**AFRICAN UNION**

POLICY FRAMEWORK ON

# SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

**PREAMBLE**

The Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (the Assembly),

*Guided* by the principles enshrined in the Constitutive Act of the African Union and in the Charter of the United Nations;

*Recalling* Decision of the Assembly **(Assembly/AU/Dec.177(X))** of February 2008 which "encourages the Commission to develop a comprehensive AU Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform (SSR), within the context of the Policy Framework on Post-conflict Reconstruction and Development adopted by the Executive Council in Banjul, The Gambia in June 2006";

*Determined* to maintain peace and security in Africa in accordance with our obligations under the Constitutive Act of the African Union, the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, the Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security Policy (CADSP), and the Charter of the United Nations;

*Encouraged* by the statement of the United Nations Security Council **(S/PRST/2007/3)** of 20 February 2007, that security sector reform is critical to consolidating peace, the United Nations Secretary-General's report **(A/62/659-S/2008/39)** of January 2008, which lays down the United Nations approach to security sector reform, the UN Secretary General's Report **(A/63/881-S/2009/304)** of 11 June 2009 recognizing that SSR is a priority in the immediate aftermath of conflict, and the UN Security Council statement of 16 July 2010 **(S/PRST/2010/14)**, which notes that effective SSR programmes are an important element of conflict prevention;

*Deeply concerned* by the devastation caused to lives, properties, infrastructures and institutions by armed conflicts and the various threats to human and state security on the African continent;

*Noting* the destructive effect on peace and security of natural disasters, environmental degradation, climate change and pandemics;

*Emphasizing* the obligations of Member States under international law towards eradicating all forms of violence in their territory, including international humanitarian and human rights law and the applicable international legal framework on the  responsibility to protect civilians and civilian objects at all times;

*Acknowledging* the efforts of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Member States of the Union to bring about peace, security and sustainable development in Africa;

*Recognizing* that political, social and economic development is impossible without sustainable peace and security;

*Considering* the challenges faced by the security sector in Africa in situations where there may be  weak institutional structures, lack of effective democratic control, weak democratic governance, lack of sufficient public awareness on  gender issues, lack of effective and relevant training, inadequate equipment, lack of adequate funding and other resources;

*Desirous* of establishing a continental framework for the democratic governance of a security sector that is effective, efficient and without prejudice to existing similar frameworks at national and regional levels;

*Recognizing* the peculiarities and the specific requirements of security sector reform in Africa, the need for African ownership of the continent's security sector reform processes, and the desire to situate security sector reform efforts within the African Union's shared values;

*Acknowledging* the obligation of Member States to apply the principles of gender equality and women's empowerment, including in SSR processes, as elaborated in the AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA), and particularly in light of the decision of the Executive Council of the AU, **(EX.CL/Dec. 487 (XIV))** of January 2009 which declared 2010 - 2020 as the African Women's Decade;

*Reaffirming* the provisions of the Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Policy (PCRD), which give priority to the re-establishment and strengthening of the capacity of security institutions, noting specifically, that paragraph 25 (c) of the PCRD policy calls on countries emerging from conflicts to:

i)   Pursue the transformation of the organs of State, especially those relating to security and justice;

ii)  Restore and strengthen institutions of public law and order, including the establishment of an efficient police [as well as correctional services];

iii) Establish mechanisms for the democratic governance and accountability of the security sector, as a means of restoring public confidence;

iv) Facilitate security sector reform, including civil-military relations, right-sizing and professionalisation of the security sector, as soon as demobilisation efforts are commenced; and

v) Create appropriate and effective oversight bodies for the security sector, including parliamentary committees, national ombudsperson, etc.

***Determined***, therefore, to provide political support, to strengthen institutional structures and to mobilize the necessary resources to facilitate security sector reform processes on the African continent at all levels;

***Decide*** to adopt as follows the African Union Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform.

**SECTION A:    INTRODUCTION**

**A1. Definitions**

1. **The African Union:** For the purposes of security sector reform, African Union includes the Assembly, the Peace and Security Council, the AU Commission and all other relevant organs of the African Union.

2. **African continent:** In this policy, Africa, the African continent, the continent or continental means the territory of the continent of Africa, islands States members of the African Union and all islands considered by the African Union in its resolutions to be part of Africa.

3. **Security:** as guided by, but not limited to, the definition of security given in the Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security Policy (CADSP). The CADSP gives a multi-dimensional definition of security which encompasses both the traditional state-centric notion of the survival of the state and its protection from external aggression by military means, as well as the non-military notion of human security based on political, economic, social and environmental imperatives in addition to human rights.

4. **Security Sector:** The components of the security sector vary according to each national context. However, in general terms and in an African context, a security sector comprises individuals, groups and institutions that are responsible for the provision, management and oversight of security for people and the state.  These include but are not limited to the following:

    (a) **Primary Security Institutions:** such as the armed forces, the police, gendarmerie and other law enforcement agencies, presidential guards, anti-terrorist units, border management, customs and immigration authorities, Office/Directorate of the State Department, as well as  any other services set up by a Member State;

    (b) **Specialized Intelligence and Security Institutions**: such as those that are in charge of finding and using intelligence to preserve state sovereignty, state security and to defend vital national interests. These may be involved in security activities such as counter espionage, counter terrorism and the fight against all forms of organized crime;

(c) **Public Oversight and Management Bodies:** such as the executive, the justice ministries, the legislature, national security advisory bodies, parliamentary sub-committees, anti-corruption bodies, customary authorities, the Pan African Parliament, and regional parliamentary bodies;

(d) **Justice and Rule of Law Institutions:** such as the judiciary, prisons and other correctional facilities, Office of the Attorney General, Office of the Public Prosecutor, ombudspersons, traditional and transitional justice systems, human rights commissions, tribunals and courts;

(e) **Civil Emergency Units:** such as search and rescue services, fire fighting, riot control, natural disaster management and natural resource protection units; and

(f) **Non-state Security Bodies**: such as private security companies, informal, traditional and customary authorities and others, as may be decided by each Member State.

