VALIDATION WORKSHOP FOR THE AU SECURITY SECTOR REFORM OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE NOTES (OGNS)

9 NOVEMBER 2015
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

OPENING REMARKS

BY

DR. TAREK A. SHARIF
HEAD, DEFENSE AND SECURITY DIVISION
AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION
Distinguished Representative of the UNDPKO;
Representative of the EU;
Representative of the ASSN;
Honorable participants;
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the African Union Commission, let me start by welcoming you to Addis Ababa and to this important workshop on Security Sector Reform (SSR) Operational Guidance Notes (OGNs). This workshop is held under the AU project, “Building African Union Capacities in Security Sector Reform (SSR): A Joint United Nations/ European Union Support Action”.

At the outset, I wish to thank all the partners for their assistance in building AU capacity for SSR. I would also like to extend my thanks to all participants for your commitment and time and for making the long journey from your respective countries to come and contribute to the enrichment of the AU SSR documents.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Recognizing the fact, that many African countries that have emerged from conflict and continue to face challenges in establishing effective public institutions, to deal with the legacy of ethnically charged conflicts, the AU added SSR, as part of its Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) Policy. This was followed by the endorsement by the AU Assembly of the AU Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform in January 2013. In addition, the AU started an SSR program to assist Member States to formulate, strengthen and re-orient the policies, structures, and capacities of institutions and groups engaged in the security sector, in order to make them more effective, efficient, and responsive to democratic control, and to the security and justice needs of the people. The development of OGNs for SSR is done in line with this agenda. Also, it is important to underline that the OGNs is, a key element to the effective implementation of the policy framework in order, to assist AU Member States and RECs in the implementation of their SSR activities.
Ladies and Gentlemen

The main objective of this three days’ workshop, is to bring all the project stakeholders together in order for them to review the documents, validate and finalize them.

The expectation of the AU is that this meeting will refine all the documents and make them ready for use in the field by AU staff, RECs, Member States SSR practitioners, partners and other stakeholders.

Ladies and Gentlemen

This workshop today should, therefore, not be seen, as the end of the document development process. The documents being considered today clearly do not cover all the SSR areas, that the AU needs to address. There are still obvious gaps that remain such as public management of the security sector, the right to security sector information, democratic control of the security sector, the role of traditional and non-state actors in the security sector, and issues of corruption affecting the security sector.

Furthermore, the current OGNs will be subject to review at a later date to take into account new developments in SSR. The AU will also process the final versions of the documents for publication, printing and dissemination to stakeholders starting in 2016. Let me also emphasize the fact that the OGNs, on hand, are part of the AU support to assist Member States in their national SSR activities. Indeed, at the AU level, we see SSR, as part of the overall peace and governance agenda, in particular the deepening of democracy, the respect of human rights and the building of strong and accountable institutions.

Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to indicate that the development of these tools further demonstrates our commitment to SSR. Our presence here today, offers us this opportunity; to contribute constructively on how best the AU and partners can initiate a successful SSR.
In conclusion, and on behalf of the AU, let me thank you all once again for being here, and encourage you to take advantage of this workshop not only to finalize the OGNs under discussion, but also to share your views and experiences on the wider subject of security sector reform and the areas, which we should focus on in the medium and long term.

Thank you once again. I look forward to your valuable contribution during the next few days.

I thank you all for your kind attention.