contemplate external peacekeeping-related missions.

South Africa demonstrated decisively that “SSR is fundamentally a political process”, and consequently a political venture managed by high-level decision-makers. It demands political commitment, as opposed to a process driven by technocrats and “securocrats” or for a process of merely mobilizing and applying resources in the absence of any real strategy. The leading role of the

parliament and the parliamentary defence and security committees was particularly notable in this respect. Importantly, reform, and in particular the key principle of civilian oversight, was embedded in the Constitution. It also demonstrates that SSR and defense transformation involve many non-military decisions, for instance the prominent role of land and the environment in the Defence Review. The whole process was also highly consultative, evolutionary with no artificial cut-off point, carefully sequenced as it was not considered necessary or advisable to take on many complex reform activities at the same time, and largely funded from internal resources.

SSR is fundamentally a political process.

Even so, the role of international partners and international support was important, particularly in the process of police reform. The British Military Advisory and Training Team (BMATT) rendered support in the process of defense transformation.

Discussion

The case of Sierra Leone and South Africa highlighted contrasting modalities and trajectories of SSR in the two countries as

well as the importance of recognizing context specificity. At the same time, however, they underscored several commonalities:

- In both cases, there was reference to a shared history of oppression and abuse by the security apparatus and the need to ‘change the mindset’ of security institutions. In this respect, it was acknowledged that countries emerging from conflict have a unique opportunity to transform abusive security institutions. It was also acknowledged that ‘civil militarism’ needed to be addressed and can-as in the case of both South Africa and Burundi-be even more difficult to uproot.
- Both experiences stressed – albeit in different ways and with different levels of success – the elements of political will, inclusivity, broad governance and rule of law reforms, and the need to link security to development and poverty reduction.
- Another shared element was the role of community organs and civil society in SSR. In South Africa these were very much involved in both defense and police reform, while in the case of Sierra Leone, community and civil society engagement took longer to mobilize. This was due in part to the devastation of war, a sense of distrust between the communities and the sheer sense of



Discussions highlighted the elements of political will, inclusivity, broad governance and rule of law reforms, and the need to link security to development and poverty reduction. SSRU photo.

alienation between communities and the security forces. For instance, it was strongly advocated that the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) be dismantled rather than rebuilt. Nevertheless, the emerging security architecture attempted in both cases to build on community and local-level participation (e.g. the Community Police Forums/CPFs in the case of South Africa, and the DISECs, PROSECs and Chiefdom Security Committees in the case of Sierra Leone). The ensuing discussion raised a number of issues:

Terminology: the issue of terminology was raised in two ways:

- Various terms were used interchangeably in the discussion but with little analysis of the underlying nuances. Terms used included “security sector reform” (SSR), “security sector transformation” (SST), “security sector development” (SSD), and “security sector management” (SSM). The need for clarity and use of terms was highlighted.

- With reference to the experiences of Uganda, the issue of terminology was addressed at yet another level. In this view, SSR refers specifically to post-conflict contexts where the military was regarded as oppressive and dictatorial. What is the appropriate terminology in a country like Uganda where the Defence Force – a victorious former liberation force in the process of transformation into a conventional military – is popularly perceived as not an enemy, but a defender of the people? Here the issue of national ownership was posed at two levels: initially at the internal level, where the National Resistance Army under its own initiative was undergoing change in the direction of a conventional force, and subsequently at the external level as the government sought partners for the defense transformation process. At this stage, the debates over levels of defense expenditure became emblematic of the wider issue of national ownership.

Scope: What is the scope of SSR? Does it include the Justice sector for instance? Importantly, how broad can the concept be defined without becoming unwieldy and unsustainable?

National ownership: What does ‘national ownership’ mean in the context of countries emerging from conflict, particularly in the presence of factors like Governments of National Unity with partisan interests and agendas, and even off-budget militias not open to public scrutiny? To what extent is ‘national ownership’ actually possible given the deep asymmetries of power in the international system and within the UN itself? It was acknowledged that ‘national ownership’ was a contested concept that required unpacking. Three levels of meaning were identified:

- *Political leadership:* National ownership consists above all of the ability to exercise political leadership of the process and in the capacity to make strategic decisions relating, inter alia to the timing, scope, priorities, methodology, and resource dimensions of SSR; the choice of external partners; and coordination of local as well as external actors. In this regard, there is a need to create checks and balances within the political system to ensure that those partners that are not aligned with a national political agenda are required to engage in accordance with national priorities.

Addressing political, capacity and resource factors of SSR will allow African states and societies to exercise strategic leadership of the process with all the rights and – as importantly – responsibilities that this entails and to ensure that externals, including the United Nations, become partners rather than drivers of SSR.

