

FOREWORD

The title of this book, 'Guarding the Guardians', is derived from the famous aphorism of the Latin poet Juvenal: *quis custodiet ipsos custodies?** Africa faces numerous political, economic, developmental and social challenges, as is evidenced by the many conflicts on the continent, the unacceptable conditions of poverty, sanitation and health, as well as the low levels of human development and education. Today, at the start of the new millennium, great effort is being made to address and reverse this condition and to allow Africa and her people to find their rightful place in the sun. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is at the forefront of such efforts. It is a pledge by African leaders, based on a common vision and a firm and shared conviction that they have a pressing duty to eradicate poverty and to place their countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development, and at the same time to participate actively in the world economy and body politic. The programme is anchored on the determination of Africans to extricate themselves and the continent from the malaise of underdevelopment and exclusion in a globalising world.

The NEPAD document further argues that peace, security, democracy, good governance, human rights and sound economic management are preconditions for sustainable development. The leaders of Africa are making a pledge to work both individually and collectively to promote these principles in their countries, regions and on the continent.

One of the sectors of governance that is essential in enhancing peace and security and that equally needs to be subjected to good governance is the defence sector. This sector includes military forces, defence departments and ministries, the legislature and the executive, other national departments to the extent that they interact with defence, sub-regional, regional and international defence and security organisations, paramilitary forces and civil society organisations involved in the defence debate. To ensure positive change aligned with the democratisation of sub-Saharan Africa, it is essential that the defence sector of the region also be fundamentally transformed.

Transformation of the defence sector should address three fundamental issues. These are the establishment of a collaborative defence community, inculcation of democratic civil-military relations and ensuring efficient defence management. A collaborative defence approach and posture leads to sub-regional and regional confidence and security building, which contributes to conflict prevention and national and regional security. Democratic civil-military relations also contribute to confidence building through

* Quoted from L Nathan, *The changing of the guard: Armed forces and defence policy in a democratic South Africa*, Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria, 1994, p 60.

transparency, accountability and civil control in defence management. Good civil–military relations furthermore enhance the ability of governments to prioritise between developmental and security needs. Efficiency in defence management ensures that defence activities are aligned with policy and that defence expenditure is maintained at the absolutely essential level to ensure effective defence, therefore releasing scarce resources needed for developmental and social requirements.

To contribute towards the mission of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) to conceptualise, inform and enhance the security debate in Africa with a focus on human security, the ISS has recently launched a Defence Sector Programme (DSP). The DSP is wholly funded by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID). The object of the Programme is to strengthen democracy and good governance of the defence sector in Africa and thereby to contribute to human security and development.

In support of this goal the DSP organised and conducted a civil–military relations conference involving members of the legislatures of South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia. The conference was conducted from 8–11 July 2003 in Arusha, Tanzania and was entitled, 'Parliamentary oversight and civil–military relations: The challenges for SADC'. The conference involved 31 participants from members of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Defence in South Africa, the Parliamentary sub-committee on Defence and Security in Tanzania and the Parliamentary Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs in Zambia. Other participants were members of the East African Legislative Assembly, academics from Dar-es-Salaam University in Tanzania and the University of Zambia as well as researchers from the ISS.

The aim of the conference was to facilitate discussion and the exchange of ideas and experiences on parliamentary oversight of the military between the defence and security committees of the parliaments of the three countries. More particularly the conference sought to enhance the understanding and insight of members of parliament on the subject of parliamentary oversight over defence and civil–military relations, to enhance the capacity of parliamentarians to exercise control and oversight of the defence sector and to support the ISS objective of enhancing and informing the security debate in Africa.

During the course of the conference a number of papers were presented and critical issues regarding parliamentary oversight over defence and security agencies were discussed. During the opening, the Hon. Abdulrahman Kinana, Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly, called on the participants to develop the capacity to analyse, monitor and provide an input into the defence expenditure of their respective countries, thereby avoiding abuse and misappropriation. This would contribute to a defence sector that is more efficient and accountable.

It was generally agreed that whereas parliamentarians do play a role in domestic policy development within their respective countries, their role in the

development of collaborative security and the enhancement of sub-regional and regional organisations was still unclear. Parliamentarians should discuss this issue at the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Parliamentary Forum.

Although it is clear that parliamentarians have the responsibility to curtail the powers of the executive, including that of the president, they should also respect the separation of powers between the legislative and the executive authorities. This presents the problem to find the correct balance between oversight and 'micro management' by parliamentary committees. Parliamentary oversight includes the approval of defence policy, the approval of defence legislation, the annual approval of the defence plan, programmes and budget and the approval of the employment of the defence force. The question, however, arises as to how far oversight goes in the actual monitoring of the execution of the plans, programmes and operations as well as in oversight of expenditure. This differs between countries and should be regulated by their respective constitutions and defence legislation.

Parliamentary oversight and healthy democratic civil–military relations need not imply adversarial relations but should rather be based on mutual trust and respect, shared responsibility and a partnership in the defence and security of the country. This is greatly enhanced by education in civil–military relations within the defence establishment on the one hand, and by building an understanding of defence matters and of the peculiar characteristics of defence forces within the parliamentary committees on the other. Healthy civil–military relations are enhanced where oversight and control are balanced by the acceptance of responsibility for defence by the political masters. The South African White Paper on Defence provides a good example by spelling out the responsibilities of the South African government towards the defence force and its soldiers.

The issues related to civil–military relations and parliamentary oversight are complex and require that unique answers be found for the diverse realities of different countries and regions. In particular more research is needed to find an African model to suit African realities. Despite this, civil–military relations in the region can be greatly enhanced through interactions among parliamentarians of the different countries as well as between them, the military and broader civil society. It is the hope of the editors that this book will contribute towards that quest.

In his closing address, the Hon. Willibrod Peter Slaa, member of the SADC Parliamentary Forum, emphasised the need to broaden the security debate to include the important concept of human security, the complexity of the issues of the security debate in the region and the fact that there was not one single model on oversight that could address all situations. He stressed the need for African solutions to African realities and encouraged participants to continue with the dialogue on these issues.

The DSP staff would like to express their thanks to all who participated in the conference and who made this book possible. We acknowledge with gratitude the contributions of the Hon. Abdulrahaman Kinana, Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly who opened the conference and the Hon. Willibrod Peter Slaa, member of the SADC Parliamentary Forum, who closed the conference on behalf of the Secretary-General of the Forum. Special thanks also go to the three Chairs of the respective parliamentary committees, the Hon. Thandi Ruth Modise, Henry Mtonga and John Samuel Malecela as well as to all the contributors of the papers published in this book. Finally our thanks go to the programme donor, the DFID, without whose contribution the conference and the book would not have been possible.

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