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STATEMENT

by

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**Debate of the United Nations Security Council
Maintenance of international peace and security: security sector reform**

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New York**

Mr. President,

I wish to thank you for inviting my country to participate in today's debate, which creates another useful opportunity to take stock of essential developments in the area of Security Sector Reform within the United Nations system and discuss what more needs to be done in addressing this issue in a comprehensive, coherent and coordinated way, with special focus on African experience and needs.

I would like to commend Nigeria for organizing this debate and welcome adopted Presidential Statement, which we see as a very useful contribution to the ongoing SSR work in the UN system.

Slovakia is proud that the open debate of the Security Council organized under our Presidency in February 2007 set the tone for advancing the SSR agenda, including for the milestone report of the Secretary-General issued in 2008, and for the creation of the institutional framework for SSR.

Capacity building for SSR within the United Nations system has gone a long way since 2007. A lot has been done in raising awareness about SSR, building expertise and knowledge of UN staff both in the Headquarters and in the field, advancing UN conceptual work on SSR, promoting integrated approaches, strengthening civilian capacities, and, most importantly, providing a more systematic and better targeted assistance to national authorities in the whole array of SSR-related activities.

Nevertheless, I would like to highlight the challenge which UN Member States face in preparing their personnel, whether it is police servicing in UN missions, military contingents or civilian personnel, who directly or indirectly have a role to play in supporting the reform, restructuring or transformation of justice and security institutions. There is both a guidance gap on how to transform SSR principles into practice and a capacity gap in preparing personnel for peacekeeping and peacebuilding deployments. This is a challenge that police and military contributing countries need to tackle.

Mr. President,

National ownership remains the key principle of the UN approach to SSR. It is not only a moral imperative but also pragmatic consideration because if the design and implementation of SSR policies and programmes are not led by national actors, they are unlikely to be successful. This is acknowledged across the board also by concerned donors.

Right next to national ownership there is the essential role of regional and sub-regional actors who can significantly contribute with their legitimacy, expertise and capacities to achieving sustainable progress in SSR-related work on the ground. A lot of positive results have been achieved recently in the work that the UN system has done together with its regional and sub-regional partners in areas such as developing concepts, joint training, joint assessment missions, etc. The UN has especially closely worked in this regard with the African Union and the European Union.

We strongly believe in the importance of regional and sub-regional approaches, in the related capacity building and coordination mechanisms. We equally believe in the need of promoting bottom-up and demand-driven approaches. It is in this very context that Slovakia, together with its close partner countries in the regions and with assistance of DCAF, organised three regional workshops with the aim of galvanising discussions and tangible efforts on SSR in the most relevant regions, facilitating partnerships and enhancing coordination mechanisms. The first such regional workshop, which we organised together with South Africa in Cape Town in 2007, contributed a great deal to the process of defining African Union's approaches to SSR, as well as to enhancing the AU – UN cooperation in the area of SSR. The two subsequent workshops were equally useful: for the Latin American and the Caribbean region in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 2009 and for South East Asia in Jakarta, Indonesia in 2010. In fact, we have recently approached another regional partner and are considering the possibility of organising the fourth regional workshop in another important region.

Slovakia is keen to continue contributing as an honest broker to building trust, further strengthening UN capacities for SSR, enhancing coherence and coordination within the UN system, as well as with regional and sub-regional actors, promoting positive synergies while at the same time trying to avoid duplicities, etc. This is exactly the context which led us to initiate the creation of the UN Group of Friends of SSR back in 2008. It has since served mainly as an interface between the Member States and the UN system, especially the co-chairs of the Inter-Agency Task Force, and as such has proven to be useful. As Chair of the

Group of Friends we would like to take this opportunity to invite all interested Member States, especially the recipients of assistance in the area of SSR, to use this tool as platform for sharing their lessons learned, articulating their needs and identifying best ways how to address them in a timely and efficient manner. We are ready to continue enabling such interactions and promoting enhanced cooperation in this regard.

Last but not least, I would like to highlight that recently we have been witnessing increased demand for assistance in the area of SSR, both from countries emerging from conflict and from countries undergoing democratic transitions. This puts before us new challenges and requires additional capacities. We believe it is our joint obligation to address the challenges in a comprehensive, coherent and coordinated way. I would like to invite all Member States to approach the tasks at hand in this spirit.

In the same spirit and in the context of the Community of Democracies, Slovakia, together with the Netherlands, is now looking at how we can best assist Tunisia to address the challenges this country has identified in the area of SSR.

Equally, as the current Chair of Governing Board of the Geneva based International Security Sector Advisory Team (ISSAT) we are committed to enabling timely and efficient reinforcement of the UN system capacities for SSR, both in training and in advisory work carried out in the field, especially in Africa.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to take the floor and assure you of our full cooperation with you and with other Council members in the area of SSR, which is a crucial component of the UN work in promoting peace, stability, development, rule of law and justice in the aftermath of conflict or in transition.

Thank you for your attention.