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Statement by Ambassador Dalius Čekuolis,

President of the Economic and Social Council

**Open Debate of the Security Council on the Maintenance of International Peace and Security:
Role of the Security Council in Supporting Security Sector Reform**

New York, 20 February 2007

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to thank the Slovak Presidency for convening today's meeting and inviting me to this debate on the role of the Security Council in supporting security sector reform. We welcome your invitation, Mr. President, because it is once again an acknowledgement that the traditional division between "security" issues on the one hand and "development" issues on the other is both artificial and unsustainable.

Indeed, this is the perspective under which the ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on Africa have operated. Within the context of the mandate to promote an integrated approach to relief, reconstruction and development and to encourage the mobilization of resources, both Advisory Groups - on Guinea-Bissau and Burundi - have called for more attention to be paid to security sector reform as a way of addressing one of the key structural causes of conflict in many fragile countries – that is, the involvement of the security forces in political matters. The experiences of the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups have led them to conclude that the role of security forces, in particular its internal role, and the process of security sector reform are key ingredients of the post-conflict peacebuilding agenda. Without a secure environment, recovery, reconstruction and sustainable development is not possible.

This is why the Ad Hoc Groups, in their meetings in the countries concerned, have always seen the military as key interlocutors for dialogue. It is this interaction as well as their dialogue with other stakeholders

that have led them to support the call for security sector reform.¹ Indeed, the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau had lent its voice to that of the Security Council, during its joint mission to Guinea-Bissau in June 2004, in calling for urgent and immediate assistance from the international community to finance a comprehensive restructuring package for the country's armed forces² because of concerns regarding poor conditions of service, ethnic divisions in the military and the availability of small arms in the country. ECOSOC also welcomed, in its resolution 2005/2, the recommendation by the Security Council to establish a voluntary emergency fund, to be administered by UNDP, to support efforts related to the planning and implementation of military reform.

It is fair to say the Economic and Social Council considers that the lack of progress on security sector reform in post-conflict countries will continue to contribute to political instability and uncertainty and thus hamper development. Moreover, progress on poverty reduction will make the task of security sector reform easier as demobilized soldiers and ex-combatants will be more willing to give up the gun. For this reason, special attention must be given to demobilized soldiers and ex-combatants in national poverty reduction strategies and also within the context of development cooperation activities of the donor community.

As UN system develops its capacities in support of security sector reform, ECOSOC, within the context of its coordinating role in economic, social, environmental and humanitarian fields, will continue to encourage and promote a coherent and coordinated approach, based on a shared understanding of the system's comparative advantage relative to other multilateral, Government and civil society actors. The Council, in its sessions, will do its part, within its mandate, to keep supporting the efforts of the Security Council to promote security sector reform. Thank you.

¹ E/2003/8 and E/2004/11

² E/2005/8