- *Capacity:* While institutional and technical capacities are acknowledged to be broadly inadequate or lacking in many countries undergoing SSR, there is a need to distinguish between two dimensions of the issue: technical skills, which is primarily what external actors bring to the table and, contextual

knowledge including institutional memory, which only locals can command and which is always key to defining the nature of the problem and appropriate solutions. The absence of local technical skills is often presumed, as a matter of faith, rather than as a tested observation. This is why a local audit of essential skills is always recommended prior to the start of SSR. In any case, the challenge is to find the right balance between technical capacity and skills on the one hand, and context-specific knowledge on the other hand.

- *Resources:* while again it can be assumed that many of the resources needed to support and sustain SSR will have to be generated by the international community, ownership implies that national governments undertaking SSR will have to inject substantial resources of their own into the process if they are to speak meaningfully of ownership.

Taken on board, addressing political, capacity and resource factors of SSR will allow African states and societies to exercise strategic leadership of the process with all the rights and – as importantly – responsibilities that this entails. It will also ensure that external actors, including the United Nations, become partners rather than drivers of SSR.

The discussion also generated debate around a number of other key issues:

- SSR begins with, and can only be sustained by firm political commitment.
- Fundamental transformation is often required in contexts where security institutions were prominent actors in the conflict and as such have been discredited.
- In countries transitioning from conflict, SSR is only feasible following the political resolution of the conflict. In the absence of such resolution, SSR may degenerate into preparation for renewed war.
- While the prevailing discourse has made reference primarily to post-conflict reconstruction, SSR should not be limited only to transitions from conflict but is a



The United Nations has an important role to play as a partner of national authorities in SSR. A view of the graduation ceremony for 493 newly trained police officers, former Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) soldiers, trained with the assistance of the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS). UN Photo/Tim McKulka

critical element of the routine and necessary process of institutional renewal.

- “Democratic governance” of security institutions lies at the very basis of SSR as experience suggests that civilian oversight and control over the security sector, particularly in Africa, does not necessarily equate to “democratic control” let alone “democratic governance”. If effective delivery of security as a public good is the desired end-state, a related question is not only how to secure, but also whom to secure (i.e. all citizens). Democratic security sector governance (i.e. the will to protect not some, but all citizens, regardless of ethnicity, class, and gender or other social divisions) has to be the end state of SSR:

- SSR should be linked with – not be undermined by or in turn undermine – broader national development.

- There is a need for long-term partnership with external actors (as witnessed in countries such as Sierra Leone and Burundi) if SSR is to be sustained. It should also be recognized that the policy orientation and behaviour of bilateral partners can decisively affect the shape and prospects of SSR.

- African states and Regional Economic Communities are differently positioned to exercise ownership in the short term, as the case studies of South Africa and Sierra Leone suggest.

- The South Africa case illustrates that national ownership is not inconsistent with external support.

- The case of Sierra Leone shows that national ownership and initial dependence on external support need not be a zero-sum game, if bilateral partnerships are based on long-term commitments: National ownership implies the broadest

national consensus and involves consultation, inclusivity and participation. These processes should be respected and facilitated by the international community.

- Correspondingly, the understandable desire of the international community for early results and quick exit should not be allowed to undermine or usurp these processes and the national learning curve.

- There is significant diversity in countries undergoing SSR; no one-size blueprint can conceivably fit all. At the same time, there is a need to carefully note the common underpinnings of successful SSR strategies, the importance of ownership, political commitment, vision and strategy, and meaningful international partnership.

Session Two: Addressing the Challenges of Coordination: Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi

Democratic Republic of the Congo

The presentation on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) briefly discussed the defense, police, and justice reforms that are taking place in a context where armed conflict has been ongoing in parts of the country. In the presenter's view, the reforms have not had much impact so far for the following reasons:

- The international community has engaged in the DRC without a real understanding of the complexity of the situation.
- There has been a lack of ownership on the part of national and local authorities, as well as an absence of a real vision for reform.
- Financial assistance has been tied to specific donor agendas rather than those of the Congolese and, in general, the right resources have not been put behind the right priorities.
- Meaningful coordination has been lacking. It appears that some external partners prefer a bilateral framework of assistance and sometimes resist coordination with other partners. At the same time, national authorities at times privilege bilateral over multilateral partnerships. The situation is further complicated by divergences between priorities and programmes of different donors and attempts to uncritically apply lessons and experiences derived from the experiences of other countries.
- The Government of DRC itself has been focusing on military operations rather than reforms and has therefore failed to focus on other critical issues such as impunity.
- A link between SSR and transitional justice has been lacking.
- The Disarmament Demobilization and

Reintegration (DDR) process provided funding for the "DD" but not adequate funding for long-term assistance needed for successful "R".

- There is a need to properly link DDR and SSR. This requires extensive planning at the political level and joint programming and collaboration at the operational level. In addition, there is a need for prior dialogue with the local population to enhance ownership and improved communication between donors and national institutions and stakeholders.

