Summary of Remarks

Mr. Adedeji Ebo
Chief, Security Sector Reform Unit
Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions
United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations

At the Seminar on Inclusivity in Rebuilding States: Focusing on Inclusivity in Security Sector Reform, co-hosted by Japan, Tanzania, and Slovakia mission to the UN on April 22, 2014

Initial Presentation

Mr. Ebo's speech focused on the essential importance of inclusivity for the viability of security sector reform, with specific attention to inclusivity's relationship to legitimacy and national ownership.

Mr. Ebo noted that inclusivity is a very attractive concept which enjoys universal normative appeal. However, there is no clarity on how to operationalize this normative aspiration. Inclusivity is not a matter of governments displaying "generosity" by allowing certain groups from outside of government to be involved in the security sector, Mr. Ebo noted. In other words, it is an act of expanding the political space to include a wide range of groups in the political process, even where it may not necessarily be convenient for the government or directly advantageous to those in power. Thus, in some cases, inclusivity could essentially involve a reduction of power in the future: Mr. Ebo also indicated that the collapse of the security sector due to war or political transformation, as seen in South Africa in the 1990s, can occasionally push new governments towards greater inclusivity and voluntary reductions of power. In practice, however, inclusivity is a difficult concept to operationalize.

Mr. Ebo also drew attention to different types of inclusivity, which include a variety of elements. National level elements include a shared, clear vision of SSR held by different actors in post-conflict states. Without this shared vision, it is very difficult to implement SSR. Inclusivity also requires post-conflict states to manage an inclusive process in creating a new security sector, but in many cases, they lack sufficient capacity, which points to the need for capacity building. Mr. Ebo also commented on the importance of monitoring and evaluation of SSR, whose focus should include not only the government, but various sectors of society as well as international actors. He explained that funding for security sector reform must not come from heads of state, but instead must be properly decided by parliaments through inclusive decision-making, enabling the public to better embrace the process.

At the international level, Mr. Ebo argued, international organizations and donors must be respectful of the specific situations in post-conflict states and avoid imposing their own experiences and conceptualizations of the security sector. He stressed that UN Security Council resolutions with peace-building mandates should include SSR components which reflect the national visions of the states, without which UN mission support for national ownership is very difficult.

Mr. Ebo concluded by emphasizing that inclusivity in security sector reform is a relatively new concept to the United Nations, but that it is an area in which the UN has a comparative advantage due to its legitimacy and impartiality. However, he noted, this comparative advantage is not clearly shared by the full UN system: although funding has been available for SSR for police training and equipping the military in post-conflict states, there has been insufficient funding allocated for advancing inclusivity in SSR processes.

Key Comments During the Discussion

The subsequent discussion covered a range of issues and questions raised by members of the diplomatic community, international organizations, and the media.

Responding to questions on whether it is appropriate to include former combatants who committed war crimes or other atrocities, Mr. Ebo stated that Sierra Leone and Liberia offer examples where citizens supported reconciling with former combatants and reintegrating them into society, and occasionally in government. He pointed to a tendency for the international community to emphasize transitional justice to a greater extent than citizens in post-conflict states, who may wish to move forward rather than focus on justice against former combatants.

Mr. Ebo also underlined that inclusivity is a form of social contract. In South Africa, the state's vulnerability presented an opportunity to find a solution for the lack of trust between security institutions and citizens. The nature of SSR as an organic social contact should be emphasized when thinking about inclusivity.

Further to this point, Mr. Ebo pointed out that the disarticulation of the police and the people they should be serving, together with the non-organic nature of their relationship, are responsible for many security sector problems. This disarticulation has its origins in the colonial period and unfortunately persists today: in states where security institutions have historically been envisioned as protectors of the state *against* the people rather than as protectors *of* the people, an increase in the number of police and military can actually become a source of insecurity. The process of creating a security sector is thus a political one; it must include different political and ethnic groups so that a truly national policy and military are established which are perceived as serving all members of society.