

SLOVAKIA – Statement of the Permanent Representative of Slovakia, Ambassador Michal Mlynár at the Security Council Open Debate on "Silencing the Guns in Africa: cooperation between the United Nations and Regional Organizations"

Mr. President,

I wish to congratulate you on your successful presidency of the Security Council and thank you for convening this Open debate on the AU initiative on Silencing the Guns in Africa. We thank the Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo and other briefers for their contributions.

Mr. President,

While fully aligning myself with the statement of the European Union, I would like to offer a few additional remarks.

My delegation supports the African vision of an integrated, stable, peaceful and prosperous continent. It is in this context that we welcome the African Union (AU) Commission's decision to 'silence the guns by 2020, which has a great potential to contribute to peace, security and stability in Africa. In this spirit, we strongly support every opportunity for strengthening the cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations in support of African solutions to problems facing the continent. Naturally, Slovakia strongly supports every opportunity for strengthening the cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations in support of African solutions to problems facing the continent. In this context, we have also decided to co-sponsor the resolution 2457 that the Council just adopted.

Allow me to stress two points:

1) First, All states should uphold their responsibility to protect populations by taking effective measures to address the root causes of violent conflicts, including the detrimental impact of small arms and light weapons trafficking. The consequences of the devastating impact of the illicit transfer of SALW across Africa can be witnessed today in the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan and elsewhere. I would like to highlight the importance of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which contributes to improving regional security and stability, as well as the promotion of accountability, by establishing better controls for the transfer of conventional arms. Slovakia strongly encourages all member states to ratify the Treaty. - Weapons are force multipliers. If the weapons situation is not consistently dealt with, exacerbation or relapse into renewed fighting remains a paramount risk. Therefore we call on full implementation of existing international, regional and sub-regional instruments addressing the illicit trade, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons in Africa, including, the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Mr. President

In your concept note, you attributed the increased risk of relapse in post-conflict countries also to weak state institutions. This brings me to my second point.

2) I would like to highlight in this regard the important role of the security sector governance in sustaining peace and conflict prevention. In this respect, Slovakia welcomes the 2nd AU Forum on SSR convened in Addis Ababa on 22 Oct 2018, which discussed key challenges to advance this SSR agenda in Africa. We were proudly one of the partners of the forum, also in our capacity as co-chair of the UN Group of Friends of Security Sector reform.

The 2nd AU Forum on Security Sector Reform also identified challenges for the implementation of the SSR component of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the year 2020. The Forum recommended AU Commission to develop a 3-Year Strategic Plan on SSR and establish a Steering Committee on SSR in coordination with Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. United Nations, along with EU are currently focused on supporting AU Commission in advancing these activities.

Also, let me highlight the role of the women in the SSR processes and the need to fully implement the Security Council Resolution 2151 (2014), which calls for “women’s equal and effective participation and full involvement in the security sector reform process, given their vital role in the prevention and resolution of conflict and peacebuilding”. In this regard Slovakia in its capacity as co-chair of the UN GoF of SSR with South Africa, Ghana and Qatar are organizing High-Level Dialogue on Gender Parity and Security Sector Reform, which will be held on March 13, 2019. This meeting aims to generate an understanding of the importance of a gender balanced security sector on promoting peace and inclusive societies for sustainable development.

Last, but not least, I would further like to highlight the importance of UN and AU strategic partnership on SSR for the implementation of the “AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by year 2020”. As a result of the 2nd AU Forum on SSR, UN and AU partnership on SSR is currently focused on assisting the Defense and Security Division of the AU Commission to finalize a 3-year Strategic Plan on SSR.

We welcome the development of this Plan and urge all partners to support its implementation. The Plan will serve as an important vehicle to advance the African Union’s leading role in security sector reform and mobilize assistance to the implementation of the pending SSR tasks of the AU Master Roadmap by year 2020.

Thank you for your attention.