Burundi – perspectives from the Burundian National Defence Force

The two presentations on Burundi included first a general overview of the security sector reforms implemented, and second, the role and experiences of the Netherlands as a donor. The reform process has involved:

- Separation of the defense and security functions (separation of the Burundi National Defence Forces and National Police).
- Abolition of the gendarmerie.
- Ethnic rebalancing of the security institutions.
- Sharing of military power under the Forces Technical Agreement.
- Right-sizing the security services and sustainably reintegrating demobilized former combatants.

For the Burundian National Defence Force, there has been normative training that addresses behaviour, human rights, discipline, humanitarian law, gender, leadership and political neutrality. A core challenge is that of right-sizing the army and police to bring them in line with the



Linking DDR and SSR requires extensive planning at the political level and joint programming and collaboration at the operational level. Above, Democratic Republic of the Congo Armed Forces (FARDC) personnel, and the Front for National Integration (FNI) militia commanders negotiate to reach an agreement concerning the disarmament process in the Ituri region, Doi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). UN Photo/Martine Perret

demands of donors and with budgetary realities.

Reform of the police is even more complex. A decision has been adopted to put in place a “police de proximité” (community police service) but there is little clarity on what this concept means. A number of bilateral partners have engaged in providing training to the National Police of Burundi (PNB), many of whom are former rebels with no formal police training.

Civilian disarmament also presents a major challenge. There are an estimated 300,000 small arms in circulation in Burundi. While significant effort has been made to implement voluntary disarmament programmes, the population is generally hesitant to hand over their weapons due to a general lack of security.

In addition, a National Security Council (NSC) has been set up, but does not meet regularly. The three security services have each developed strategic plans but there is no coherent national security strategy for the country. Moreover, integration notwithstanding, the security forces remain politicized and there is a persistence of impunity among military and security services, and of crime and violence within the society at large. However, civilians are no longer being judged by military courts and all police procurement goes to public tender.

The presentation identified five key challenges:

1). Coordination between national, international (multilateral as well as bilateral), regional, and African actors; managing manifold priorities is difficult, often resulting in duplication or gaps in programming.

2). Absence of a forum to exchange experiences: there is an absence of a forum for sharing experiences of post-conflict states undergoing SSR in the region (namely, Chad, Uganda, Central African Republic, Rwanda, DRC, and Sudan).

3). Situational and cultural differences:



Refugees from the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB) camp in Cibitoke are being relocated to Mwaro in the center of Burundi. UN Photo/Martine Perret

there is a lack of experts to drive the technical aspects of the process and to help ensure its sustainability. In addition, donors want to see tangible results quickly, sometimes at the expense of sustainable programming.

4). Harmonization of planning: SSR is not always well coordinated with other programming strategies, e.g. transitional justice, land issues, international humanitarian law and other development priorities.

5). Right-sizing of the security services: demobilization and sustainable reintegration remain a challenge that may compromise right-sizing efforts of the security services.

Challenges at the national level include:

- SSR not being understood as a holistic concept, but rather in a piecemeal and fragmented manner.
- A lack of understanding of security as a mutual responsibility of government and citizens; security is largely considered the exclusive domain and responsibility of the government.
- A fragile political situation, although the 2010 elections did not result in

large-scale violence as feared by some interlocutors.

Potential solutions to these coordination challenges could include:

- Strengthening the national coordination capacities, particularly the SSR-related “Groupe sectoriel”.
- Establishing a regional framework for coordination of SSR, which could involve the East African Community, the African Union and other key actors.
- Establishing a space for open and transparent dialogue.
- Ensuring that experts deployed to support the security sector remain for a sufficient period of time (e.g. 2 years or longer).
- Developing a system of communication to share information on downsizing and reintegration options.

Burundi – a donor perspective

Security specific challenges in Burundi included the reintegration of demobilized soldiers and so-called associated adults, returnees (more than 500,000 people have returned from Tanzania, in search of land and work), and the fight

against corruption and impunity.

Key Actors: On the Burundian side, these include the President as Head of State and Head of the Armed Forces and the First Vice President, in charge of all political and security matters. Other actors include civil society, the churches and the media as well as opposition parties. Key national security institutions include Defence, National Police, and Intelligence, which reports directly to the President. Both the National Police and Intelligence are perceived as “branches” of the ruling party, and hence not politically neutral.

On the international side, in addition to the Netherlands, the following bilateral financial and technical partners are engaged:

- Belgium: working with the police, through the Belgian Technical Cooperation and the army, through the Defence Attaché.
- France: Working with the police, mainly in terms of infrastructure – including a national police school– and in public order as well as with the army, through their Defence Attaché.
- Germany: Police infrastructure.
- European Commission: Police infrastructure.
- China, Egypt, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The United Nations Integrated Bureau (BINUB – as of December 2010 the United Nations Office in Burundi, BNUB) is actively engaged and, until 31 December 2010, had its own SSR/Small Arms unit which – together with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was the main partner for the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) projects focused on SSR.

