



Security Council

Seventy-eighth year

9285th meeting

Thursday, 16 March 2023, 3.05 p.m.

New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Afonso (Mozambique)

Members:

Albania	Mr. Hoxha
Brazil	Mr. Parga Cintra
China	Mr. Dai Bing
Ecuador	Mr. Montalvo Sosa
France	Mr. De Rivière
Gabon	Mrs. Ngyema Ndong
Ghana	Mr. Asare
Japan	Mr. Ishikane
Malta	Ms. Gatt
Russian Federation	Ms. Evstigneeva
Switzerland	Mrs. Baeriswyl
United Arab Emirates	Mr. Abushahab
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
United States of America	Mr. Wood

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

Security sector reform

Letter dated 1 March 2023 from the Permanent Representative of Mozambique to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2023/168)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

Security sector reform

Letter dated 1 March 2023 from the Permanent Representative of Mozambique to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2023/168)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Slovakia and South Africa to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Alexandre Zouev, Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions in the Department of Peace Operations, and His Excellency Mr. Bankole Adeoye, African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2023/168, which contains the text of a letter dated 1 March 2023 from the Permanent Representative of Mozambique to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept note on the item under consideration.

I now give the floor to Mr. Zouev.

Mr. Zouev: I am grateful for the opportunity to brief the Council on the Secretary-General's report (S/2022/280) on strengthening the United Nations approach to security sector reform. The Secretary-General outlines a new, bold vision for security sector reform, focusing on the primacy of politics and governance and on concrete recommendations for the work of the United Nations in implementing the Security Council's landmark resolution 2553 (2020), on security sector reform, fully in line with the Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative and *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982).

Let me start by outlining the progress we have achieved in implementing the priorities set out in the report. I would then like to share with members some of the key challenges that we have encountered, before turning to avenues for joint action.

Regarding progress, much has been achieved since the adoption a little more than two years ago of resolution 2553 (2020). As I just mentioned, the Secretary-General issued his first report on security sector reform in March 2022. For the first time, through the Inter-Agency Security Sector Reform Task Force, a system-wide programme of action on security sector reform was launched to guide the implementation of the report. Strategic partnerships have been strengthened, including with the African Union, the European Union, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the World Bank.

Next, we established our Security Sector Reform Unit standing capacity in Brindisi. In a very short time, our nimble team has become indispensable in ensuring flexible, timely and high-quality support to peace operations, country teams and national institutions, particularly in the context of crises and mission downsizing. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, for example, our experts helped the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to mobilize resources and capacities for the transition and facilitated consultations with the World Bank on the need for a public expenditure review of the security sector. But while these achievements are certainly worth celebrating, our work is not done. As the Secretary-General noted, the Organization is facing major challenges in accomplishing the tasks mandated to it by the Security Council in resolution 2553 (2020), particularly at the country level.

First, we often encounter situations where inclusive national ownership and leadership of security sector reform is lacking. Without buy-in from the highest national authorities, the United Nations lacks a foundation for its support and for sustainable peace more broadly. Secondly, national parties and international partners are often reluctant to integrate security sector reform into the early stages of mediation and peace processes, risking a recurrence of conflict when key questions around security sector reform remain unresolved for too long. Thirdly, too often critical progress in reforms cannot be financially sustained after a drawdown of peace operations, risking relapses into conflict. Lastly,

we see too many barriers to women's participation, as gender stereotypes are deeply embedded in the institutional cultures of security services, undermining people's trust in them.

Addressing those challenges requires strong United Nations leadership. It needs predictable mandates by the Council for our peace operations to assist security institutions and build democratically governed, accountable, inclusive and people-centred services. It will also require strategic and effective interventions informed by political and economic analysis that identifies barriers and articulates incentives for national actors to commit to security sector reform.

To tackle those shortcomings, the Secretary-General advised us first of all to strengthen the role of United Nations leadership in building and fostering national ownership of security sector reform, which we are committed to doing, including by developing a security sector reform policy and delegated guidance and tools for United Nations principles.

Secondly, we must improve our efforts to facilitate dialogue, share lessons learned, offer technical advice on security sector reform to parties during mediation processes and prioritize the implementation of security sector reform provisions in peace processes.

Thirdly, we must ensure the financial sustainability of security sector reform, including through public-expenditure reviews, which we conduct, as I mentioned, in partnership with the World Bank.

Fourthly, we must develop the first-ever global report on the status of women in the defence sector. I would like to thank Germany and Switzerland for their generous contributions to that end.

In closing, I would like to thank Mozambique for organizing today's meeting, as well as South Africa for its leadership in facilitating the adoption of resolution 2553 (2020), on security sector reform. The implementation of such a critical resolution starts with well-tailored and prioritized mandates. In that regard, the Security Council could more systematically integrate into its instructions the key tenets of the resolution, such as national ownership, the primacy of political solutions and the need for governance-focused and gender-sensitive approaches at all stages of security sector reform. Furthermore, mandates on security sector reform without the financial and human resources

needed to fulfil them undermine the credibility of the United Nations and undercut our support for the people we serve. We need Member States' support for the new United Nations programme of action on security sector reform designed to implement their priorities, including for our newly established Security Sector Reform Unit standing capacity in Brindisi, which I mentioned. In that respect, we sincerely thank the Governments of Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway and Slovakia for their financial support to our standing capacity.

Finally, I want to stress the oversight role of the Council and the importance of consistent reporting. We believe that a fixed cycle of the Secretary-General's thematic reports on security sector reform, every five years, for instance, would strengthen the Council's consideration of the topic and therefore our collective support to national security sector reform efforts. Every aspect of strengthening United Nations engagement on security sector reform will continue to depend on all of us working together to address the challenges and priorities outlined by the Security Council and the Secretary-General.

The President: I thank Mr. Zouev for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Adeoye.

Mr. Adeoye: The African Union (AU) is pleased to participate in today's debate on the maintenance of international peace and security, with a special focus on security sector reform. We consider this discussion very relevant, as it coincides with the tenth anniversary of the launch of the African Union Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform, adopted in January 2013. The AU policy underscores that security sector reform is an integral part of its peace processes and an essential element in conflict prevention, early recovery, peacebuilding and indeed sustainable development.

For a continent afflicted by recurring conflicts, security sector reform is a key component of the AU's efforts to silence the guns. It is as a prime enabler for building resilience and achieving peace dividends. The African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by 2030 acknowledges the challenges in developing an African defence and security sector that is professional and disciplined and capable of creating national security institutions with balanced civilian oversight and control. However, we still often continue to see the eruption of conflicts or relapses into them, perpetuating cycles of violence and sometimes disrupting stabilization and peacebuilding efforts.

The core principles of the African Union's security sector reform policy align with the United Nations security sector reform principle. In that regard, I would like to highlight first, African solidarity; secondly, regional integration; thirdly, national ownership; fourthly, context specificities; and fifthly, security sector reform as part of a broader democratization and reform process that will include the role of women in partnering for peace.