5. **Security Sector Reform (SSR):** In this policy, SSR refers to the process by which countries formulate or 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. This policy takes note that "Security Sector Reform" is sometimes expressed as security sector governance, security sector transformation, security sector development, security sector review as well as security and justice reform.

6. **African ownership:** Of security sector reform processes includes ownership by local communities, national ownership by Member States, regional ownership by the RECs and continental ownership by the African Union.

7. **Mercenary:** As guided by, but not limited to, the definition of mercenary given in the 1977 OAU Convention for the Elimination of Mercenarism in Africa, and any relevant amendments to that convention; the 1989 UN International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries (the UN Mercenaries Convention) as well as Article 47 of the Additional Protocol 1 to the 1949 Geneva Convention.

8. **Civil Society**: In this policy, civil society refers to civil society organizations (CSOs) as defined in article 3 of the Statutes of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union (ECOSOCC).

## A2. Rationale and Scope

9. Africa is generally recognized as the theatre where the vast majority of SSR processes take place, particularly as part of post-conflict reconstruction. Yet, such SSR processes have been mostly informed by externally-generated policy frameworks and assumptions that often do not necessarily align with the realities and sources of insecurity of African peoples, states and societies.

10. In outlining this policy framework, the AU reiterates its recognition of, and commitment to, existing normative frameworks on SSR, particularly those developed by the United Nations and other multilateral actors. The AU recognizes national and regional SSR frameworks that have collectively built a rich body of knowledge and lessons learned in this important area. The AU policy framework on SSR, therefore, emanates from the recognition of the continuing gap between existing approaches to SSR and deficits in the delivery and governance of security in many AU Member States. Thus, the policy is a major step in addressing the lack of African ownership of current SSR approaches. The African Union has a unique responsibility to lend an African character to and African ownership of SSR processes in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building contexts in Africa.

11. In this regard, the AU recognizes that, together with other sectors, the security sector should be subject to regular institutional review at least once every 10 years. Moreover, SSR should be part of a broader reform effort and an essential element of the conflict prevention, peacemaking, early recovery, peace-building and sustainable development agendas.

12. The decision for the AU to engage in supporting national SSR efforts will be taken on the basis of a request from national authorities to the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) and on the PSC's recommendation to the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

**A3. Aim of AU Policy Framework on SSR**

**13.** The aim is to provide a continental policy framework on SSR that provides the AU, RECs, Member States and other stakeholders with the necessary guidelines to implement SSR programmes.

**A4. Objectives**

**14.** The specific objectives of this policy framework are to:

**(a)** Provide the policy framework for AU Member States and RECs to formulate, design, implement, monitor and evaluate Security Sector Reform processes;

**(b)** Provide a platform for SSR orientation, training and capacity-building to assist African individuals, groups and institutions to participate more effectively in SSR processes and to provide an African instrument for SSR advocacy;

**(c)** Guide the partnerships and relationships of international organizations and other partners working with the AU, RECs and Member States in SSR processes; and

**(d)** Serve as an African building block contribution to the global SSR framework of the United Nations.

**SECTION B:    CORE AFRICAN PRINCIPLES FOR SECURITY SECTOR REFORM**

15. The African Union has already developed broad principles relating to the security sector that are elaborated in a number of key instruments, including but not limited to the Constitutive Act of the African Union, the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, the Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security Policy and the Policy on Post-conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD), among others.

16. In addition, a set of global SSR norms and principles have been developed by the United Nations and are elaborated in the UN Secretary-General's report on SSR and subsequent UN documents. These principles form the overarching framework for the African Union's approach to SSR. Further to the above, the following core principles of SSR encompass those values that are particularly relevant for or unique to the African continent:

    (a) **African solidarity and African partnerships:** This policy is predicated upon the principle of African solidarity, as enshrined in the Constitutive Act of the African Union, and forms the basis of engagement in SSR for the African Union, the RECs and Member States. Recognizing the role of an increasing number of Member States in the provision of SSR support on the continent, Member States are encouraged to make use of this African support to advance African solidarity and partnership in SSR processes.

    (b) **SSR and regional integration:** This policy recognizes the linkages between an effective and democratically governed security sector and peace and security which are essential for regional integration in Africa. In particular, as part of the continental integration agenda, this policy is inspired by the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Area of Peace and Security between the African Union, Regional Economic Communities and the Coordinating Mechanisms of 2008, which makes these regional mechanisms the building blocks of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The regional cooperation in the area of peace and security will endeavor to include cooperation in security sector reform processes.