Regional actors include the African Union, the DRC, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya, acting through their embassies in Bujumbura. Other regional actors are the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region, the East African Community, the Economic Conference of the Countries of

the Great Lakes Region, among others.

Coordination: Coordination within and between this multiple set of actors has been complicated and problematic:

- The National Security Council, chaired by the President of the Republic (whose members include the Ministers of National Defence and Former Combatants, Public Security, Interior, External Relations and International Cooperation and Justice, among others). The National Security Council meets infrequently and has not been consistently effective due, in part, to the absence of a Permanent Secretariat.
- The Council of Ministers meets more regularly, but SSR is rarely discussed in this forum. The Coordination Group of Partners has several layers, including the Political Forum, and the Strategic Forum. However, security sector issues have to date not been discussed at either of these levels.

Coordination and national ownership are intimately linked. Coordination should be the primary responsibility of the national authorities and is in itself a manifestation of ownership.

In addition, there are the Sectoral Working Groups, including the sectoral working group on security, which is chaired by the Ministry of Public Security and co-chaired by the Netherlands. Members include the Ministry of Public Security, the National Police, the Ministry of Defence, the UN, European donors, the United States, and South Africa. Neither Russia nor the other African countries with a role in SSR are represented in this body. Civil society organizations are also represented but have never attended.

Two previous parallel coordinating structures, one covering the implementation of the Strategic Framework for the Consolidation of Peace and the other monitoring the implementation of the

Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper/ Strategic Framework are gradually being harmonized under the auspices of the Coordination Group of Partners. On the other hand, while the functioning of the Group has improved recently, it has not yet become a fully functional coordination body.

The role of the Netherlands: Burundi and the Netherlands signed a “Security Sector Development” Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in April 2009. This MOU has a life-span of eight years and has three elements:

- The main text, which sets out the objectives, the underlying principles, the various fields of cooperation, the resources to be provided by both partners and a framework to run the programme (namely, a Political Committee consisting of ministers meeting once yearly, a Technical Committee of high-level civil servants meeting once monthly, and programme management units for each element of the programme including defence, police, governance, political dialogue, and cooperation with other partners).
- An “Annex A” which identifies a list of 30 activities to be covered over the first two years of the programme.
- An “Annex B” which describes certain normative goals, such as national political dialogue, accountability, impartiality and professionalism of the security and defence services, and the modalities for attaining these goals.

Coordination challenges were discussed with specific reference to Burundian-Dutch collaboration, but were seen as more broadly symptomatic of the field in general.

For example, at the international level, some donors may exchange information but they do not always consult each other in the planning phase. Some other donors tend not to share information about their activities in the area of SSR. In addition, there is no agreed framework of rules and regulations that can act as a common point for donors. Finally, lead donors or natural coordinating institu-

tions including the UN, do not always have the staff or capacity, or necessarily even the will to coordinate.

At the national level in Burundi, there are a number of challenges of coordination at this level. These include:

- Challenges of defining a national vision in a context of multiple and sometimes conflicting priorities.
- Absence of a functional National Security Council.
- Lack of human and financial resources.

Finally, there are coordination challenges at the intersection of national and international actors, namely:

- The “national frameworks for peace consolidation and poverty reduction” (both of which provide a foundation for SSR/SSD) have remained largely bureaucratic exercises.
- Both the Coordinating Group of Partners and the sectoral working groups are in an “early stage of work and far from being realised as robust coordination mechanisms”.

- Lack of a coordinated approach to programme or project design and planning. This means that national actors and/or donors may evolve programmes without involving or adequately informing the host government or intended beneficiaries or including other donors working on related and/or complementary activities.

- Lack of coordination between the financial and technical partners of Burundi and the regional organisations active in Burundi.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

A long list of lessons and recommendations emerged from the presentation. These include the following:

- Ensure international impatience does not undermine national initiatives.
- Develop a broader development lens as SSR is clearly linked to other post-conflict development priorities (e.g. justice reform, land reform, agricultural development, and economic growth).
- Do not lose sight of the real beneficiaries of SSR: the citizens of a country and region.

- Focus on national institutional capacity building and enable beneficiaries to coordinate.

- Give priority to joint strategic planning between national counterparts and international partners.

- Provide the coordinating bodies, in particular the lead donor and the UN, with sufficient capacity.

Discussion

The following observations emerged from the discussion that followed the presentations on the DRC and Burundi:

- There is a need to share experiences between African countries undergoing SSR.

- Better coordination among national institutions of donor countries, e.g. defense, foreign affairs, and development ministries as well as between donors is imperative.

- Coordination and national ownership are intimately linked. Coordination should be the primary responsibility of the national authorities, and is in itself a manifestation of ownership.

- Mechanisms and strategies should be in place to prevent elections and other political shocks from undermining SSR.

- The pressure by some donors to privatize SSR delivery creates challenges, including issues of accountability and oversight, leading to potential tension between international norms of SSR and market-driven (profitability) objectives of private contractors.

