

The following information was released by the United Nations Commission for Social Development:

With an increasing number of United Nations organs, funds, programmes and agencies engaged in security sector reform support activities in post-conflict countries, the Security Council today acknowledged the need for Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon to compile a comprehensive report with "concrete recommendations" on how to improve the effectiveness and coordination of all United Nations system entities that supported security sector reform.

() "The Security Council also underlines that the United Nations has a crucial role to play in promoting comprehensive, coherent and coordinated international support to nationally owned security sector reform programmes, implemented with the consent of the countries concerned," he said, adding that the Council also recognized the links between security sector reform and other key stabilization and reconstruction factors, like transitional justice, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, small arms and light weapons control, as well as gender equality, children and armed conflict and human rights issues.

In light of that, he said the Council acknowledged the need for a comprehensive report of the Secretary-General on United Nations approaches to security sector reform, which should identify lessons learned, core security sector reform functions that the United Nations could perform, roles and responsibilities of United Nations system entities, and how best to coordinate United Nations support with national and international activities in that field. The Council recognized that security sector reform could continue well beyond the duration of a peacekeeping operation and, in that regard, emphasized the important role the Peacebuilding Commission could play in continuous international support to countries emerging from conflict.

Setting the stage for the debate, Slovakia's Foreign Minister, Jn Kubi, told the Council earlier in the day that, while reformed and restructured security sectors were crucial for post-conflict peacebuilding, the ultimate objective should be the improvement of the everyday lives of people. While the United Nations had done a good job dealing with security sectors in post-conflict environments, it was time for the United Nations, as well as the wider international community, to devote more time and attention to the matter, especially since security sector reform required a balance between international support efforts and national ownership.

() She said that collective efforts at the international level, and across the United Nations system, needed to be better coordinated to ensure that assistance to countries emerging from conflict had a greater impact. There was a need for a common policy within the framework of the Assembly to define such concepts and coordinate the efforts across the Organization. The Peacebuilding Commission could play a very important role in that regard. She also emphasized the important contribution the General Assembly could make to the emerging debate.

() "The Security Council emphasizes that security sector reform must be context-driven and that the needs will vary from situation to situation. The Security Council encourages States to formulate their security sector reform programmes in a holistic way that encompasses strategic planning, institutional structures, resource management, operational capacity, civilian oversight

and good governance. The Security Council emphasizes the need for a balanced realization of all aspects of security sector reform, including institutional capacity, affordability, and sustainability of its programmes. The Security Council recognizes the interlinkages between security sector reform and other important factors of stabilization and reconstruction, such as transitional justice disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration and rehabilitation of former combatants, small arms and light weapons control, as well as gender equality, children and armed conflict and human rights issues.

The Council's engagement in human rights matters, as well as issues regarding women, crime, HIV/AIDS, and with reports that it would attempt to address economic and environmental issues, were cause for grave concern for all Member States, he said. Such encroachment highlighted that the Council's working methods needed real reform -- along with increasing its membership -- so that it could become more democratic and representative of the wider Organization. The debate today fell into that "grey area", in which the Council was attempting to exercise control over matters that fell to the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. He added that, while security sector reforms had had limited success when applied by such European groups as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the suggestion that there was widespread agreement on that so called "new concept" was far from true, especially since security sector reform was linked to a number of controversial issues -- on which there was no consensus -- such as "the responsibility to protect" and human security, both of which attempted to use humanitarian imperatives to justify interference in the internal affairs of some countries.

FRANK GRUETTER (Switzerland) emphasized the need for broad-based and coherent coordination in security sector reform, saying that particular attention must be paid to the link between that reform and related areas, such as the rule of law, transitional justice, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration -- including child soldiers -- small-arms control and gender equality. Strengthening respect for human rights and social and economic development must also be taken into account. The issue of governance was an integral part of security sector reform. The Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), an international foundation initiated and co-financed by his country, had solid experience in the field of security sector reform in general, and of parliamentary oversight of the security sector, in particular. The Centre could, therefore, be a partner of choice for the United Nations.

JOHAN L. LVALD (Norway) () He said the complex realities facing modern-day crisis management operations required multidimensional responses, of which civilian aspects were increasingly regarded as an integral part. Security sector reform was an element of crucial importance, if sustainable peace and viable democracies were to be achieved. If there was a fundamental lack of trust in the institutions that should be upholding the rule of law and respect for human rights, there would hardly be any progress in a post-conflict situation. Gender awareness should be integrated into security sector reform. Mandates for peace operations should specify how the various measures would affect both women and men. Without timely security sector reform, extensive peacebuilding and appropriate reintegration of fighters, countries might fall back into violent chaos. That would destroy any hope of development.

ELBIO ROSELLI (Uruguay) () said the gender perspective needed to be taken into account in any security sector reform strategy, according to resolution 1325. In that way, one could effectively respond to threats related to gender, including violence against women, and compensate for the underrepresentation of women in the security sector. He suggested that the United Nations should achieve a common approach to security sector reform by way of consensus, and by including best practices and recognizing the link with disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. He welcomed the fact that, in the mandates for the integrated United Nations offices in Burundi and Sierra Leone, security sector reform had been included. It would be interesting to know what the results in those countries had been, so that the Peacebuilding Commission could carry out a follow-up of those policies. International cooperation was indispensable to carrying out activities in security sector reform.