    (c) **National ownership, national responsibility and national commitment:** A Member State that undertakes security sector reform activities may do so on the basis of a national decision, and any SSR process will be based on national ownership. A core

component of national ownership will be the elaboration by a broad range of national stakeholders of a national vision for security and for security sector reform. However, national ownership also entails national responsibility and commitment. National ownership cannot be viable or realistic if the financial burden for reform is borne exclusively by external actors and partners.  In advancing national ownership, therefore, the AU encourages Member States implementing SSR to commit some national resources to the process.

(d) **National vision and parameters for external support for SSR:** External support for SSR will adhere to a nationally defined vision of security and security sector reform. Where such a vision has not yet been coherently articulated, external partners may seek to support the development of such a national vision. At the same time, national actors need to share the responsibility of ensuring that external support advances a national vision and need to be willing to (re)negotiate external assistance if it is not consistent with nationally-defined goals and objectives.

(e) **SSR will be context specific:** The current African security sectors are a result of very diverse backgrounds that have also been affected by different historical experiences. SSR processes need to be tailored to the unique histories and cultures of each national context while at the same time conforming to the framework of the rule of law, international law including international humanitarian law and internationally-recognized human rights. There will not be one-size-fits-all.

(f) **Informal and customary security providers and traditional justice actors:** In many, but not all contexts in Africa, informal, customary and traditional security providers offer critical support to the State in delivering security to the population. Thus, to ensure their conformity with legal norms, rule of law and human rights, informal and customary security providers and traditional justice actors need to be integrated into the SSR process, where appropriate. In this regard, SSR processes on the African continent may need to engage a broader range of actors than is typical in other contexts.

(g) **SSR as part of a broader democratization and reform process:** SSR is an essential but not a sufficient condition for lasting peace and security and therefore it may need to be part of a broader democratization and reform effort. SSR may need to be integrated as early as possible in peace processes and it may also form an essential element of conflict prevention, early recovery, peace-building and sustainable

development, including poverty reduction. In post-conflict situations, SSR and DDR may be intrinsically linked and may complement each other.

**(h) SSR and good governance:** SSR will adhere to basic good governance principles, including accountability and transparency, and be undertaken within the broader framework of the rule of law, non-discrimination and respect for human rights. In this regard, SSR will be part of the continuous review of security institutions.

**(i) SSR and gender:** SSR will adhere to the principles of gender equality and women's empowerment as enshrined in the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003), the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (2004), the Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security Policy (2004 ), the Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development Policy (2006), the African Union Gender Policy (2009), the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325(2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 and 1889 (2009), as well as to other relevant gender instruments of the RECs and of Member States. The entire SSR process will, therefore, include women-specific activities, gender awareness and responsive programming, and aim to bring about transformative possibilities for gender equity within the security sector.

**(j) Coordination of SSR assistance:** Coordination of SSR assistance is ultimately a national responsibility. When and where national authorities lack the capacity for coordination, the RECs, the African Union and/or the United Nations may, where appropriate, partner with national authorities to facilitate coordination of SSR assistance and to build national capacities for the Member State to eventually assume a lead coordination role.

**SECTION C:    PROHIBITIONS**

17. The African Union may not support SSR activities in any Member State if it considers that the situation therein is not conducive.

18. Without prejudice to their obligations under any regional and international legal instruments, this policy prohibits all national, regional, continental or international entities from carrying out activities in Africa, in the name of SSR, which may undermine the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence, domestic jurisdiction of a Member State, including the use of SSR to effect regime change in a Member State, or its ability to fulfill its international obligations.

19. This policy also prohibits the following:

    **(a)** the use of  children below the age of eighteen (18) years in general in armed forces and groups;

    **(b)** the use of mercenaries as agents or members of the security sector or for security sector reform either by the RECs, Member States or international partners;  and

    **(c)** any form of subversive activities on the territory of Member States.

20. The African Union deplores the use of private military companies (PMCs) in security sector reform activities in Africa either by the RECs, Member States or their international partners. Where any of the above parties engages the services of private security companies (PSCs), such parties will conform to relevant international, regional and national frameworks regulating the activities of PSCs.

21. The African Union may not support any activities in the name of SSR that have a potential to cause unnecessary militarization and/or may lead to an arms race or re-armaments that are contrary to international law.

**SECTION D:    KEY ELEMENTS OF SSR PROGRAMMING**

22. The national authority of a Member State  are encouraged to ensure that the design and implementation of security sector reform programmes are based on but not limited to the following fundamental core elements:

    **(a)** Security sector review and needs assessment;

    **(b)** National security strategies;

    **(c)** The existence of institutional, legal and security policy frameworks;

    **(d)** Comprehensive capacity building and professionalization of the institutions of the security sector;

    **(e)** Institutionalization of effective partnerships and coordination mechanisms;

    **(f)** Ensuring that democratic control and oversight mechanisms are enhanced and functional;

    **(g)** Ensuring adequate resource mobilization, funding and accountability;

    **(h)** Appropriate monitoring and evaluation; and

    **(i)** An effective communications strategy.

**D1. Security Sector Review and Needs Assessment**

23. Member States are encouraged to set up timetables for the regular review of the security sector at least once every 10 years.

24. When conducting a comprehensive security sector review process, a Member State will provide conceptual clarity, help delineate relationships and hierarchy between security sector institutions and civil authorities and help to clarify the roles and responsibilities of various security sector agencies. A security sector review process can also facilitate the determination of priorities within the security sector, appropriate sequencing and medium

to long term strategic planning for defence and national security decision making. These aspects may generally be further elaborated in a national security strategy.