The AU is therefore pleased that the report of the Secretary-General on security sector reform (S/2022/280) provides an excellent strategic overview of the global security sector reform and governance landscape. Indeed, it inspires the AU Commission to undertake a critical analysis of all concrete outcomes and to address the challenges after 10 years of implementing the AU security sector reform policy. It is important to emphasize that our member States continue to face challenges when it comes to the implementation of security sector reform, owing to inadequate resources, the absence of operational national security sector reform coordination mechanisms and the competing priorities of Governments. The African Union itself has extended technical support through the Commission to a number of member States, including the Gambia, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Madagascar and Mali, to name only a few. We are also scaling up a number of initiatives that relate to entrenching and consolidating security sector reform in some of those member States through the nexus approach, which focuses on peace and security and development. That includes an African facility to support inclusive transitions, which is being put together by the United Nations Development Programme and the AU Commission, as well as the enhanced operationalization of the African Standby Force. At the regional level, we are also partnering with the regional economic communities and regional mechanisms on the African continent on early warning and conflict prevention through the interregional knowledge-exchange platform.

Let me assure the United Nations that the African Union remains a steady partner. We are committed to mainstreaming security sector reform norms and working methods in all of our endeavours, in particular with the regional economic communities. That is why we launched the African Union-led Lessons Learned Forum on AU Peace Support Operations in 2022. We have also continued to work towards using the

knowledge-exchange platform to bring together all knowledge communities when it comes to think tanks and do tanks aimed at concretizing our peace efforts. I would like to conclude by assuring the Council that through our efforts to re-energize national commitments, we can achieve a clearer, more comprehensive, more consistent and focused whole-of-society approach to security sector reform, which will drive resilience and build peace both on our continent and globally.

The President: I thank Mr. Adeoye for his briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Mozambique.

At the outset, I wish to thank our briefers — Mr. Alexandre Zouev, Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions of the Department of Peace Operations, and Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security — for their important contributions to this debate.

Mozambique attaches great importance to the strengthening of security sector reform, which is a crucial prerequisite for States to enhance their ability to provide security, manage and resolve conflicts, and promote social and economic development, as well as to protect human rights and ensure the participation of civil society at large. In that regard, we highly commend the Secretary-General's report (S/2022/280), which highlights critical elements on the way forward to strengthening the comprehensive approach to security sector reform. The report reiterates the importance of ensuring that the development of security sector institutions adheres to the same governance principles and standards applied to any public services institution. Ensuring accountability, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of security services in a participatory, inclusive and responsive manner is critical for fostering sustainable peace and stability and enabling societies to move towards achieving their development goals. We are cognizant that security sector reform is a complex process, particularly in the context of transitions from protracted conflicts to peacebuilding. It is critical to combine factors that can contribute to the success of security sector reform — chief among which is the ownership of States in defining their strategies and priorities.

Today, the world is confronted with new challenges to peace and security as a result of events such as climate change, cyberthreats and the increasing proliferation

of terrorism and violent extremism leading to terrorist acts—with a particular incidence in Africa. In our opinion, that requires a shift in the security sector response to those challenges. A bottom-up approach is critical in that regard. We need to reinforce complementarities through cooperation and partnership at the national, regional and international levels. In that regard, we welcome the Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen the integration of United Nations security sector reform in assistance in the field, including through the new standing capacity on security sector reform and governance in Brindisi. We also emphasize the importance of improving the participation of all segments of civil society, with a focus on women and young people, who can play an important role as key transformative agents for the prevention and resolution of conflicts at the local level.

Mozambique recognizes the linkage between security sector reform and socioeconomic development. In that regard, we hold the view that reform efforts should have a holistic vision and be more comprehensive so as to address the root causes of conflicts.

We believe that reforms implemented through national dialogue, wide consultations and participation by various actors are likely to be more successful. From that perspective, it is vital to understand the political and economic role of institutions, the dynamics of power-sharing, the distribution of resources, the local culture and the formal legislation that governs our societies. We welcome the continuing strong cooperation and collaboration between the United Nations and the African Union Commission in implementing the United Nations-African Union Joint Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security.

Let me conclude by reiterating Mozambique's support for the role that the Security Council can and must play. It can ensure a greater integration of efforts in aligning and coordinating broader international support by regional and bilateral partners behind national priorities. It can also ensure transparency and accountability. In addition, we believe it can avoid gaps and contradictory roles in this important area, particularly in the context of post-conflict situations such as our own.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Ishikane (Japan): Allow me to start by expressing my gratitude to you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting on such a timely topic. I thank Assistant Secretary-General Alexandre Zouev and Commissioner Bankole Adeoye for their briefings. I also welcome the presence of the representatives of South Africa and Slovakia in their capacities as co-Chairs of the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform.

For sustainable peace and stability, building inclusive, effective and accountable institutions across the sectors is of primary importance. The security sector, in particular, is at the heart of national authority, and its institutional reform is therefore first and foremost a political endeavour. If it is to succeed, we need both careful political consideration and well-crafted capacity-building. With that in mind, I would like to highlight two points.

The first is the importance of inclusive ownership. A clearly defined blueprint must come from national leaders and be owned by their peoples through a broad political process. The participation of the people at all levels is a key driver of reform in this area. Transparency, accountability and respect for human rights and the rule of law are fundamental to security sector governance in order to gain people's trust. With that in mind, reforms must be tailored to and aligned with the values and norms that shape each country. The reforms themselves are an inevitably arduous task, and it takes a long time to consolidate their achievements. Discontinuing the process in the middle of reform has a significant and long-term impact on people's daily lives. Mobilizing sufficient national resources for strengthening institutions through necessary budgetary arrangements must be a part of the reform process. Technical capacity-building in that area to make the process more sustainable deserves more attention.

Secondly, international partnership is essential for boosting national efforts. Assisting security sector reform is a major mandated task for United Nations peace missions. With their long record of engagement, they are best placed to play a critical role in coordinating international efforts for more results in line with national priorities. Addressing the complex humanitarian-development-peace nexus of security sector reform efforts requires a comprehensive approach. Close communication and information sharing at the technical level should be further encouraged, with the United Nations entities at the centre on the ground. An integrated strategy shared by all the relevant stakeholders will lead to greater predictability and further mobilization of financial resources.

Last week the Council paid a visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Japan has been a long-term partner of countries striving to carry out the formidable task of security sector reform. Professional, accessible and accountable law-enforcement forces are vital in that country, which is battling illegal armed groups and rampant conventional crimes. Fully in line with the Government's priorities, Japanese experts are closely working on site with the Congolese National Police to introduce a community-policing model. Our support includes capacity-building for police officers in areas such as budgetary management and the development of infrastructure for accessible police posts, as well as building the trust of the local people. In collaboration with the International Organization for Migration, the work will expand into the area from which the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has already withdrawn in accordance with its transition plan.

Japan remains committed to working with all partners to further support security sector reform and its governance for international peace and security.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I too would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Zouev, African Union Commissioner Adeoye and Ambassador Joyini for today's briefings.

The United States Government is deeply committed to security sector reform as a tool for promoting international peace and security. The Secretary-General's report (S/2022/280) lays out several challenges and recommendations for improving security sector reform globally, and a few key themes emerge, which I would like to highlight and amplify.

