STATEMENT BY
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ON THE THEME
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY SECTOR REFORM + GOVERNANCE REVIEWING
GERMANY’S CONTRIBUTION

AT THE
FEDERAL FOREIGN OFFICE

BERLIN, 4 MAY 2015
Your Excellency, Markus Ederer, State Minister, German Federal Foreign Minister;

Honorable, Ina Lepel, Director for Crisis Prevention and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding, German Federal Foreign office;

Distinguished participants;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is a single honor for me to be here in Berlin and to address this important event. I have no doubt that today's deliberations will greatly assist us in better understanding the challenges at hand and identifying practical and collaborative efforts in order to overcome them.

I would like to thank Foreign Minister Steinmeier and express my sincere gratitude to him, for the invitation he so kindly extended to me to attend this meeting. This is a further illustration of the close partnership between the African Union and Germany on a range of issues that are crucial for the development of our continent and the wellbeing of its people.

On behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, and on my own behalf, I would like to put on record our deep appreciation of Germany's continuing support to the Continent's Peace and Security Agenda. We truly value this exemplary partnership and look forward to its further enhancement.

In a few months, the German Government will formally hand over to the Commission the magnificent building that will house its Peace and Security Department. Germany provides support in a number of other areas, including the African Union Border...
Programme, the Continental Early Warning System and post-conflict reconstruction and development. German assistance has also been constant within the European Union. More generally, the African Union and Germany share the same commitment to multilateralism and the peaceful resolution of conflict. On many international issues, our positions converge.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The relevance of this meeting to Africa hardly needs to be emphasized. The title - security sector and governance - aptly captures the issue at hand. Indeed, at the end of the day, security sector reform is about good governance.

At the African Union, we see security sector reform as part and parcel of our overall peace and governance agenda, in particular the deepening of democracy, the respect for human rights and the building of strong and accountable institutions. Over the past few years, we have made significant progress in this respect, including through the adoption of a number of instruments such as the African Charter on Democracy, Governance and Elections.

We have outlawed unconstitutional changes of power, including coups d'Etat; we are taking concrete steps to ensure Member states compliance with their commitments under the relevant African Union instruments; we are stepping up our efforts towards the structural prevention of conflicts, as shown by the development of tools to assess Member States vulnerability to conflict and assist them elaborate appropriate mitigation strategies. The promotion of good governance, understood as transparency and accountability, is at the heart of these efforts.
We continue obviously to face several and, at times, serious challenges in these efforts. But our resolve remains unshaken. We are determined to do all we can to preserve the democratic gains and build institutions that are accountable.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

When the African countries won their independence in the 1960s, they found themselves faced with a myriad challenges that included the management of diversity, economic diversification and development, education and training to take over the running of governments. They also found security services in their infancies. This situation contributed to the outbreak of crises on the continent.

The African leaders, with the support of the larger international community, painfully secured agreements that ended conflicts in many parts of the continent. These peace agreements often involved, in addition to a cessation of hostilities, the demobilization of fighters and the integration of others into the armed and security forces and services, with a clear mission of protecting the integrity of their countries and, above all, their populations. It was the reform of the security sector that often facilitated good governance and stability that the countries concerned enjoyed years later.

In the 1990s, the continent witnessed an era of coup d’états. It then became evident that more work was needed to ensure that the security services maintained their neutrality in political disputes and that their roles was limited to serving their countries and people, under appropriate civilian oversight. It also became clear that the reform of the security sector was primarily a political endeavor. To get the reform right, you had to get the politics right!

The African Union and the Regional Economic Communities, through their interventions in many countries to resolve conflicts, have contributed to security
sector reforms, directly or indirectly. In Burundi, where the African Union deployed a peace support operation and contributed to the signing of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, many hailed the integration of the former rebels and the former army into the Burundi National Defense Forces. In Somalia, in collaboration with the Federal Government and other partners, we are working to rebuild an all-inclusive Somalia National Army (SNA) after years of conflict.

Recognizing that many African countries that have emerged from violent conflict continue to face challenges in establishing effective public institutions and dealing with the legacy of ethnically charged civil wars, the African Union added security sector reform as part of its Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Policy, through the adoption of a Framework on this issue in January 2014. The Framework emphasizes the importance of “giving priority to the (re) establishment and strengthening of the capacity of security institutions” and of “facilitating SSR”.

Since then, the AU has entered into partnerships with the Regional Economic Communities, the United Nations and the European Union to strengthen its capacity in the area of security sector reform. Indeed, the need for partnership is critical because SSR processes are often large-scale undertakings in terms of financial and human resources. In so doing, the African Union is also seeking to benefit from best practices from other partners with experience in this field.

In addition, the African Union has carried out SSR needs assessments in some member states. These include the Central African Republic, the Madagascar and Guinea-Bissau. At a more operational level, the African Union also seconds experts to Member States to assist the implementation of their SSR activities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Security sector reform is not only critical to strengthening the military and police capabilities, but is also a tool in our conflict prevention and response mechanisms. We will step up efforts to ensure that security services on the continent are all-inclusive, accountable and capable of performing their primary goal of defending the territorial integrity of member states and their people.

It is our hope that the German Government, which has supported us in many of our efforts in the area of peace and security, will stand with us as we embark on this new effort to strengthen the capacity of our security services.

I have no doubt that this meeting will be a model of informed debate on SSR and will significantly strengthen coordination and harmonization of our collective efforts. In so doing, this event will, no doubt, further our quest for lasting peace and security on the continent.

Before concluding, let me, once again, underline the high quality of our bilateral cooperation for which the new Peace and Security Building will stand as an enduring testament. I am confident that, in the years ahead, our partnership will grow stronger in both intensity and depth.

I thank you all for your attention.