25. A Member State is encouraged to carry out a needs assessment of the security sector that it wishes to reform to be able to make a decision on appropriate action in respect of each element of that security sector. The needs assessment will provide enough information to the national authority to be able to design an appropriate national SSR strategy and plan of action within a given time-frame.

26. The needs assessment  will be transparent, fully consultative and participatory, and will include input from as many stakeholders as possible including security and justice providers, the public, civil society, women's organizations, think-tanks, academic institutions involved in peace and security studies and research, non-state actors and community based organizations. It is also very important that the assessment team receive input from the rank and file of security sector practitioners and that they consider very carefully the expert opinions of local security leaders and veterans.

27. The needs assessment report will make recommendations to the national  authority with regards to the following:

   (a) Possible threats to national security, including the threats of local and international terrorism;

   (b) The ideal security and justice needs of the Member State, in terms of number of units, strength of each unit, governance structure, financial and other resources required to maintain such units;

   (c) Gender issues in all elements of the security sector;

   (d) All other related issues such as transitional justice, small arms control, Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR); and

   (e) The capacity, technical expertise, training and financial resources needed to carry out the necessary security sector reform.

**D2. National Security Strategies**

28. The national authority of a Member State implementing SSR will produce through a fully consultative and participatory process, a well defined national security strategy based on democratic principles, human security needs, respect for human rights and international humanitarian law. The national security strategy will incorporate a long term vision of security and will highlight, but not be limited to the following:

    **(a)** The possible security threats that the Member State may face and the security means to counter such threats;

    **(b)** The security posture of the Member State which will be based on principles of non-aggression, legitimate self defence and collective security in terms of the UN Charter and the AU Constitutive Act;

    **(c)** Security interests of the Member State which will complement and not contradict national development objectives;

    **(d)** Efficient and rational use of resources for the maintenance of peace and security;

    **(e)** Commitment to regional, continental and international peace and security obligations;

    **(f)** Provision for the development of strategically essential technology and cost-effective research and development capacities where possible, for the equipment and maintenance of security sector machinery that may not be satisfied through competitive international procurement; and

    **(g)** Participation of all groups including women and girls at all levels of national security activity.

**D3. Legal and Security Policy Frameworks**

29. The AU encourages Member States to ensure that security sector reform programmes are undertaken based on a sound and adequate legal and security policy framework. The framework will detail the main national interests, core values, sectoral priorities, legal basis, and role of key actors in the security sector policy making and implementation process.

30. It is important to review existing constitutional instruments and relevant security sector legislations to ensure that institutional gaps and challenges are addressed and that the basic responsibilities of each element of the security sector are well-defined. The policies and laws developed will clearly define and mandate democratic control over the security sector and the chain of command for policy implementation.

31. It is also crucial for Member States implementing security sector reform programmes to align such efforts with conflict prevention, peace processes, post conflict reconstruction, and economic reform programmes in order to ensure financial sustainability of SSR processes and the subsequent reformed security sector.

32. Except where such laws are already in existence, the AU encourages Member States to enact relevant laws for the effective implementation of the relevant provisions of this policy.

**D4. Comprehensive Capacity Building and Professionalization of the Security Sector**

33. Member States are advised to ensure the effectiveness of security sector personnel through comprehensive capacity-building programmes, including the provision of transparent, accountable and equitable recruitment mechanisms, appropriate training, equipment, and gender compliance.

34. Member States are encouraged to take advantage of existing regional and international training institutions on the African continent as a step towards standardizing security doctrines and professional development for all elements of the security sector. The development and strengthening of procurement policy and procedures for the purchase, supply and disposal of all security equipment will be clearly defined and applied.

35. Member States carrying out SSR activities will be encouraged to ensure the institutional formalization of security structures and mechanisms and the creation of conducive conditions of service.

36. Member States will  take part in regional and continental security exercises as a confidence-building measure and as a way of ensuring inter-operability in doctrine, standard operational procedures (SOPs) and equipment. In addition, partnership and collaborative arrangements will be developed between national, regional and international training institutions with a view to improving standards, capabilities and inter-operability.

**D5. Institutionalize Effective Partnerships and Coordination Arrangements**

37. Generally, post conflict security sector reform processes may go through stages, moving from a stronger influence of external actors and partners in the early stages to a stronger influence of national actors in the later stages. Eventually, security sector reform processes need to come under full "national ownership". Throughout, the relationship between external and national actors is expected to be an equal partnership of actors who have a common interest in a particular outcome and will invest resources to achieve this outcome.

38. Member States are encouraged to conduct thorough partnership analyses to examine the mission, mandate, technical approaches and obligations of potential partners in the process of establishing a comprehensive partnership strategy for the design and implementation of security sector reform. Partnership analysis will also include a clear definition of the responsibilities of the partners in the programme design phase, the timeframes for partnership engagement, and potential exit strategies.

39. A Member State is advised to assume responsibility for coordinating external support to national SSR processes. When this capacity does not immediately exist, the Member State may seek support and capacity-building assistance for coordination from the RECs, the African Union, the United Nations or other partners until the Member State has the capacity to lead.