The first is the importance of inclusive national ownership to the long-term success and sustainability of security sector reform and good security sector governance. The United States fully supports the Secretary-General's focus on ensuring the meaningful participation and representation of local communities, women, young people and civil society in the development of national security strategies and plans. We recognize that local security mechanisms and practices can provide viable entry points for building trust with local populations and encouraging cooperation with State security institutions. Locally driven civil and military consultative mechanisms, such as those cited in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia after peacekeeping transitions, can also play a critical role in sustaining and strengthening reform efforts in transition contexts.

We endorse the importance of putting human rights-focused and gender-responsive approaches at the centre of engagement in security sector reform. As the Secretary-General said, demonstrable human rights compliance is a key indicator of the professionalism of security forces and the exercise of responsible command. Without it, security sectors will not gain the trust of populations.

The second key theme is the need to address the governance of the security sector and the necessary security sector reform during early phases of United Nations engagement, as well as the real risks that come with rushing or deferring long-term agreements on security sector reform in governance. As the Secretary-General's report points out, leaving security-related disputes unresolved and putting in place temporary arrangements that are doomed to fail only undermines and delays long-term reform efforts. Similarly, deferring those tasks to newly established mechanisms or technical bodies also appears to reduce the timely development of durable security arrangements. Experience shows us that these processes take longer and are less successful than processes that outline longer-term national security architecture arrangements upfront.

The third key theme is the importance of developing strategic partnerships, integrated and joint planning processes, joint assessments and more transparent cooperation and coordination among partners working in the security sector reform and governance space.

We support the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report for the United Nations to conduct security sector reform assessments in cooperation with national and international partners in order to inform planning, monitoring and evaluation of security sector reform efforts. The report highlights useful examples of joint planning in which strategic partnerships have provided a solid foundation for long-term sustainable security sector reform and governance efforts. We commend such collaboration and fully support the Secretary-General's recommendation to further strengthen it.

We also take note of the many opportunities for capacity-building highlighted throughout the report. It is clear that there is much work to be done in order to continue to learn from our experiences in security sector reform and to strengthen the practice of security sector reform as a tool for international peace and security.

Mrs. Baeriswyl (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Zouev, Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions, and Mr. Adeoye, African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, for their briefings. I also welcome the Permanent Representatives of South Africa and Slovakia. I would also like to thank Mozambique for putting this theme on the agenda.

This meeting allows us to address the important points in the Secretary-General's report on security sector reform (S/2022/280). We appreciate the Secretariat's efforts to develop the programme of action to implement resolution 2553 (2020) and acknowledge the initiatives undertaken by the African Union and its member States with an eye to strengthening security governance capacities.

Switzerland believes that governance and security sector reform are essential to peace, security and sustainable development. Beyond our efforts within bilateral cooperation, the cornerstone of our commitment in this sphere is the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance. The Centre carries out programmes involving more than 70 States, and its contribution to the areas of governance and security sector reform are globally recognized.

I would like to make three remarks here.

First, investing in institutions for effective, responsible and professional security means investing in lasting peace and conflict prevention. Every peace process redefines the balance of forces in society. That must be fully considered during peace negotiations, and clear implementation processes that are mutually agreed among all stakeholders must be followed in order to avoid a relapse of tensions.

Secondly, supporting security sector reform means strengthening the rule of law. The security sector must integrate the specific security needs of the population as a whole. The full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all institutions and all decision-making, accountability and monitoring mechanisms must therefore be guaranteed. It is in that spirit that Switzerland is engaging with the Gambia, for example, alongside the Immigration Department, in order to improve the quality of services provided in local communities by strengthening its management and accountability, with a focus on gender.

Thirdly, United Nations peacekeeping and special political missions can play a role in improving security governance. It is essential that support be part of a national political process that develops the capacity of security institutions. Regional and subregional instruments, such as that the African Union Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform, provide important information that can guide those efforts. Successful security sector reform is often a key factor in enabling a mission to minimize its presence and, in time, withdraw. The Council should therefore strengthen the mandates of missions with regard to the role of security sector reform and encourage enhanced cooperation between peace operations or political missions and the United Nations country teams.

Resolution 2553 (2020) recognizes that a representative, reactive, effective, efficient, professional and responsible security that operates without discrimination and in full respect of human rights and the rule of law is the cornerstone of peace and sustainable development. That is why Switzerland is committed to promoting good governance in the security sector in the framework of its priority of building sustainable development.

Mr. Montalvo Sosa (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Alexandre Zouev, Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions, for his briefing on the report of the Secretary-General (S/2022/280), as well as Mr. Bankole Adeoye, African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, for his valuable briefing this afternoon. But above all, I thank you, Mr. President, for having convened such an important meeting in order for us to address a critical theme for peacebuilding and ensuring stability in post-conflict situations.

The weakness of the institutions tasked with guaranteeing security diminishes a State's capacity to maintain public order and the rule of law. In States in which political processes have been established with the support of peace missions, that shortcoming creates conditions for the resurgence of violence and the reversal of peace processes, making it sometimes necessary for certain missions to return, despite having seemingly attained their objectives.

Peace and sustainable development can be achieved only if States have a professional, efficient and effective security sector that protects all members of society and acts in accordance with the principles of responsibility

and non-discrimination, within the framework of the rule of law and in full compliance with the protection of human rights. That is why the security sector reform support that the United Nations offers to countries that require it is so valuable.

In that sense, the Peacebuilding Commission is a tool that supports peace efforts in countries in conflict or in transition. Its advisory role to the Security Council can provide important elements for the withdrawal phase of peace missions and can promote consistency for a global analysis of the issue. Moreover, its convening power facilitates dialogue among the actors concerned and proposes strategies, including financial ones, in the necessary reconstruction and institution-building efforts for the conflict-recovery phase.

We thank the Secretariat for its efforts in that area and for its report on strengthening security sector reform, published in March 2022, which reiterates the principles of the support provided, including inclusive national ownership, the primacy of politics and the central importance of good governance. That, in turn, bolsters transparency, responsibility and accountability as an essential part of efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 16 — peace, justice and strong institutions.

The institutional capacity of States in the management of security sector resources, as well as transparency and accountability — as we have said — are all essential for security sector reform. In that regard, as we undoubtedly need resources, we call on the international and regional financial institutions to provide support to countries in need, as set out in Sustainable Development Goal 17. International cooperation in this field and South-South cooperation are also essential.

We are convinced that the participation of all actors strengthens processes of transition to peace. In particular, the contribution of women in the security sector fosters social cohesion, which is undoubtedly necessary for development and the prevention of violence. We agree with the Secretariat on the need to incorporate the gender perspective in security sector reform as well as the importance of having effective oversight and accountability mechanisms to end impunity for all related forms of violence. We also advocate the mainstreaming of child protection in security sector reforms, through appropriate military training and vetting systems to prevent perpetrators of violations and abuses against children from joining national security forces.

Finally, I would like to mention such emerging threats as transnational organized crime and arms trafficking, and note that demobilization, reintegration and reconciliation efforts must be accompanied by disarmament measures and goals, national management of small arms and light weapons, and the enforcement of arms embargoes.

Council resolution 2553 (2020) has already stressed the importance of security sector reform in better integration of, inter alia, the functions of police, justice and corrections, defence, and border services, management and security. As members of the Security Council, we must therefore introduce this aspect into the mandates of peacekeeping missions, particularly for transitional phases.