- More clearly defined, sharply focused and contextualized SSR is important. SSR becomes unwieldy and overly complex once everything is thrown into the same basket.

- National authorities and donors often have different priorities. This underscores the need for national authorities to have their own resources in order to make decisions independently.



The Expert-level seminar underlined that there is a need to share experiences between African countries undergoing SSR. Above, the 4th Burundian battalion of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) is pictured shortly before being deployed, in Bujumbura, Burundi. UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

Session Three: Regional Dimensions – the African Union and West Africa

African Union

This presentation emphasized the regional dimensions of SSR, focusing in particular on the integration of SSR into the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) as well as a number of recommendations to strengthen regional approaches to SSR. The following observations were made:

- There is a need for a security sector review and assessment process to identify priorities and available resources.
- There is a need for a legal framework for the security sector beginning with the Constitution, a national law for each service approved by the Parliament as well as Regulations and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).
- There is a need for security policies and doctrines. For African Union Member States, this should revolve around principles of self-defence, collective security and non-aggression.
- National security policies should be consistent and align with national economic and other interests.
- Levels of security expenditure should be carefully controlled and monitored.
- Civilian control (or democratic control) should be at the foundation of reform efforts.

Ghana

This presentation focused on a number of recommendations for SSR from a regional perspective. These include the following:

- The United Nations needs to speak with a coherent voice. The United Nations General Assembly (in particular, its Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations) has been divided on the issue of SSR. There is therefore clearly a continued need for the United Nations Secretariat to demonstrate the value of SSR.



A regional approach can empower Member States to implement SSR activities with the confidence that they have the support from the international community and the Regional Economic Communities. Above, Nigerian UN peacekeepers stand in formation for their medal ceremony at the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID)'s Super Camp in El Fasher, Sudan. UN Photo/Albert Gonzalez Farran

- There is a need to use regional mechanisms to encourage and support countries to undertake sustainable SSR. The African Peer Review Mechanism may be useful in this regard because it is African-led and provides considerable scope to consider SSR.
- A regional approach can empower Member States to implement SSR activities with the confidence that they have the support from the international community and the Regional Economic Communities.

- However, it is critical to recognize the challenges and limitations to regional approaches given that many neighboring countries are in conflict or have a history of conflict, underscoring the importance of engagement at the international level.

Discussion

The discussion highlighted a number of important observations. It was noted that the African Union and Regional Economic Communities could play a more active role in channeling and streamlining external support for SSR. In this regard, the African Union is uniquely positioned to provide a convening forum for different stakeholders. For example, it is one of the few forums for bringing together the Ministers of Defence, Chiefs of militaries and intelligence services (through the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services in Africa (CISSA)). However, a more robust regional role in SSR is needed as programming has remained – for the most part - narrowly national in scope. Mechanisms do exist in this regard. For example, regional approaches are already firmly embedded in the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the African Union is developing a strategy and capacities to design and implement a regional approach to SSR.

A number of discussants noted that the commitment of national resources to SSR is a core element of national ownership. Others expressed reservations over the assumption that “if African states want to own the SSR process, they should commit meaningful funding toward the exercise”. It was suggested that in some contexts, particularly those emerging from conflict, the commitment of national resources was not possible. Moreover, the demand to commit national funding may provide an “escape route” for those governments reluctant to undertake SSR for political or other reasons. A possible solution may be to develop long-term partnerships and commitments that allow recipient countries to exercise greater ownership over time as its financial capacity increases.

Given the extensive discussion on the role of donors and external actors, several participants felt it necessary

to reiterate the principle that primary responsibility for delivering SSR (and hence effective security) belongs not to donors but to national governments. At best, donors can play only secondary and supporting (albeit crucial) roles. Thus, SSR programmes should be designed in such a way so as to ensure sustainability beyond the departure of donors.

On the outsourcing to international private actors, it was stressed that there exists a United Nations Special Committee on private military companies (PMCs) to provide guidance in this area. The issue of PMCs is also on the African Union’s agenda. However, it is essential to understand that outsourcing of SSR in its various forms does not involve just PMCs but also international consulting and management companies that are largely ‘civilian’ in character.

If African states want to own the SSR process, they should commit meaningful funding toward the exercise.

It was noted that it will be important to “de-mystify” SSR as a number of Member States see it as an imposition from external actors. In this regard, there may be a need for a follow-up event as part of a broader “outreach” strategy.

The increasing role of African SSR providers was welcomed and a number of discussants noted a need for even greater intra-African support for SSR. At the same time, it was observed that African SSR providers do not always coordinate well with each other, or with other international actors. The African Union may have an important role to play in encouraging deeper collaboration and cooperation.

Regional entities could play an important role in terms of putting SSR on the agenda of countries emerging from conflict as was the case of the Arusha Accord in Burundi. In the case of the DRC, the regionalized nature of the conflict meant that SSR had to be intricately linked to expanded notions of DDR (i.e. ‘DDRRR’). The inverse is also true. The case of South

Africa demonstrates how peacebuilding in an entire region can benefit from the adoption of SSR in a particular country.