**D6. Democratic Control and Oversight of the Security Sector**

40. The AU advises Member States to commit themselves to strengthening instruments for democratic oversight of the security sector. These oversight instruments may be country-specific whilst seeking to promote and uphold good governance principles, the rule of law, respect for the legal framework including human rights and gender equality. In this regard, the following oversight mechanisms will be established by Member States in furtherance of democratic control and oversight of the security sector:

*D6.1 Executive Control of the Security Sector*

41. Member States will encourage and support their Heads of State and Government, members of Cabinet and other coordinating officials that assist the Executive in the execution of their functions, to direct the security sector, as provided for in their respective constitutions and

other legislations, in keeping with the spirit of separation of powers among the various branches of government. In this regard, the main focus of the Executive will be to provide political and policy direction to security sector institutions. The Executive will also ensure that the security sector adhere to, and implement their mandates, roles and functions and have the necessary operational resources, in a manner that promotes human security. The Executive will be accountable for national security decision-making in keeping with national legislation, in addition to regional, continental and international legal instruments.

### D6.2 Legislative Oversight of the Security Sector

42. The AU advises Member States to  encourage and support their legislatures to oversee the work of the security sector by holding the Executive accountable for the mandates, roles and missions of the security sector. Additionally, the legislature will make and approve laws, rules and regulations of the respective security sector institutions and will establish and mandate specialised Committees to exercise oversight on behalf of the legislature and regularly report thereto.

43. In furtherance of continental integration processes, relevant regional bodies including the Pan African Parliament and Regional Parliaments where applicable, will support national legislatures in overseeing the security sector by providing common normative standards including as contained in this policy.  In this regard, the relevant regional bodies will enhance parliamentary capacity to play a watchdog role particularly with respect to regional peace support operations and related security mechanisms.

### D6.3 Judicial Control and Oversight

44. Judicial control and oversight is aimed at curtailing the use of intrusive powers of the security sector without constitutional and legislative justification. Member States are, therefore, advised to provide for national legislation to prohibit the limitation of the rights and freedoms of citizens by the security sector through the use of intrusive operational methods.

45. No member of the security sector will act in contravention of any national and international law, including international human rights and humanitarian law. Those found in violation or abuse of these laws will be held accountable.

**46.** Where a civilian is tried before military courts for military offences, such a civilian will be tried in accordance with the rules and principles of natural justice. .

### *D6.4 Independent Oversight by Designated Civil Institutions*

**47.** In keeping with the spirit of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, which among other things underscores the need for peace, security, stability and human rights based on peoples participation, inclusion, and ownership of the democratic processes, Member States are encouraged to set up appropriate independent oversight instruments such as inspectors-general of intelligence and security and ombudspersons for the security sector through national legislation. The legislation needs to empower these civil institutions to investigate complaints from the public and security service members, and to monitor compliance of the security sector with applicable national and international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law.

**48.** Member States are encouraged to provide space and empower traditional and community-based oversight in recognition of African traditional authorities in a manner consistent with this policy.

**49.** In keeping with good governance principles, Member States are encouraged to ensure that all elements of the security sector establish internal checks and balances or internal monitoring mechanisms, since effective management provides an essential building block for sound oversight. In this regard, Member States are encouraged to undertake regular reviews, and audits of said mechanisms. It is these internal monitoring mechanisms that provide guidelines and reference points for investigations, review, and oversight of security sector operations.

## D7. Financing Security Sector Reform and the Security Sector in General

### *D7.1 Financing Security Sector Reform Processes*

**50.** The responsibility for financing national SSR processes lies with Member States. National authorities may therefore coordinate with bilateral partners, the African Union, the United Nations and other stakeholders to ensure the long-term sustainability of funding for security sector reform activities.

51. Where the African Union is mandated to support a Member State's security sector reform process, the Chairperson of the AU Commission will make resources available from the Peace Fund and other sources for such engagement by the African Union.

### D7.2 Post-SSR Financing of National Security Sectors in General

52. The AU encourages Member States to continue to allocate from the state budget, adequate funding to all elements of the security sector on an annual budget basis and in a predictable manner. In this regard, Member States are encouraged to allocate sustainable funds in the budget to finance the salaries and pensions of all security sector staff, security operations, maintenance of land and equipment, production and procurement, training, research and development, food and rations, emergency situations and social services.

53. In peace time, Member States are encouraged to allocate funds to the security sector in accordance with their national security and development priorities.

54. In the case of an emergency, Parliament may provide for special budgetary arrangements.

55. In respect of regional, continental or international peacekeeping engagements, Member States will ensure transparency in reimbursement procedures in a standardized approach to remuneration of peacekeeping personnel.

56. All elements of the security sector will utilize their budget allocations in an efficient and effective manner and will abide by the budget allocated to them.

57. All elements of the security sector will submit their financial reports to the relevant national authority on a regular basis.

58. All elements of the security sector will be subject to an annual audit by the Auditor General or the equivalent public auditor or national audit institution and the results of all audits will be reported to Parliament.

59. Member States are encouraged to promote transparency, accountability and public access, through relevant oversight institutions, relevant legislations and other mechanisms, to unclassified information related to the funding of the security sector.

60. Member States are encouraged, within the framework of their national constitutions to establish and maintain continental peace and security through transparency and restraint in national military expenditures and armaments. In this regard, this policy encourages all Member States to comply with the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 62/13, which calls upon all UN Member States to report annually to the UN-Secretary General their military expenditures using the United Nations Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditure as recommended in UN General Assembly Resolution **A/Res/35/142B** of 12 December 1980. This policy encourages the AU Commission and RECs to develop their own instruments for reporting regional and continental military expenditures.