Ms. Gatt (Malta): At the outset, I thank Assistant Secretary-General Zouev and African Union Commissioner Bankole Adeoye for their briefings. I would also like to thank Mozambique for organizing today's meeting on this important topic.

One of the primary purposes of the United Nations, as stated in its Charter, is the maintenance of international peace and security. It is a keystone of the Organization's daily work in peacebuilding and sustaining peace, including conflict prevention and post-conflict stabilization.

The strengthening of the United Nations comprehensive approach to security sector reform and broader support for this approach are essential for the establishment of sustainable, secure and stable institutions and environments around the world. Security sector reform is a long-term and political process that needs to be nationally driven and requires political commitment and leadership. It also depends on inter-institutional cooperation and broad stakeholder participation to achieve the widest possible buy-in.

Security sector reform governance is central to the women, peace and security agenda. Knowing who is at greatest risk of perpetration and victimization is essential for meeting the security needs of men, women, boys and girls. Translating this operationally will require training and capacity-building across the armed forces, police, border guards and intelligence services. Vetting and codes of conduct are crucial for ensuring that the security sector is a trusted partner. Gender-responsive legal, judicial and security sector reform can help overcome obstacles in women's access to justice.

An intersectional understanding of security sector reform would gradually provide individuals and the State with more effective and accountable security that takes a human rights approach and strengthens democracy, the rule of law and good governance. A professional, effective and accountable security sector and an accessible and impartial law-enforcement and justice system are necessary to lay the foundations for peace and sustainable development.

Security sector reform is a core element of peacekeeping, peacebuilding and development. While ensuring national ownership, the United Nations has strengthened the assistance to national authorities to undertake critical and complex security sector reform processes. Malta welcomes the progress made in mainstreaming child protection in military training, standard operating procedures, and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes. Child-protection units in national security forces and effective age-assessment mechanisms to prevent underage recruitment have helped advance this agenda. Malta stresses that reforming the security sector in post-conflict environments is crucial to the consolidation of peace and stability, promoting poverty reduction, rule of law and good governance to prevent countries from relapsing into conflict.

While the United Nations has played a valuable role in promoting security sector governance and reform, national and local-driven processes remain essential for successful outcomes. Moreover, a holistic approach is needed to encompass the security and justice needs of the local population, ensuring that security sector reform results in State security and human security. Engagement with civil society is crucial as a key vehicle for transparency, accountability and oversight.

If we strive to build a better future, accountability must be our cornerstone. Security sector reform is crucial to addressing impunity and promoting accountability for violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law, and undoubtedly contributes to upholding the rule of law and access to justice. By incorporating security sector governance and reform into strategic partnerships with regional and subregional organizations, as well as through existing mechanisms, the United Nations could strengthen security sector reform.

Finally, for these long-term political processes to be effective, Member States should promote the equal representation of women at all levels in all security

institutions, include gender expertise in field operations and guidance, and ensure that the workplace environment is free from sexual and gender-based harassment and discrimination. It has been proven that women's full, equal and meaningful participation has helped to build inclusive, accountable and legitimate institutions that promote lasting peace and sustainable development.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): I also thank Assistant Secretary-General Zouev and African Union Commissioner Bankole Adeoye for their briefings.

As Mozambique's helpful concept note for this meeting (S/2023/168) sets out, security sector reform and governance play an important role in State-building and peacebuilding. The United Kingdom has invested in security sector reform and governance at home and overseas. We have done so because we believe that a democratically accountable and well-functioning security sector is an integral part of a broader system of government that provides protections for its citizens, based on the fundamental principles of universal human rights and respect for the rule of law.

That is what makes security sector reform relevant not just in post-conflict reconstruction, but also in conflict prevention, because trust between citizens and the State is premised on the existence of institutions that serve and protect the needs of those citizens. For example, today the Security Council has just issued a presidential statement on Libya's electoral process (S/PRST/2023/2) (see S/PV.9284). We welcome the 5+5 Joint Military Committee's engagement with the United Nations Support Mission in Libya and their commitment to coming together to create a safe environment for free and fair elections. As a co-Chair of the Security Working Group for Libya, the United Kingdom will continue to support efforts for the joint working and eventual unification of Libya's militaries into one State military that is accountable to an elected Government and able to comprehensively tackle Libya's security challenges.

Allow me to make three additional points. First, the United Kingdom welcomes the Secretary-General's efforts aimed at strengthening the United Nations comprehensive approach to security sector reform, including in his particular focus on security sector governance. In this regard, the United Nations has a strong comparative advantage underpinned by experience and an approach that prioritizes integrity, transparency and accountability.

We are grateful to Mr. Zouev for his update on the implementation of the United Nations programme of action on security sector reform. The United Kingdom continues to support a more integrated and coherent United Nations approach to security sector reform and governance.

Secondly, the Security Council plays an important role in driving the application of best practices on security sector reform by the United Nations and its partners. That includes Council cooperation to shape fit-for-purpose mandates to guide the engagement of United Nations peace operations and improve the coordination of international support.

Thirdly, we all need to do more to advance women's inclusion in security sector reform processes. The United Kingdom's new action plan on women and peace and security underscores precisely that point, which will guide our domestic and international policymaking in that area.

The United Kingdom will continue to be an advocate for security sector reform and governance, working with the United Nations and other partners, including the African Union, to maximize the impacts of our support.

Mr. Dai Bing (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China welcomes Mozambique's initiative to hold this important meeting. We thank Assistant Secretary-General Zouev and African Union (AU) Commissioner Adeoye for their briefings. I welcome the presence of the Permanent Representatives of Slovakia and South Africa at today's meeting.

Security sector reform in post-conflict countries is an important task in consolidating peace and achieving development. During its term as a non-permanent member of the Council, South Africa pushed for the Security Council to adopt resolution 2553 (2020) on that issue. We should take this meeting, initiated by Mozambique, as an opportunity to explore effective ways for security sector reform and effectively improve the capacity of the countries to maintain peace, stability and development. China would like to share four points of view.

First, we should adhere to the right direction of country ownership. The report of the Secretary-General of last March (S/2022/280) emphasized that country ownership is the basic principle of security sector reform and that countries have various histories,

political environments and cultures and are at different stages of security sector development. Only by adapting measures to local conditions can reform be successful. South Sudan has made steady progress in implementing the security arrangements under the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan and has completed the first phase of the graduation of the necessary unified forces. The Central African Republic has strengthened the deployment of local security forces to consolidate and extend State authority. Mali has actively implemented the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and has promoted the integration of 26,000 former combatants. Such practices are in line with the political and security situation and the realities of the security sector in the countries concerned and are conducive to maintaining peace and stability in the relevant countries. Imposing the so-called common standards and best practices without regard for the basic national conditions and urgent needs of the countries concerned may be counterproductive and not conducive to building the security sector in those countries.