While “context” is important in SSR – and in peacebuilding in general – differences in ‘context’ are not simply or exclusively the product of local dynamics, but may be created to an extent by differences in the way the international community responds to or engages in specific national situations. In this respect, there is little consistency in the manner or degree to which the international actors have engaged in different countries. The reasons for this are not always apparent, but presumably include historical ties, geopolitical interests and chances for success.

Conclusion

The Experts-level seminar on African Perspectives on SSR created a unique space for African Member States, the African Union, the United Nations and other members of the international community to come together to discuss challenges and opportunities for SSR in Africa from an African perspective. The discussions addressed three of the most complex themes in SSR: 1) national ownership; 2) coordination of SSR assistance and; 3) the regional dimensions of SSR. They drew on concrete examples and experience from a diverse range of African countries – from contexts of continued instability to countries where SSR has progressed significantly, including Sierra Leone and South Africa. Discussions also focused on partnerships in SSR, drawing on lessons from the unique Burundi-Dutch SSR partnership.

While the debate was dynamic, a number of key conclusions emerged from the discussion. It is clear that this concept of national ownership is a complex one that varies in degree and kind at each stage of the SSR process and according to the specificities of different contexts. However, there was general agreement that national ownership requires national responsibility. If SSR is to be driven by national priorities, a country must demonstrate consistent political will and – when

possible – commit national resources to the process. As one participant noted, “you cannot own what you do not pay for.”

It was also noted that coordination of SSR support is a key element of ownership and should be the primary responsibility of national authorities. In contexts where national capacity for coordination is weak, international partners should help build this capacity.

It was clear that the strengthening of regional capacities in the area of SSR could make a key contribution to SSR in Africa. In this regard, the African Union’s initiative to elaborate and help implement a continental SSR policy is vital. However, there is still much work to be done in Addis Ababa and New York to continue to build support for a regional SSR agenda.

The rich nature of the discussions clearly demonstrated the demand for the continuation of dialogue and exchange of experience with the ultimate goal of enhancing the delivery of SSR programming in Africa and beyond.



The strengthening of regional capacities in the area of SSR could make a key contribution to SSR in Africa. SSRU photo.

Co-chairs Statement, High-level Forum on African Perspectives on Security Sector Reform

Introduction and Background

1. The High Level Forum on African Perspectives on Security Sector Reform was held on 14 May 2010 at the Permanent Mission of Nigeria to the United Nations, New York, and co-hosted by the Permanent Missions of Nigeria and South Africa to the United Nations. Over 80 personalities participated at the Forum, including Permanent Representatives of 55 African and other Member States, as well as senior officials of the United Nations and regional organizations. The initiative was facilitated by the United Nations Security Sector Reform (SSR) Unit located in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, with generous funding from the Government of the Netherlands. It was co-chaired by the Permanent Representatives of Nigeria and South Africa to the United Nations, H.E Professor Joy Ogwu and H.E Mr Baso Sangqu. The African Union was represented by H.E. Mr. Tété António, Permanent Observer, African Union Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations. The United Nations was represented by Mr. Dmitry Titov, Assistant Secretary-General, Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions. The High-level forum was preceded by an Experts-level Seminar which was held the previous day (13 May 2010).

2. The event was organized within the context of the evolution of the United Nations approach to SSR and the strategic partnership between the African Union Commission and the United Nations on SSR. It aimed to provide African states, as the major beneficiaries ("recipients") and emerging providers of SSR support in their own right, the requisite space to contribute collectively and effectively as a critical building bloc to the UN's SSR agenda and to further provide input into the AU's emerging SSR continental policy framework. In this regard, the High-Level

Forum was a follow up to the International Workshop on "Enhancing UN Support for SSR in Africa: Towards an African Perspective", which was held in Cape Town, South Africa in November 2007 (co-hosted by the Governments of Slovakia and South Africa), and the Regional Workshop on SSR in Africa, which was jointly organized by the AU Commission and the United Nations and held in Addis Ababa in March, 2009.

3. This Co-Chairs' Statement has benefited from the main messages emerging from an Experts-Level Seminar, which was held on 13 May 2010 and was also co-hosted by our two countries. The Experts-Level Seminar brought together working-level representatives from a number of African states that have undergone and/or are providing support to security sector reform processes as well as the SSR Advisor from the African Union Commission. The discussions were based on three major themes, which we consider as central to the viability and sustainability of SSR processes and which have similarly been identified by the Secretary-General of the United Nations as core elements of the UN's SSR agenda: (a) national ownership, (b) coordination of SSR assistance, and (c) regional dimensions of SSR processes.