## D8. Monitoring and Evaluation

61. Member States implementing SSR are encouraged to develop and implement appropriate mechanisms and indicators for the monitoring and evaluation of SSR processes. The aim of a monitoring and evaluation exercise will be to track, assess, monitor and evaluate SSR processes on a regular basis in order to indicate progress or lack of it, gauge cost effectiveness of  processes, compliance with terms of reference, achievement of expected results and where necessary, to take corrective measures.

62. To be effective, monitoring and evaluation exercises will be continuous and will not target only the specific projects, but will be sector-wide and be results-based.

63. A Member State implementing SSR is encouraged to create capacity and tools for the monitoring and evaluation of their SSR processes. Where appropriate, a Member State may seek monitoring and evaluation assistance from the REC, the African Union, the United Nations and/or other partners and stakeholders.

64. Monitoring and evaluation processes will be carried out in a transparent and inclusive manner and reports will be made available to stakeholders as appropriate.

## D9. Effective Communications Strategy

65. A Member State implementing SSR is encouraged to establish and implement an effective communications strategy with the aim of informing stakeholders of developments in the SSR process. Such a communications strategy should take into account the citizen's right to information and the need to regulate the manner in which security information is protected in the national interest or disclosed to the public. This may call for a clear indication of the

procedures for the classification and declassification of national security information and related material.

**SECTION E:     GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN THE SECURITY SECTOR**

**66.** The African Union is committed to the principle of gender equality as expressed in the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) as well as the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA) in addition to all relevant instruments adopted by Member States and RECs. These African gender instruments are in line with United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 of 2000, 1820 of 2008, and 1888 and 1889 of 2009 which legitimize the role of women in all peace and security activities and specifically SSR. Therefore, security sector reform on the African continent should be able to address the security needs and ensure the participation of men, women, boys and girls. It follows that any SSR process should be a result of consultation between men and women from diverse social groups including women's organizations. In particular, an SSR process will aim to achieve the following:

   **(a)** Endeavour to implement gender best practices and women focused activities at all levels and in all the elements of the security sector;

   **(b)** Improve the mechanisms for the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence with the aim of ending all violence against women. This policy includes rape and other forms of sexual violence in conflict zones under the definition of war crimes, and supports  the relevant UNSC resolutions, other international, regional and national legislation that do the same;

   **(c)** Involve women at all levels of SSR processes including in leadership positions, with the aim of creating gender balance in  security sector institutions;

   **(d)** Address specific needs of women and girls formerly associated with armed forces or groups as well as wives and widows of former combatants;

   **(e)** Provide gender, international human rights and humanitarian  law training to all security personnel; and

   **(f)** Increase the recruitment, retention and advancement of women in all security sector institutions.

**SECTION F:    VULNERABLE GROUPS AND THE REHABILITATION OF EX-COMBATANTS, VETERANS REFUGEES AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPS)**

**67.** A Member State implementing SSR is encouraged to develop and implement mechanisms to address vulnerable groups including people with disabilities and for the effective rehabilitation of all ex-combatants and internally displaced persons. The exercise may include the following:

**(a)** Repatriation from combat zones;

**(b)** Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR);

**(c)** Counseling;

**(d)** Financial assistance;

**(e)** Demobilization, return, rehabilitation, resettlement, protection and assistance of children formerly associated with armed forces or groups;

**(f)** Return, rehabilitation, resettlement, protection and assistance of refugees in line with UN protocols and conventions relating to the status of refugees and the OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa; and

**(g)** Return, rehabilitation, resettlement, protection and assistance of internally displaced persons in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and applicable international and regional legal instruments under international humanitarian and human rights law, including the relevant decisions and instruments adopted by the Policy Organs of the African Union with respect to the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa. The return, rehabilitation, resettlement, protection and assistance of IDPs will be unconditional, and will not depend on whether such displacement was caused by war, social unrest, economic conditions, climate change or other natural disasters.

**SECTION G:    CONTINENTAL IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND STRUCTURES**

**G1. Role of the African Union in Continental SSR Processes**

**68.** The African Union will perform the following functions in the continental SSR strategy:

**(a)** Establish a Security Sector Reform Unit at the AU Commission under the Peace and Security Department, which will coordinate all African Union security sector reform activities and perform policy work, research, coordination, training, administrative, secretarial, and information management functions in the area of security sector reform;

**(b)** Coordinate the implementation of this policy and  compliance by Member States;

**(c)** Partner with and support the national SSR activities of Member States and offer the necessary assistance as required;

**(d)** Collaborate with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs),  the United Nations, and other international partners and stakeholders in all aspects of security sector reform and especially those aspects of SSR that affect the African continent;

**(e)** Assist in the mobilization of funding and other resources for the implementation of SSR processes in Member States as and when required to do so;

**(f)** Engage  international partners with the view to encourage them to be accountable to their agreed commitments in support of the SSR activities of Member States;

**(g)** Develop a continental roster of SSR experts and facilitate their deployment;

**(h)** Develop SSR assessment tools, guidance notes, best practices, evaluation templates, training modules and other SSR implementation tools;

**(i)** Develop a continental code of conduct for African armed forces, security institutions and AU Missions, a manual on SSR best practices in Africa, and guidance on harmonization of national security, in partnership with the UN;