Secondly, we should attach importance to integrating the two major issues of security and development. In many post-conflict situations, countries face security threats, such as armed groups, violent extremism and ethnic conflicts. A professional, efficient and dedicated security sector is an important guarantee for national development and construction. At the same time, security sector reform is a multifaceted and formidable task and cannot be achieved overnight. Security sector reform must be aligned with national development planning and the socioeconomic development level, coordinate with reforms in other areas, such as economy and the rule of law and require a balanced and adequate allocation of resources in order to gain lasting momentum and win the support of all parties. Increased investment in poverty eradication and sustainable development will help to provide more concrete material guarantees for security sector reform. The disarmament and demobilization of former combatants is a challenge for security sector reform in many post-conflict countries. The Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo adopted a development perspective in tackling that challenge and have jointly developed and implemented a community-based disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme to help former armed personnel find

livelihoods, thereby removing the profit motive for them to rejoin the armed conflict. That work must continue in the future.

Thirdly, we should deepen the building of partnerships. Post-conflict countries face challenges, such as insufficient capacity-building and limited resources to promote security sector reform. The international community and the relevant United Nations agencies should actively provide constructive assistance and should focus such assistance on intelligence, early warning, emergency response, equipment and logistics, et cetera, so as to support African countries in improving their counter-terrorism capacities and ability to maintain stability. The United Nations missions in Central Africa, Mali, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and other countries have been tasked with supporting security sector reform. They should strengthen communication with the countries concerned and carefully develop support programmes, in accordance with Security Council mandates.

With regard to mission drawdown and withdrawal, the relevant missions should strengthen their dialogue with the security authorities of the countries concerned and draw up orderly and responsible plans to prevent a security vacuum. African countries and the African Union have accumulated rich experience in security sector reform, resulting in the AU Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform and other achievements. China advocates an African approach to resolving African problems, supports African regional organizations in playing a leading role and encourages countries to strengthen experience-sharing to form synergies.

The China-United Nations Peace and Development Fund has prioritized support for security sector reform in Africa in recent years. It has provided support for projects, such as support for criminal justice responses, the development of national counter-terrorism programmes and training courses, and achieved positive results. China is willing to deepen cooperation with other international partners and strengthen support for Africa.

Fourthly, we should eliminate the negative impact of sanctions. In recent years, countries such as the Sudan, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic have firmly requested that the Security Council lift arms embargoes and other sanctions, stating that such measures have seriously hindered their national security capacity-

building and security sector reform processes. The AU has repeatedly adopted relevant resolutions and formed a common position. The Security Council should listen to Africa's voice, pay attention to its concerns, act with the greatest sense of urgency and promptly adjust and lift the Council's sanctions that do not meet the needs of the situation and remove obstacles to building security sectors in African countries.

At the same time, some countries have initiated unilateral coercive measures and applied long-arm jurisdiction indiscriminately. The relevant practices are in serious violation of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and seriously undermine the promotion of development and maintenance of security in African and other developing countries. It is a long-standing and consistent call of the international community to oppose unilateral coercive measures. We urge certain Western countries to immediately lift unilateral coercive measures and prevent further negative impacts on the peace, stability and humanitarian situation of the countries concerned.

Mr. Asare (Ghana): I would like to begin by thanking Mozambique for having convened this briefing on security sector reform. We believe that the briefing is timely. We would also like to thank the Assistant Secretary-General of the Department of Peace Operations, Mr. Alexandre Zouev, and the African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, for their useful perspectives. We also appreciate the participation of the Permanent Representatives of South Africa and Slovakia, co-Chairs of the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform, in this meeting.

We take note with appreciation of the Secretary-General's March 2022 report (S/2022/280) and acknowledge the Council's own useful contributions, made through resolutions 2151 (2014) and 2553 (2020), in coming to a common understanding on the principles and expectations for security sector reform (SSR), including inclusive national ownership, the primacy of politics in security sector reform and the need for a governance-focused approach.

As the Council, we have on our agenda several conflicts that are intra-State in nature, as well as some that have relapsed after past efforts to resolve them. At the heart of the Council's effectiveness in supporting sustainable peace in such conflict settings, there should be an approach that centralizes security

sector reform in order to enhance the implementation of peace agreements between Governments and armed groups, and that contributes to the stability of fragile societies by taking measures to rebalance State power, professionalize security institutions and law enforcement practices, protect the rights of all citizens, and forge social cohesion among diverse national groups.

In responding to the question as to what the Council can further do to ensure the inclusion of SSR in peace processes, it is necessary to underscore that the Council's increasing role and involvement should not undermine the centrality of national ownership and leadership for peace efforts. Through its resolutions and mandates, the Council should reinforce the existing commitments of national actors and help to unlock the resources required for advisory and technical assistance by national Governments to undertake what is usually a difficult and sensitive reform.

Furthermore, we believe that through its periodic consideration of the SSR agenda, the Council could assess performance across different peace operations in order to understand practices that have yielded the best results and have presented challenges that are unique. In that regard, we also believe that further leverage could be mobilized by the Council from the Inter-Agency Security Sector Reform Task Force for a whole-of-United-Nations approach to SSR that spans the peace spectrum, including prevention, conflict resolution, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, sustainable peace and development. The Council's encouragement for a whole-of-society approach towards security sector reform is also especially useful in contexts in which non-State institutions and establishments, such as traditional and religious leaders, play a role in maintaining order, protecting societies and resolving disputes.

We would encourage the Council's continued interest in SSR, even after a peace operation has transitioned, including through its engagement with the Peacebuilding Commission and other relevant bodies that support the development of expertise and capacity at the national and local levels. Similarly, support for efforts that enhance trust and confidence among national authorities, national security actors and institutions, and the population would be relevant, including through the programmes of United Nations country teams. In that regard, we call for the maintenance of an inclusive process that benefits

from the contributions of women and young people. In re-establishing the norms of fragile societies around proper security sector management, it is important to be mindful that they are long-term commitments and that the resources required for capacity-building need to endure beyond the short and medium term, if we are to achieve results that move such societies away from a negative and divisive orientation of political contestation and an oppressive security approach. Funding commitments in alignment with Sustainable Development Goal 16 would be a useful way to ensure the sustainability of the commitment.

I would like to emphasize the important contribution and support that regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union, can further make towards security sector reform and governance on the African continent. The African Union, through its Peace and Security Architecture and associated doctrines, the African Governance Architecture and the African Peer Review Mechanism, can play a major role in reorienting the security sector of the countries of the continent in a manner that positively impacts sustainable peace and development. We encourage the provision of dedicated resources to support such regional endeavours and the sustained engagement of stakeholders in that regard.

Lastly, we wish to highlight the importance of applying lessons learned from past and ongoing security sector reform mandates in order to better inform future SSR mandates. The Council's mandates for the promotion of national dialogue, the enhancement of civilian oversight and public financial management in countries such as Libya, Guinea-Bissau and Somalia, for security sector governance, police reform, prison reform and defence sector reform in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Libya, and for capacity-building and the establishment of national security coordination mechanisms in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya, Mali and Somalia, contain essential elements for inclusion in the Council's future mandates.

Mrs. Ngyema Ndong (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): We appreciate the importance and timeliness of this briefing on security sector reform in the context of peacekeeping, at a time when the risks of post-conflict countries relapsing into the vicious cycle of violence are becoming ever greater. Gabon welcomes such an approach aimed at preventing the resurgence of conflicts, while improving the effectiveness and coherence of peacekeeping operations and special political missions.

We thank Assistant Secretary-General Alexandre Zouev and Commissioner Bankole Adeoye for their substantive contribution to today's discussion, and I also welcome the representatives of South Africa and Slovakia to this meeting.

