Security Council Open Debate on the Maintenance of International Peace and Security, Security Sector Reform: Challenges and Opportunities, April 2014, Security Council Chamber

Statement by **Mr. Quinlan** *Permanent Mission of* **Australia** *to the United Nations.*

I thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this debate and for your presence here today. I also thank the Nigerian presidency of the Security Council for all of its important efforts on the potentially transformational task of security sector reform.

In May 2006, four years after Timor-Leste's independence, as the United Nations Office in Timor-Leste was preparing to withdraw, a crisis in the security sector sparked a political, security and humanitarian emergency. This was precipitated by the dismissal of nearly one-third of the Timorese armed forces, and saw the police and army fighting each other again in the streets. The unravelling of law and order left dozens dead and some 150,000 displaced. In response, at Timor-Leste's request, Australia, New Zealand and Portugal deployed an international stabilization force and, in August 2006, the Council mandated another peacekeeping mission, the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT).

We must heed the important lessons of this and other experiences of relapse regarding the centrality that security sector reform (SSR) can have to long-term stability and how SSR should be supported. There is a very positive ending with Timor-Leste, which has made great strides in reforming its security sector, strengthening not just capacities but governance and civilian oversight. In March 2011, the national police resumed primary policing responsibilities after a phased handover from UNMIT. Our understanding of SSR has evolved — an evolution helped by the experience in Timor-Leste. From a narrow conception of training and equipping institutions, we now view SSR as a process that needs to encompass the security architecture as a whole and is as much political as technical.

I will focus on three issues. The first if national ownership. National authorities need to generate and drive a strategic vision for reform, but SSR is in many ways about the contract between the security sector and population, so to be effective it must have community buy-in. The involvement of civil society, including women's groups, is vital.

How do we better foster such ownership and leadership? Second-generation SSR in Timor-Leste is a good example. The Government took strong leadership, with UNMIT and international partners — with their relatively small footprint — in support. There was significant community outreach. UNMIT's final stages were guided by a best-practice, jointly agreed transition plan, including a framework for the final assumption of functions by Timorese security institutions and the continuation of support by other partners. Separately, Australia has signed an innovative New Deal agreement with the Timorese Government, including a commitment to supporting Timor-Leste's goals for security sector reconstruction and reform across crime prevention and investigation, public safety and border control.

My second point concerns measuring impact. We need to find new ways to evaluate the real impact of SSR, including public confidence in security services. In Solomon Islands, an innovative tool — the annual people's survey — covers perceptions of the police force. This informs planning by the Government and the Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands on police reform and law and order.

My third point concerns the role of the United Nations. Many SSR initiatives fail because of a narrow technical focus, but the United Nations can be uniquely placed to support a holistic perspective across the sector. UNMIT, for example, supported Timor-Leste's comprehensive security sector review, which led to new legislation for the security and defence sectors.

Security sector reform is most effective when complemented by the development of strong democratic institutions. Those are inherently political processes, and today's draft resolution rightly encourages Special Representatives and Envoys of the Secretary-General to focus on security sector reform in their good offices roles.

Finally, I would like to mention two particular areas of United Nations engagement on security sector reform.

First, on sanctions, the Côte d'Ivoire regime, where lethal equipment importation is linked directly to the Government's security sector reform process, is one of the most striking examples of the nexus between arms embargoes and security sector reform. Embargoes can assist in stopping flows of weapons that could reignite violence and in creating the conditions for the development of stronger security institutions. Groups of experts can provide invaluable support — for example, providing information on threats and illicit flows, which can help security sector reform design. We call for deeper cooperation among United Nations missions, Sanctions Committees and groups of experts on these issues.

Secondly, on policing reform, the Council has just authorized one of the largest police components in any peacekeeping operation, in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic. In that country, rebuilding the shattered security sector is absolutely vital.

When thinking of United Nations police, our minds often jump to images of formed police units patrolling. But let me emphasize the important part police and civilians in United Nations missions can play in supporting rebuilding and reform of host-State policing.

Policing reform is often overshadowed by the higher-profile reform of militaries. Yet police are the public face of the security sector, the ones the population should turn to for protection, and the guardians, as the representative of Luxemburg reminded us this morning. Building professional, accountable policing and law enforcement agencies focused on serving the community — and UNMIT supported such efforts well in its later years — can be central to restoring the rule of law and building trust in the authorities. We urge more Council focus on that, including in mandates.

The United Nations can be uniquely placed to coordinate international support, but it needs to get better at coordinating its own policing assistance, including by harmonizing the various approaches adopted by different contributors to missions. The Police Division's new strategic guidance framework will contribute significantly to standardizing United Nations policing activities, including capacity-building.

In conclusion, at its core, security sector reform is about ensuring that a State's institutions serve and protect its population. Support to security sector reform is increasingly and rightly an integral part of the mandates the Council authorizes. It is, effectively, our exit strategy. When done well, security sector reform's legacy is the stable and potentially transformational foundation it provides for long-term peace, security and development.