**(j)** Assist in the assessment, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of SSR processes in Member States;

**(k)** Provide a continental dialogue forum for exchange of national SSR experiences;

**(l)** Conduct SSR training workshops with RECs, Member States and other relevant stakeholders; and

**(m)** Foster African solidarity in SSR.

## G2. Regional Economic Communities (RECs)

69. The RECs as the building blocks of the African Union are therefore leading stakeholders in all continental peace and security policies and strategies. The principle of local ownership in SSR is also extended to regional ownership, which means that, a Regional Economic Community has a primary stake in the SSR activities of its Member States vis-à-vis other external organizations. The regional approach is strengthened by the fact that Member States in a REC often face common security needs due to the cross border nature of some security challenges which therefore require collective regional responses. In this regard the AU will engage with the relevant RECs whenever SSR activities are envisaged in a Member State of the REC. Where both the AU and a REC have to engage in an SSR activity together, the organization that has a comparative advantage in that particular situation may take the lead. Among other SSR activities, RECs may engage in the following:

**(a)** Develop regional security sector reform and governance frameworks to assist Member States to comply with this policy;

**(b)** Designate an SSR Focal Point to coordinate SSR activities in Member States and to coordinate with the African Union and the rest of the international community;

**(c)** Provide financial support for the building of institutional capacity, integrated monitoring and evaluation systems which can be linked to early warning, regional and continental situation analyses;

**(d)** Assist in reinforcing and supporting the AU in developing SSR standards through operational guidelines and policy development;

**(e)** Engage international partners such as the United Nations in the implementation of national SSR activities of Member States; and

**(f)** Submit reports to the AU Commission on regional SSR processes on a regular basis.

## G3. Member States and National Ownership

**70.** Member States are the primary providers of peace and security for their citizens and for all entities within their borders. One of the main principles of this policy is "National Ownership" of SSR activities in any country. National ownership means that SSR will be conceived, designed, led, managed, coordinated, implemented, monitored and evaluated by national actors. National authorities will also make substantial financial, human and other resource contributions to the SSR process. To be truly national, a Member State will include as many national stakeholders as possible into the SSR process. These may include but not limited to the following:

**(a)** Representatives of various Government Departments and legislatures;

**(b)** The local security sector, as defined in paragraph 3 of this policy;

**(c)** Women's organizations;

**(d)** Political parties;

**(e)** Universities, research institutions and other think-tanks;

**(f)** Civil society and representatives of youth organizations;

**(g)** Customary and traditional organizations;

**(h)** The local business community and financial institutions;

**(i)** Labour unions and other professional groups;

**(j)** Faith based organizations, and

**(k)** The local media.

71. SSR activities in Member States will also take into consideration the activities of non-state actors, identify and address activities that may undermine the SSR processes.

72. A Member State that embarks upon an SSR process is encouraged to ensure the following:

    **(a)** Appoint a national SSR team that will coordinate the assessment, planning, funding, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the SSR process. The national SSR team will include all relevant stakeholders;

    **(b)** Designate a national SSR Focal Point;

    **(c)** Provide the necessary financial resources to carry out the SSR processes in question. Where funds are not available from national sources, Member States should seek to mobilize requisite resources;

    **(d)** Develop the necessary national policies and strategies for SSR. Articulate the national SSR vision, provide leadership and create legislation to enable SSR activities and harmonize these with national laws;

    **(e)** Provide the necessary resources, political support, and access to relevant information to facilitate security sector reform processes;

    **(f)** Guarantee the appropriate independence to the national SSR team to enable it to complete its work without hindrance; and

    **(g)** Encourage African collaboration and South-South cooperation in SSR as well as partnerships with the wider international community.

73. Member States are encouraged to be open with each other in matters of peace and security and share security information in order to build confidence among each other and enhance regional and continental transparency.

**SECTION H:    THE ROLE OF AFRICAN CIVIL SOCIETY IN SECURITY SECTOR REFORM**

74. The African Union recognizes the role of civil society in the activities of the Union as enshrined in Article 4(c) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union and in the relevant sections of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and the Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development Policy (PCRD). The role of African civil society organizations in security sector reform will include but not be limited to:

    **(a)** Promote dialogue among the different sectors of society on security issues as a confidence-building measure;

    **(b)** Actively participate in the formulation,  monitoring and evaluation of security sector policies and legislation;

    **(c)** Promote peace, security and stability in Africa;

    **(d)** Promote and defend a culture of good governance, democratic principles, participation, human rights and freedoms as well as social justice in the security sector;

    **(e)** Promote and defend gender best practices in the security sector;

    **(f)** Conduct research and provide training on security related issues;

    **(g)** Advocate and create awareness on security issues in particular on security budget analysis, and monitoring and evaluation of security policy and practice; and

    **(h)** Promote the implementation of this policy at the national, regional and continental levels.

75. The African Union encourages Civil Society Organizations to use relevant channels to continue to interact with the AU, RECs and AU Member States on matters relating to their roles as described in paragraph 74(a) to (h). Civil society will act not only as watchdogs over security related actions of national, regional and continental authorities, but civil society engagement will also be seen as a measure of public approval of security related activities including security sector reform.

76. In the spirit of the objectives and principles of the Constitutive Act of the African Union and the Statutes of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), the African Union, the RECs and Member States are encouraged to ensure the participation of Civil Society Organizations as defined by ECOSOCC, in the needs assessment, formulation, adoption, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the security sector.