Security sector reform is one of the pillars on which we must focus our efforts to achieve a sustainable peace, especially for post-conflict countries. In adopting its first resolution on security sector reform (resolution 2151 (2014)) on 28 April 2014, the Security Council acknowledged the vital need to help fragile States to strengthen their capacity for the management and oversight of security services in order to ensure their stabilization and ability to build peace. Moreover, the adoption of resolution 2553 (2020) reaffirmed the stakes involved in security sector reform and gave impetus to a new dynamic, thereby offering the opportunity to strengthen the means and strategies of action at all stages of the peace process — conflict prevention and resolution, peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction — by focusing on destabilizing factors, such as poverty, inequality, social exclusion and violent extremism. For Gabon, successful security sector reform ensures stability and development. It enables not only the strengthening of a country's resilience but also the restoration of State authority throughout its territory. However, the effectiveness of such reform necessarily depends on two fundamental pillars: human security in all its forms and the imperative ownership of the State concerned.

The meaningful participation of communities in all their diversity, with the full participation of women and young people, is vital to achieving that goal. Lasting peace can be built only with the participation of local communities, which must be able to participate in all phases of the peace process. State ownership of security reform must therefore be predicated on the latter in order to develop reforms that are based on a solid community foundation, while taking into account the specific needs and characteristics of every State. In that regard, the role and involvement of regional and subregional organizations remain crucial. It was to respond to that demand, among others, that the African Union adopted its Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform in 2013, the primary goal of which is to provide a platform for member States and subregional organizations to implement, monitor and evaluate security sector reform processes, which are decisive for stabilizing the continent.

It is undeniable that cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, through strategic partnerships and predictable and adequate funding of AU peace operations, is part of the dynamic that is essential to creating an environment in Africa conducive to sustainable peace. It is also important to ensure that the mandates of United Nations peace operations and special political missions continue to place a special emphasis on security reform. The Council needs to build on that momentum to develop more responsive, realistic and adequately funded disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes. Given the importance of DDR to peacebuilding, it is crucial to integrate it into the overall reform process.

Successful security sector reform requires input from all, including international financial institutions, the private sector and civil-society actors, stakeholders whose contributions should be well coordinated in support of the efforts of States. The fact is that fragile States often have very little leeway in their budgets. Facing multiple challenges with limited resources, they have to make difficult trade-offs and have less funding to devote to security sector reform. We therefore need to intensify the support for building such States' institutional capacities so that they can responsibly plan, mobilize, budget, allocate and spend national resources for defence and security. I would like to emphasize the important role of the Peacebuilding Commission in that regard.

In conclusion, as the United Nations embarks on a new common agenda aimed at rebuilding trust, redressing inequalities and strengthening the social contract between Governments and societies, the international community must redouble its efforts through dialogue and cooperation to strengthen the rule of law and ensure that States' security sectors serve their peoples.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Mr. Alexandre Zouev, Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions in the Department of Peace Operations, as well as Mr. Bankole Adeoye, African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, for their informative briefings. We also welcome the participation in today's meeting of the representatives of South Africa and Slovakia in their capacities as co-Chairs of the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform.

We believe that a sound public policy establishing competent authorities and a functioning security sector, particularly an effective army, is key to building a stable State and society. The security sector is an important aspect underpinning State sovereignty, which is why security sector reform should always be seen as a follow-up to the national political process. The most effective security sector is one that takes into account a society's unique historical, cultural and political characteristics and serves the interests of the entire population. In a number of developing countries, especially in Africa, one of the challenges is the fact that institutions and customs there have often been transplanted into post-colonial societies without regard for their national specificities.

If security sector reform initiatives are to be successful, they must be implemented by national forces through actual deeds, not words. National ownership is critical to the legitimacy, sustainability and effectiveness of such reform programmes. However, even minimal progress in transforming the security sector can bolster citizens' trust in the authorities, as well as create conditions conducive to a return to normalcy, a peaceful social and economic life and a safe education. Unfortunately, in many cases post-conflict countries are not in a condition to maintain their security and restore viable and effective State institutions without external support. In such situations, the international community's assistance is especially important and should be based on fundamental principles that include the consent of the host country and respect for its national sovereignty and political independence.

We agree with the Mozambican presidency's concept note (S/2023/168) that proposals on security sector reform should not be based on provisions hastily inserted into agreements that do not take into account broader political arrangements on power-sharing and the historical and country-specific context for the formation of armed forces and security bodies, or that are derived from externally imposed prescriptions. We often see rigid timelines imposed by donors or formulaic approaches undermining the fragile process of building State institutions for maintaining security. Sanctions, including those authorized by the Security Council, should never get in the way of reform processes. All of these issues can lead to a reluctance to accept innovations and in the worst-case scenario to the

undermining of agreements previously reached, further fragmentation of the security sector and relapses into conflict.

There is no question that security sector reform should be carried out in the context of broader reconstruction processes and include comprehensive efforts on the political and socioeconomic tracks. Only a holistic approach can give rise to a hopeful and lasting peace and security and ensure a sustainable outcome. Security sector reform is a resource-intensive process in itself, and it is often closely linked to the equally complex process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. Timely financial support makes it possible to better address existing and emerging challenges, but obviously the allocation of funds must be long-term and sustainable.

The United Nations, above all through its peacekeeping and special political missions, plays an important role in providing appropriate international assistance to States. For example, many early peacebuilding issues are now included in the multidimensional mandates of peacekeeping operations. Peacekeepers play a key role in supporting security sector reform, as well as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and in restoring law-enforcement bodies and the rule of law in general. We note the special role within the United Nations system played by the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions, which provides assistance to United Nations missions on the ground and to States at their request.

We also note the role of the Peacebuilding Commission in post-conflict recovery and in security sector reform in particular. Developing a comprehensive approach to consultative and financial support for post-conflict countries significantly improves the reliability, accountability and professionalism of national security structures. We should not underestimate the potential of the Peacebuilding Fund as a flexible instrument for financing projects in the area of security sector reform. When providing assistance with reforms, it is important for the various stakeholders to coordinate their efforts to ensure that the reforms and the training of personnel are based on the same approaches and principles throughout the country. And of course the international community must understand that complex processes — especially in post-conflict environments — such as reform of the security sector and the rule of law require painstaking effort, patience and a sufficiently long period of time to ensure their full restoration and functioning.

Mr. Abushahab (United Arab Emirates): I thank Mozambique for taking the initiative to organize today's meeting, which is long overdue.

Improving security sector governance is a key feature of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982) and the African Union's Silencing the Guns initiative, as well as many peace operations mandated by the Security Council.

I also thank Assistant Secretary-General Zouev and African Union Commissioner Adeoye for their valuable briefings, and I welcome the participation of South Africa and Slovakia in this meeting.

A security sector based on the rule of law, integrity and accountability can provide the bedrock for a resilient country. Ideally, it supports stability, helps to address external and internal threats and responds to the needs of the people in moments of emergency. For countries emerging from conflict, an effective, inclusive and accountable security sector is a precondition of sustaining peace. While failed security sector governance has contributed to the resurgence of conflict in the past, successful efforts have enabled peacebuilding and reconciliation. For instance, South Africa leveraged security sector reform to cement peace at home in the 1990s. Security sector governance considerations remain a critical priority in a broad range of situations, from Mali to South Sudan and from Colombia to Guinea-Bissau. I would like to make three points here today in order to help move that agenda forward.

