

**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 Sir Grant Permanent Mission of United Kingdom to the United Nations.

I thank you, Mr. President, for initiating and presiding over this important debate. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his informative briefing earlier today.

When people are asked to rank what is most important to them, they respond that personal safety and security and trust in those providing that security are the highest priorities. Today we will recognize that fact with the adoption of the first-ever Security Council draft resolution on security sector reform. The United Kingdom is pleased to sponsor the draft resolution.

When citizens are safe, countries are able to recover from conflict and to grow their economies. Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste are successful examples of how the patient work of reforming a country's security sector as part of a broader effort to strengthen the rule of law is fundamental to countries' growth. Conversely, in many of the countries in which we have seen a relapse into conflict, such as the Central African Republic and South Sudan, the collapse or mismanagement of the security sector is often a major contributor to the violence.

One of the most acute challenges facing the United Nations on security sector reform is how to take forward such reform when there has been a complete collapse in State authority, where political legitimacy remains contested and where serious violence persists. In places such as Libya, Somalia and the Central African Republic, United Nations missions are grappling with security sector reform challenges in extremely fragile contexts.

Our end goal should be to build capable, accountable and responsible security sectors with full national ownership. But in the early stages of a reform process, we need to be realistic about what is achievable and to prioritize and sequence interventions accordingly. In violent and unstable contexts, security cannot wait for security sector reform. The immediate focus must be on reducing violence and protecting civilians. We must seek to stabilize the situation in the short term while working to create the conditions for sustainable political settlement and the longer-term reform of the security sector.

Too often, we embark on wholesale reform of the security sector when the requisite political preconditions do not exist. We train, man and equip security forces without considering how that will impact the fragile political balance in the country or how those security forces are perceived by the citizens they are entrusted to protect. At times, our eagerness to get something done means that we do more harm than good and contribute to further instability. We can avoid those mistakes.

First, as a Council we have a responsibility to provide missions with clearer, more credible mandates that are better sequenced and prioritized by the most urgent security-related needs.

In the early phases of a mission's deployment, we should not aim for expansive security sector reform activities. We must focus on the most urgent issues to stabilize the situation.

Secondly, missions cannot afford to de-link their good offices and political functions from their security sector reform tasks. The two are intimately linked. The Secretary-General's Special Representatives should work to generate the political space for security sector reform and gain commitments from leaders to drive forward that reform. Similarly, swift action in the security sector to reduce violence, protect citizens and build trust between citizens and State authorities can help reinforce ongoing political processes and national dialogues. If managed well, those efforts can be mutually reinforcing.

Thirdly, United Nations missions cannot successfully take forward security sector reform alone. Effective interventions in the security sector must employ the full United Nations toolbox — political, security, peacebuilding and development. To do that, we must strengthen the internal mechanisms within the United Nations, both in the field and at Headquarters, to coordinate security sector reform activities. In addition, the United Nations needs to deepen its partnerships with regional organizations, such as the African Union and European Union, which can play an important role in delivering key security sector reform tasks.

The United Kingdom will continue to support security sector reform around the world. We have kept our promise to spend 0.7 per cent of our gross national income on overseas aid. We are the only Group of 20 country to do so. At least 30 per cent of that aid will be spent in conflict-affected States. Over the past decade, we committed \$278 million to support security and justice programmes in 25 countries across various regions of the world. For example, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a United Kingdom programme has helped to improve the capacity and accountability of the Congolese national Police and of the internal security sector with a particular focus on the needs of women and girls. The United Kingdom treats security and access to justice as a basic service on a par with health and education and a fundamental right as recognized in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. In all of the United Kingdom's security and justice activities, we take a people-centred approach, focusing not only on State security but also on how individuals experience insecurity and access justice.

I thank you again, Mr. President, for convening this debate and for submitting the important draft resolution to be adopted this afternoon. Building accountable and responsive security services in countries recovering from conflict should remain a priority for the Council so that everyone everywhere can live safely and free from violence.