**SECTION I:      RELATIONS WITH COOPERATING PARTNERS**

**I1. Relations with the United Nations**

**77.** Chapter VII of the UN Charter states that the UN Security Council has primary responsibility for international peace and security, and Chapter VIII recognizes the crucial role of partnerships between the UN and regional organizations. This arrangement, together with the already existing AU-UN 10 year capacity-building partnership, forms the basis of the partnership between the African Union and the United Nations in the area of SSR. The January 2008 Report of the UN Secretary-General on security sector reform entitled "Securing Peace and Development: the role of the United Nations in supporting security sector reform" (A/62/659.S/2008/39) and subsequent documents, set out an overarching framework for the UN's approach to SSR. This approach is based on ten basic principles, which resonate closely with the African Principles for SSR outlined in section B of this policy.

**78.** The African Union recognizes that the UN, owing to its global mandate, is the primary organization in the position to set out basic principles for international approaches to SSR that reflect the perspectives of a comprehensive range of Member States, as both recipients and donors of SSR support. The AU also acknowledges that the UN has relevant experience in supporting national authorities in SSR in diverse contexts. At the same time, the AU recognizes its own critical role as the main custodian of peace and security on the African continent. Thus, the AU's pivotal role in elaborating SSR policies and guidelines for Africa as well as planning and implementing related activities in Africa will inform and strengthen the UN's global approach to SSR. On the basis of this mutually beneficial partnership, the UN may support the AU in these and other areas:

  **(a)** Assisting the AU in developing key policy tools towards the implementation of this policy;

  **(b)** Conducting joint SSR needs assessment missions and assisting national authorities with the development of strategies on security sector reform;

  **(c)** Undertaking joint SSR advocacy initiatives for AU and RECs experts to enhance understanding and build capacities in support of SSR processes;

**(d)** Supporting the AU in human resources and other capacity areas, including deploying experts from the UN's roster of SSR experts, and/or the UN SSR Unit, to assist the AU in developing policy and tools in the area of SSR; and

**(e)** Supporting the AU with monitoring and evaluation of its SSR activities.

## I2. Relations with other Cooperating Partners

**79.** The United Nations, Member States, Regional Economic Communities and the African Union have the primary responsibility to provide security and to implement security sector reform under their different mandates. However, SSR processes may require the involvement of other international partners. The African Union recognizes that the majority of SSR processes carried out in AU Member States have been initiated, coordinated and funded by international partners. The African Union appreciates the lead taken by some international partners in assisting Member States with their SSR requirements and encourages these and other partners to continue to engage with Member States, RECs and the AU in security sector reform. In order to effectively support the implementation of this policy, upon request, international partners may:

**(a)** Continue to support AU Member States, RECs and the African Union in their SSR activities;

**(b)** Provide financial and technical support to AU Member States and RECs wherever possible;

**(c)** Provide expert opinion and SSR advice to AU Member States and RECs as may be required;

**(d)** Provide support for, and be part of joint SSR assessment missions to AU Member States together with national authorities, the AU, the RECs and the UN as required;

**(e)** Provide support for SSR monitoring and evaluation teams together with national authorities, the AU, the RECs and the UN as required;

**(f)** Support the development of tools for the assessment, monitoring and evaluation of SSR activities for the AU, RECs and for Member States;

**(g)** Support the development of national plans of action for the implementation of SSR activities in AU Member States;

**(h)** Provide equipment for the setting up of SSR offices for the AU, RECs and Member States;

**(i)** Support SSR training and other SSR information sharing activities for the AU, the RECs and for Member States;

**(j)** Support capacity-building in SSR for the AU, RECs and for Member States;

**(k)** Provide support for the implementation of gender best practices in the security sector; and

**(l)** Provide support for civil society and media engagement in SSR on the African continent.

**SECTION J:     AU COMMISSION IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS AND GUIDING TOOLS**

80. The AU Commission will publish, print and distribute this policy to all stakeholders. The Commission will establish and implement an effective information and communications strategy with the aim of informing all stakeholders of developments in the AU SSR process. This will be enhanced by the creation of an SSR information system and a continental SSR dialogue series.

81. The AU Commission will develop mechanisms, tools and instruments for the operationalization of this policy. Among others, the Commission will develop the following instruments together with funding proposals and implementation timelines for their operationalization:

   **(a)** African data base of SSR capacity and expertise;

   **(b)** Technical guidance notes for all envisaged SSR scenarios;

   **(c)** Model code of conduct for armed forces, intelligence services, the police, gendarmerie and other law enforcement agencies, correctional services, border management, customs and immigration authorities as well as other services set up by Member States and for AU peace support missions;

   **(d)** Code of conduct for SSR cooperating partners;

   **(e)** SSR orientation and training manuals for African situations;

   **(f)** SSR assessment and review templates;

   **(g)** SSR monitoring and evaluation template;

   **(h)** Manual of gender best practices in the security sector;

   **(i)** Survey of national security policies and laws; and

   **(j)** Other SSR mechanisms, tools and instruments as required.

**SECTION K:     AMENDMENTS AND REVISIONS**

**82.** The present Policy Framework may be amended or revised by the Assembly on the recommendation of the Executive Council.

**SECTION L:     ENTRY INTO FORCE**

**83.** The present Policy Framework will enter into force upon its adoption by the Assembly.

**SECTION M:     LANGUAGES**

**84.** This African Union Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform (PFSSR) is done in Arabic, English, French and Portuguese languages, all four languages being equally authentic.