First, security sector reform must be nationally owned and led. While international actors can play a critical role in helping to set up frameworks and support their implementation, they must be co-designed with the priorities of national stakeholders at the centre. Since peace operations eventually end and aid programmes are redirected, it is critical that international engagement focus on strengthening national capacities and supporting context-specific solutions. The governance-focused approach suggested by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2022/280) provides a useful framework that can encapsulate the perspectives of a broad array of stakeholders. In order to be effective, those strategies must consider the social and cultural norms that, in addition to formal legislation, enable successful and context-specific reform efforts. An inclusive approach is vital in the context of peacekeeping transitions in order to ensure

that the United Nations can continue to provide adequate support. The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, has worked with the Congolese Government, local partners and regional organizations to integrate security sector reform into the Government's national action plan. As the peace operation draws down, national institutions will be able to drive that process forward to consolidate hard-won gains with support from the United Nations country team.

Secondly, the security sector cannot be gender-neutral, because the impact of insecurity is not gender-neutral. Not only do we need to increase the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in national security sectors, but the Council should also include gender-related language in its mandates on security sector reform. We must use the unique opportunity that security sector reform provides to strengthen both women's representation and the implementation of gender-responsive regulations and policies, thereby leading to better and more sustainable outcomes.

Thirdly, security sector reform is an eminently political process, not just a technical one, and must be considered as such. We often see mediation efforts discussed in this Chamber that differentiate between the political and the security tracks. That approach works only if there is open communication between the diverse set of stakeholders negotiating the different arrangements. Too often, peace agreements fail to be implemented because outstanding security-related issues remain unresolved, or because they are left for follow-up technical committees to finesse. Political buy-in is essential, and the logistics of processes such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform must closely follow the political lead. As the Secretary-General encourages in his report, adopting that approach will support the consolidation of sustainable political conditions that underpin successful security sector reform.

To conclude, let me take a moment to celebrate the efforts of the many women and men in uniform who are decisively contributing to peace and stability. The United Arab Emirates is proud to host the Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak women and peace and security training initiative. Since 2019, the programme has contributed to more gender-responsive national security sectors, with more than 500 participants from Africa, Asia and the Middle East. As an Iraqi cadet recently told a journalist upon her graduation: "I joined

the training course because it was the first time Iraqi woman officers got to train abroad. I believe I can make a difference". As a Council, let us harness that optimism to make a difference and consolidate peace after conflict.

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): I would like to thank you, Sir, and the Mozambican presidency for including this item in our discussions, and I also thank Assistant Secretary-General Zouev and Mr. Adeoye for their briefings.

In our view, the reform of the security sector represents a comprehensive process for enhancing the provision of security by making it more effective, transparent, accountable, inclusive and consistent with the principles of human rights, the rule of law and good governance. In various countries, effective security reform has often played a vital role in political processes, national reconciliation, transitional justice, stabilization and reconstruction. It has also been key to the consolidation of peace and stability in post-conflict settings. We have seen many times that effective security sector reform strengthens institutions and leads to increased transparency and accountability, just as we have witnessed how corruption and insufficient political will undermine efforts for reform.

External assistance, including from the United Nations, has proven to play an important role in promoting security sector governance and reform. However, it is ownership at the national and local levels that remains key. Local government, civil society and non-governmental organizations provide critical contributions to both initial reforms and successful long-term governance. Regional organizations and bilateral frameworks can be successful only by providing added value to dedicated and genuine efforts at the national level.

Peacekeeping operations can play an important role in helping country authorities to develop inclusive national strategies and priorities for security sector reform. Peacekeeping operations operate in very complex environments, and it is undeniable that their role is often misunderstood, as they are expected to perform beyond their mandates. To be able to fulfil their mandate and contribute to security sector reform, those missions need to be provided with sufficient, predictable and sustainable funding and to improve their communication and public outreach. Indeed, the United Nations has a key role to play in supporting Member States to develop robust, credible and effective

security sectors, including through its peacekeeping operations and political missions. We also commend the important efforts that regional and subregional organizations make to support and guide country-led efforts in that respect.

We believe that promoting the full, equal and effective participation of women in the security sector contributes to the establishment of inclusive, accountable and legitimate institutions. We encourage States to develop security sector reforms, strategies and programmes that systematically take gender issues into account. Mainstreaming a gender perspective into the justice and security sectors is the right and smart thing to do. We have done so in Albania and have seen clear benefits. Another key element of delivering effective security to citizens is the strengthening of the rule of law at all levels. Justice and accountability are fundamental elements of security sector governance and reform. An effective and fair justice system means better respect for human rights, and it also means greater accountability.

Let me conclude by highlighting that experience has proven beyond any doubt that societies rooted in freedoms give people more power, choices and rights. That in turn leads to better governance and progress, thereby allowing societies to become more prosperous, educated, healthy and happy,

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Mr. Zouev and Mr. Adeoye for their briefings and to underscore three points.

First, the security sector reform needed to promote lasting peace should be part of a project encompassing political and governance issues as a whole. France welcomes the United Nations programme of action on governance and security system reform for 2022 to 2025, which has a global approach and will result in a new strategy this year. France is careful to ensure that major peacekeeping operations make security sector reform an essential component of their political support. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which the Council visited last week, support for security sector reform is one of the priority tasks of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The country needs trained, equipped, organized and coordinated armed forces to protect the population and defend its integrity and sovereignty.

Secondly, security sector reform can be achieved only with the political will of the host State. That is a prerequisite for gaining the confidence of international partners and is founded on respect for the mandates handed down by the Security Council. It also depends on respect for human rights, the rule of law and the guarantee that the processes are inclusive and meet the needs of all members of society, especially women and young people. Finally, it requires mobilizing the host country's own financial resources, which complement those of its partners.

Thirdly, coordinating action on the ground is a major challenge and is first and foremost an internal issue for the United Nations, essential to ensuring that the support that peacekeeping operations provide for security sector reform continues in the context of the transition to country teams. However, there must also be coordination between the United Nations and other actors while maintaining respect for the fundamental values of the United Nations and its Charter. In that regard, we welcome the action of regional organizations, which play an essential role, as, for example, in the work of the Economic Community of West African States in support of security sector reform in West Africa.

As President Macron recalled in a statement in February on the partnership between France and Africa, one of our aims is to position Europe as a key partner on defence and security issues for Africans. We would like to point to the role played by the European Union on the continent through the European Union capacity-building and training missions. France is also engaging on a bilateral basis. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we are encouraging the authorities in their efforts to train and strengthen their military personnel through our support for officer training schools, in particular the Kinshasa military academy. We are also participating in training the country's armed forces in jungle combat.

It is vital to prevent security fragilities and gaps from undermining the foundations of States and favouring harmful actors, and it is therefore our collective duty to support security sector reform processes.

Mr. Parga Cintra (Brazil): At the outset, let me congratulate the presidency of Mozambique for the initiative of convening the Council to discuss the important issue of security sector reform. I also thank the briefers, Mr. Alexandre Zouev and Mr. Bankole Adeoye, for their insightful remarks.

