



SDG 16 High-Level Conference
Peace, justice and inclusive societies for Sustainable Development
Monday, May 6th at the UNHQ in New York.



Statement by the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform

Your Excellencies, dear colleagues,

In the words of last year's *'Political declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development'* and noted in *'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development'* (A/RES/70/1), "Sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security; and peace and security will be at risk without sustainable development".

The goal of security sector reform, or 'SSR', is the delivery of effective and accountable security for all people and, therefore, SSR is important in the attainment of peace as well as the realization of sustainable development and the achievement of the SDGs.

In fact, since 2014, the Security Council has repeatedly "stressed" that "a professional, effective, and accountable security sector ...[is] necessary to laying the foundations for ... sustainable development" and "reaffirmed" that "representative, responsive, efficient, effective, professional, and accountable security sector[s]" are the "cornerstone of peace and sustainable development".

Dating as far back as 2011, the General Assembly's Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, also known as the C-34, has underlined that "the establishment of an effective, professional and accountable security sector is one of the critical elements for laying the foundation for ... development".

In 2018, the landmark report of the United Nations and the World Bank, entitled *"Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict"*, demonstrated that security institutions play an enabling role for sustainable development. They can create an environment wherein economic growth and development can flourish, and they foster resilience to all manner of shocks. This is why many countries have prioritized SSR in their national development strategies and plans.

While SSR contributes directly to Goal 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, specifically targets 16.3 [Promote the rule of law and ensure equal access to justice for all] 16.6 [Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels], 16.7 [Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels], and 16.A [Strengthen national institutions to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime] it is also an important enabler for all other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



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And for these reasons, further supported by real world experiences from our members, we, the Group of Friends of SSR, have also continued to stress the centrality of national ownership for security sector reform processes to sustainable development, including in different events, such as our High-Level Roundtables in 2018 and 2020. However, as the 2020 Roundtable concluded, “gaps remain in the implementation ... of Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Agenda”. This requires our collective efforts to ensure that these gaps are addressed effectively.

We, thus, underline the need for a holistic approach to addressing Goal 16. Our Group recognises the need to report on activities related to security reforms and governance in Member States, particularly those affected by violence. In this regard, we encourage Member States, where appropriate and relevant, to report on SSR in their voluntary national reviews for the implementation of Goal 16 – particularly targets 16.3, 16.6 and 16A. Such a reporting exercise may be guided by existing instruments on SSR such as UN Security Council resolutions 2151 (2014) and 2553 (2020).

Additionally, we call on the co-facilitators of the Summit of the Future to introduce language on SSR in the Pact of the Future. Ideally, the Pact of the Future will reflect the centrality of nationally owned, effective, accountable and inclusive national security sectors and governance to sustainable development, as well as to international peace and security, including by reflecting the importance of SSR in addressing the many risks and threats to security identified in the Pact.

And finally, in 2020, the High-level Panel on SSR recommended the need to “Expand the scope of the SSR debate and ensure that it benefits from the perspectives and experiences of the organization’s vast and diverse membership, including the General Assembly, the Peacebuilding Commission, and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).” We call on Member States to support this recommendation, with regular, annual and inclusive discussions on SSR within the General Assembly ECOSOC, the UN Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, beginning in 2025, with Secretariat support provided by the United Nations SSR Unit.

I thank you.