General Perspectives on Security Sector Reform:

4. We wish to underscore some emerging trends and developments in supporting security sector reforms which are, in our view, significant for the success and sustainability of such reform processes moving forward but which, so far, have not featured adequately in the SSR policy agenda. We recommend that these should be further addressed/reflected in future updating of the Report of the UN Secretary-General on SSR and in the AU's

SSR continental policy framework.

a). SSR is part of a broader reform effort: We recognize and fully endorse the promotion of SSR as an essential element in peacebuilding, including conflict prevention. It is important to emphasize that the reform of the security sector is often an essential but never a sufficient condition for peace and security. For SSR to be viable (to make states and societies feel safer), it needs to be part of a broader transformation and longer-term process of regular institutional renewal for all States, regardless of their level of development. National authorities undertaking SSR and bilateral and multilateral actors supporting these processes in Africa should therefore consider SSR only as a component of a wider reform effort, which should not be approached in isolation.

Furthermore, while noting that SSR has mostly been supported in post conflict contexts, we wish to reiterate the continuing relevance of (and in some cases urgency for) SSR in the context of political transition and as an essential element of a broader and sustainable good governance agenda. In noting the nexus between SSR and peacebuilding, we wish to also underscore the organic link between SSR and conflict prevention. Thus, while SSR can be a core component of a peacekeeping exit strategy, it can also contribute to conflict prevention. It is the right and responsibility of each state to decide how best to employ the governance of the security sector as an approach to conflict prevention.

b). The role of intra-African SSR support: While it is generally recognized that African states form the bulk of recipients of SSR support, the rapidly emerging role of African states as providers of SSR

support is a development that so far remains largely outside the scope of prevailing SSR policy discourse. An increasing number of African countries, including Angola, Egypt, Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Africa and Tanzania, have been providing SSR-related assistance to fellow African states. This dimension of horizontal intra-African cooperation remains hardly captured as part of the SSR policy agenda. In our view, this is a positive development that provides an encouraging basis for the successful implementation of the African Union's SSR policy framework and for expanding the global community of SSR support.

In order to further encourage and entrench this emerging trend, there is a need to enhance the exchange of expertise and experiences between African countries undergoing SSR. The African Union and United Nations are particularly well-suited to facilitate such relationships.

c). Outsourcing and the role of private commercial security actors in supporting SSR: While the bulk of SSR support has been largely state-to-state, using statutory security institutions, an emerging trend has been the outsourcing of SSR support to private commercial security companies (as is the case in the reform of the Liberian defence sector). This development introduces a new set of dynamics and challenges to SSR processes, including additional requirements to ensure democratic control and oversight of such support. In this regard, we wish to take note of the inclusion by ECOWAS of a regulatory framework for commercial companies supporting SSR, as part of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF). We further recommend that such a regulatory framework should be included in the AU's SSR policy framework currently under preparation, so as to ensure that outsourcing is brought within the oversight parameters of national and regional oversight mechanisms.

d). The AU SSR Policy as an integral part the African Peace and Security Framework (APSA): While we commend and enthusiastically welcome the proposed AU SSR policy, we wish to emphasize the

need to locate such an SSR policy within the broader framework of the APSA, in order to guarantee its viability and sustainability. In this regard, we wish to underscore the AU's Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) framework in providing the broader framework within which the AU's SSR policy should be located. Such an SSR policy should be directly linked with the Common African Defence and Security Policy, including the African Standby Force (ASF).

Further on the AU's SSR policy, we wish to emphasize the importance of accompanying such a policy with practical viable projects and initiatives in order to demonstrate its relevance to the security of states and societies in Africa. In this regard, we welcome the initiatives under the AU-UN strategic SSR partnership to focus on specific projects in this regard, including: i) AU-UN joint needs assessments; ii) development of a code of conduct for armed forces and security services in Africa, including for ASF elements; iii) a manual on SSR Best Practices in Africa; and iv) guidance on national security legislation for African states.

e). The role of informal and customary security providers: In many contexts, informal and customary security providers offer crucial support to the State in delivering security and justice to the population. It is critical, therefore, that these actors are integrated into SSR processes.

Central Themes

The following observations are significant with regard to the main themes of under discussion:

National Ownership: We observe that while there are repeated references to and broad consensus on national ownership as a bedrock of SSR, the practical application of the concept of national ownership is often confronted by different assumptions and approaches. On the one hand, some donors approach national ownership as requiring buy-in from national actors into donors' initiatives. On the other hand, some 'recipient' states insist on 'national

ownership' even when the burden of reforming the security sector is borne entirely by external funding. In this regard, we wish to reiterate that the principle of national ownership must be predicated on the primacy of national actors (ideally including various national stakeholders beyond the government such as the legislature, civil society, etc), and a secondary role for external actors.

On the other hand, the primacy of national actors in driving the SSR process can neither be viable nor realistic if the weight of financial responsibility is entirely borne by external actors. In claiming national ownership therefore, reforming states must strive to bear part of the financial burden for the reform process. In addition, we stress the fact that the country undergoing reform has a right and responsibility to define and implement the vision and the parameters for reform. This is an essential element of national ownership as it informs and defines the legitimacy and viability of support by external actors.