Efficient, professional and fully functional security sectors are fundamental elements of countries' governance systems. In many post-conflict situations, security sector reform is paramount in consolidating and building peace and is also an important basis for achieving sustainable development. With that in mind, I would like to raise five points.

First, national ownership must be the underlying principle guiding all initiatives concerning security sector reform. The intentions and priorities of the countries concerned must be respected. The imposition of blanket solutions that do not take into account specific realities on the ground can be a recipe for failure and result in the reversal of hard-won achievements.

Secondly, security sector reform is an intrinsically political process. It involves not only the implementation of governance rules and the reorganization of institutions, but also the distribution of power and resources within a society. It is therefore essential as a way to advance sustainable and inclusive political solutions for conflicts.

Thirdly, deficiencies in the security sector may become a root cause of conflict. Security institutions that are unaccountable and unrepresentative can contribute to fostering grievances in certain communities and sectors of society. Moreover, inefficient and outdated security institutions are often incapable of dealing with terrorist and other illegal armed groups as they emerge. Security sector reform is therefore fundamental not only to consolidating peace in post-conflict situations but to addressing conflict itself. That is why a number of United Nations peacekeeping missions have provided an important role in assisting security sector reform, which lies at the crossroads of peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

Fourthly, security sector reform must be understood not as a solution in itself or as a self-contained endeavour, but as part of a comprehensive peacebuilding strategy that also encompasses economic and social aspects. Reconstruction and development resources should be used in a balanced way so as to ensure that the security sector has the budget it needs, along with the social spending needed to alleviate poverty and promote sustainable development. That helps to eradicate breeding grounds for conflicts. It is failure to deal with basic development needs that runs the biggest risk of dragging a country back into conflict. The disarmament, demobilization and

reintegration of former combatants are integral parts of this process. Moreover, security sector reform in itself can be a source of employment opportunities and a driver of economic growth, especially in deprived regions and communities.

Finally, security sector reform requires coordination and cooperation on the part of multiple stakeholders. In addition to peacekeeping missions, special political missions and country teams should play active roles, in accordance with their mandates, to assist the countries concerned in advancing reforms. The African Union and other regional and subregional organizations also have a role to play in these processes. And the Peacebuilding Commission is an important platform for garnering international support for security sector reform initiatives. The African Union and other regional and subregional organizations have made great strides in helping post-conflict countries introduce reforms of their security sectors. Taking advantage of their experience, the United Nations must strengthen its coordination and cooperation with them, and Brazil stands ready to contribute to those efforts.

The President: I would like to once again welcome the Permanent Representatives of South Africa and Slovakia and commend their contributions to the holding of this meeting.

I now give the floor to the representative of Slovakia.

Mr. Mlynár (Slovakia): I would first of all like to thank you, Mr. President, and your country for organizing this important briefing, which provides a great opportunity for various actors to share their views on the implementation of resolution 2553 (2020), as well as on the Secretary-General's report (S/2022/280) on strengthening the United Nations approach to security sector reform. I would also like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Zouev for his efforts and for his informative briefing, as well as the Commissioner of the African Union.

I am pleased to start with the first part of the joint statement by the co-Chairs of the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform. We greatly appreciate the opportunity to engage with the Security Council and very much look forward to further cooperation with Council members, as well as with all other interested Member States.

For the first time, the United Nations has developed a coherent implementation framework for the work of

the Organization on security sector reform (SSR). We congratulate the inter-agency SSR task force for the programme of action for SSR, which plans concrete actions flowing from resolution 2553 (2020) and the 18 recommendations set out by the Secretary-General in his report.

The programme of action carries those most critical initiatives that the United Nations, Member States and partners are required to undertake if they are to generate impact at the country level, including on emerging security challenges, such as climate change, peace agreements, public expenditure reviews, national security planning, gender and youth, and through the newly established standing capacity on security sector reform and governance, based in Brindisi.

I find it particularly relevant that this briefing is taking place shortly after the recent Security Council mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as has been mentioned by many Council members.

From a national perspective, I am happy to announce that Slovakia will be making its second financial contribution to the programme of action. I encourage all Member States to consider making financial contributions to this important work of the Secretariat.

With the adoption of resolution 2553 (2020), through which Member States strengthened their commitment to security sector reform and the priorities set out by the Secretary-General, the expectations and tasks for United Nations assistance have significantly expanded, but sufficient resources have not yet been made available.

I echo Assistant Secretary-General Zouev's remarks in that regard and reaffirm that mandates given without the funding for implementation undermine the credibility of the United Nations and undercut our support for the people we serve. In addition to Member State support for the programme of action, Member States should also officially establish and resource the standing capacity on security sector reform and governance, from either the regular budget or the peacekeeping support account.

The rest of our joint statement will be delivered by my colleague, Ambassador Mathu Joyini, Permanent Representative of the Republic of South Africa.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Ms. Joyini (South Africa): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting to discuss the Secretary-General's report on security sector reform (SSR) and governance (S/2022/280). I thank Assistant Secretary-General Zouev and Commissioner Adoye for their insightful briefings.

The statements delivered at the meeting today confirm the centrality and importance of security sector reform as part of the continuum of peacebuilding and peacemaking. The report of the Secretary-General reminds us that security sector reform and governance needs to be addressed early on in peace processes. It should not be put aside, to be given attention only after peace agreements have been signed. That approach leads to security sector reform programmes that lack adequate resources.

We cannot stress enough the importance of national ownership of security sector reform and governance. It is the prerogative of each State to determine its approach and needs. It is important that the support provided by the international community respond to the needs of the affected country. We heard in today's debate that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to security sector reform and governance, but it is always context specific. Importantly, it is largely a political process.

We have learned, from our experience in South Africa, that security sector reform is also successful when it is inclusive. There are many actors who need to be involved, including private security actors, traditional leaders, religious communities, women and youth. That is to ensure the needed political support, given the importance of the security sector in all countries.

The involvement of women and youth is one of the core elements of the women and peace and security agenda, as well as of the youth, peace and security

agenda. As we prepare the New Agenda for Peace, we need to place security sector reform at the centre of the discussions, given the importance of security sector reform for peacebuilding and sustaining peace, including conflict prevention.

My co-facilitator and I welcome suggestions for establishing a consistent time frame within which the Secretary-General would present a report on the implementation of resolution 2553 (2020) to the Security Council. We look forward to discussing with Mozambique and Council members how we could make that recommendation possible.

I conclude by urging all members of the Security Council and the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform to join efforts in implementing the following three main priorities brought up in this meeting: first, to integrate the tenets of resolution 2553 (2020) into country-specific mandates on SSR, ensuring that they are aligned with the new United Nations vision of SSR; secondly, to establish a consistent time frame within which the Secretary-General would report on the implementation of resolution 2553 (2020) to the Security Council; and lastly, to mobilize financial support for the implementation of the programme of action on SSR, as indicated by my co-facilitator, including for the standing capacity on security sector reform and governance, based in Brindisi.

The President: I thank the Permanent Representatives of Slovakia and South Africa, as co-Chairs of the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform, for their statements and, more importantly, for their contribution to our proceedings and for the way forward regarding this important report (S/2022/280).

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.