Secondly, experiences from several reform processes have demonstrated that national ownership of reform processes are sometimes compromised on the basis of the claim that national actors, particularly in post-conflict conflicts, lack requisite capacity to lead reform programmes. In this regard, we wish to note that the capacity needed to ensure viable reform is composed of both technical skills and contextual knowledge of the reform environment. Thus, while national actors may lack the technical skills (which is only one aspect of capacity), they form the best sources of the contextual knowledge of the reform environment (the other element of capacity).

International Coordination: While recognizing the complex political nature of SSR and the fact that support is usually provided by several external actors, we wish to stress that it is the primary responsibility of national authorities to ensure the coordination of all SSR support. When and where national authorities lack the capacity for coordination, the United Nations should, where appropriate, take the lead in coordinat-



"For SSR to be viable, it needs to be part of a broader transformation and longer-term process of regular institutional renewal for all States". SSRU photo.

ing and in building such national capacity to eventually assume this role. In this regard, we stress the need to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations to perform such a leading coordination role, and to support SSR process more broadly. In the final analysis, neither the UN nor other external actors can sustainably bear responsibility for coordinating SSR support.

Furthermore, experiences have also shown that a significant aspect of the challenges of coordinating international support to SSR emanates from and relates directly to gaps in coherence and coordination within and between various UN agencies and departments. We therefore encourage the UN Secretary-General to sustain and enhance efforts at ensuring a common and harmonized UN support to SSR efforts. In addition, a lack of coherence between the relevant ministries of a single donor (e.g. Interior, Defence, Foreign Affairs, etc) and between individual donors can also seriously compromise coordination. It is therefore essential that donors address issues of coherence vis-à-vis the provision of SSR support.

The tendency toward relatively short-term deployment of international staff can also undermine the quality of external support to national SSR efforts. For example, international advisors tend

to follow three-month to two-year rotations. This does not allow sufficient time to develop the requisite knowledge and understanding of specific contexts. It also places additional strain on national authorities who must deal with a variety of shifting interlocutors. There is a need for external partners, including the United Nations, to consider longer-term deployments.

Regional Dimensions: We reiterate that the UN SSR framework is only as legitimate and sustainable as the regional frameworks of which it is ultimately composed. In this regard, we wish to emphasize the strategic importance of regional approaches to SSR as being of mutual benefit to both the RECs and the UN.

Given the centrality of regional frameworks as the essential building of the UN SSR agenda, and given the lessons and comparative experiences that the UN can share with regional organizations, we welcome the strategic partnership between the African Union Commission and the United Nations on SSR. We strongly encourage international partners and donors to support this partnership, particularly in terms of the articulation and implementation of the AU's continental policy framework and recognizing the need to integrate this at the sub-regional levels.

Follow Up

For the purpose of contributing to the larger body of policy dialogue on SSR and deriving optimal benefits from the rich exchanges that have gone into this High Level Forum, we jointly undertake the steps stipulated below as follow-up to this event:

- i. Present this co-chairs' statement to the African Union Commission as a contribution to the AU continental SSR policy which is currently under preparation;
- ii. Present this co-chairs' statement to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for circulation to relevant UN agencies and departments, and as to be considered in future reviews and updates of his Report on Security Sector Reform;
- iii. Support the AU-UN strategic partnership on SSR;
- iv. Institutionalize the initiative of this forum by ensuring that it is held every two years.
- v. Encourage similar initiatives on the continent, possibly facilitated by the African Union and the United Nations.
- vi. Explore options for African Union and the United Nations to coordinate knowledge exchanges for African policy makers and practitioners undergoing security sector reform.

*H.E. Prof. U. Joy Ogwu
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the United Nations*

*H.E. Mr. Baso Sangqu
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Mission of the Republic of South Africa to the United Nations*

African Perspectives on Security Sector Reform

On 14 May 2010, the Permanent Missions of Nigeria and South Africa to the United Nations, with facilitation support from the United Nations Security Sector Reform (SSR) Unit, Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions, and a generous financial contribution from the Permanent Mission of the Netherlands to the United Nations, co-hosted the High-level Forum on African Perspectives on Security Sector Reform. The event brought together approximately 80 high-level participants from 55 Permanent Missions and 11 United Nations entities.

The High-level Forum highlighted emerging trends and developments in the field of SSR, including its place within broader institutional reform, the role of intra-African security sector support, outsourcing and the role of private commercial security actors in supporting SSR and the significance of the African Union's SSR Policy as an integral part the African Peace and Security Framework. The co-chairs statement underscored that these developments are "significant for the success and sustainability of such reform processes moving forward but which, so far, have not featured adequately in the SSR policy agenda".

For more information, please contact the Security Sector Reform Unit: ssr@un.org