



Security Council

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Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 8884th meeting of the Security Council, held on 20 October 2021, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in the Great Lakes region", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation (PSC) Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the Region ([S/2021/836](#)).

"The Security Council recognises the progress made in the implementation of national and regional commitments under the PSC Framework despite the challenges related to: criminal activities being perpetrated by armed groups active in the region; natural disasters, including the floods in Burundi caused by the rising waters of Lake Tanganyika, as well as the eruption of Nyiragongo volcano in eastern DRC; and, the outbreak and spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and urges for continued commitment of the signatory States towards the full implementation of their national and regional commitments under the PSC Framework, which remains essential for the achievement of lasting peace and security in the Great Lakes Region.

"The Security Council welcomes the recent positive political developments in the Great Lakes Region, particularly the diplomatic efforts reinvigorated by Presidents Félix Antoine Tshilombo Tshisekedi of the DRC, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of the Republic of Uganda, Paul Kagame of the Republic of Rwanda and Evariste Ndayishimiye of the Republic of Burundi that has led to the signing of various instruments of bilateral cooperation, as well as the efforts of President João Lourenço of the Republic of Angola in his leadership of the International Conference for the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and encourages the leaders of the region to seize the current momentum to make progress in overcoming challenges to peace and sustainable development. The Security Council further commends the efforts of the African Union, as well as the sub-regional organisations in particular the Economic Community of Central African States, East African Community, ICGLR and Southern African Development Community, towards supporting political processes and finding peaceful solutions to the conflict situations in the region. The Security Council calls on the Secretary-General to continue to support these efforts, including through increased political engagement of his Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region. It further reiterates their full support to the Special Envoy of the Secretary General in fulfilling his mandate to address the remaining challenges in implementation of the PSC Framework and to promote peace and stability in



the region, including through good offices, coordinated strategies and shared information with MONUSCO, United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and other United Nations entities.

“The Security Council stresses that the 2006 Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region and the PSC Framework for the DRC and the region are mutually reinforcing, and are crucial tools to achieve long term peace and prosperity. The Security Council emphasises that the PSC Framework demonstrates that peace, security and development are interlinked and underscores the importance of strengthening regional cooperation, including the deepening of economic integration, and welcomes the commitment of the African Union Peace and Security Council to support the full implementation of the PSC Framework, as expressed in its communique PSC/PR/COMM.1005 of 21st June, 2021.

“The Security Council underlines the importance of socio-economic development for sustaining peace in the Great Lakes Region through economic development including transnational and trans-regional infrastructure development, industrialisation, legal productive use of natural resources, poverty eradication, job creation, agricultural modernisation and promotion of entrepreneurship, and support to national initiatives which further improve good governance, anti-corruption, transparency and the economic level playing field and stressed that such initiatives will boost social and economic development throughout the region and contribute to lasting peace. In this regard, the Security Council also underscores the importance of the rule of law in support of socio-economic development. The Security Council also notes that AU PCRD highlights the need for undertaking comprehensive institution-building to enhance good economic governance through the reinforcement of fiscal and financial management institutions in support of effective revenue collection, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and anti-corruption structures to ensure accountability and transparency. The Security Council acknowledges the Great Lakes Investment and Trade Conference as a potential way to harness the existing economic opportunities to contribute to sustainable peace and stability in the region.

“The Security Council reiterates its deep concern regarding the humanitarian crisis in eastern DRC, exacerbated by widespread insecurity including the destabilising activities of foreign and domestic armed groups, including a renewed surge in attacks by the Allied Democratic Forces, and demands that all armed groups cease immediately all forms of violence. The Security Council further demands that the members of all armed groups immediately and permanently disband and lay down their arms, and calls for the restoration of state authority of the government in eastern DRC. The Security Council further underscores the importance of sustainably addressing the threats from all armed groups operating in the eastern DRC and recognises the importance of efforts of the Forces Armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) and the United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), including by conducting operations in accordance with resolution [2556 \(2020\)](#).

“The Security Council strongly condemns all armed groups that violate international humanitarian law, including attacks on the civilian population and civilian objects, peacekeepers, medical workers and humanitarian actors, gender-based violence, and recruitment and use of children, as well as other applicable international law, and perpetrate abuses of human rights, and reiterates that those responsible must be held accountable. The Security Council notes the link between justice and conflict prevention and calls upon all

countries in the Great Lakes Region to comply with their obligations under international law, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and urges them to actively pursue accountability for perpetrators of human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law, and to effectively support measures of conflict prevention by ending the culture of impunity, and welcomes efforts by national governments to reverse such trend.

“The Security Council stresses that there is no purely military solution to the threat posed by armed groups and that their elimination will require an integrated and regional approach and strong political engagement by the governments of the region, with support of MONUSCO and the Special Envoy of the Secretary General for the Great Lakes Region. The Security Council recognises Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration, Repatriation and Resettlement (DDR/RR) as an important peacebuilding tool in rehabilitating ex-combatants and underscores the importance of a community-based approach, and further recognises that the effectiveness of weapons collection and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes depends inter alia on providing sustainable solutions and opportunities, to support ex-combatants and strengthen the resilience of the communities that host them, and the ability of State institutions to foster an inclusive environment in which people feel safe and secure. The Security Council calls on the governments of the Great Lakes Region to strengthen their collaboration in the DDR/RR of ex-combatants, in line with commitments under the PSC Framework, and calls upon the Guarantors of the PSC Framework to strengthen their support of priority DDR/RR programmes for ex-combatants in the region.

“The Security Council underlines the importance of promoting an integrated, strategic, and coherent approach to peacebuilding, noting that security, development, and human rights are closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing, and in this regard, highlighting the importance of the Peacebuilding Commission in mobilising support of all relevant actors within and outside the United Nations for peacebuilding and regional cooperation initiatives in the broader context of the PSC Framework to prevent the outbreak, escalation, recurrence or continuation of conflict. The Security Council further welcomes the valuable work undertaken by the Secretary-General’s Peacebuilding Fund in supporting national, cross-border and regional peacebuilding initiatives including the implementation of priority DDR/RR programmes for ex-combatants in the region.

“The Security Council condemns the continued illicit exploitation of and trade in natural resources in eastern DRC and the region, particularly so-called “conflict minerals” like tin, tantalum, tungsten, gold, diamonds, cobalt, coltan and charcoal, as well as cocoa, timber, and wildlife, by armed groups and criminal networks supporting them, and the negative impact of armed conflict on protected natural areas, which undermines lasting peace and development for the Great Lakes Region. The Security Council recognises the linkage between the illegal exploitation and trade in natural resources and the illegal acquisition and trafficking of small arms and light weapons in fuelling and exacerbating armed conflict in the Great Lakes Region. The Security Council further recognises that insecurity resulting from the illicit transfer, destabilising accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons, as well as illicit financial flows and the illegal exploitation and trade of natural resources negatively impact conflict prevention, post-conflict peacebuilding, the consolidation of peace in countries in the Great Lakes Region emerging from

conflict and their post-conflict development, including education, health and economic opportunity.

“The Security Council recognises the important role the United Nations can play in helping the States concerned, as appropriate, upon their request and with full respect for their sovereignty over natural resources, to prevent illegal access to and trade in natural resources and to lay the basis for their legal utilisation and trade with a view to promoting sustainable development, in particular through building the capacity of governments in post-conflict situations to manage their resources lawfully, transparently and sustainably. In this regard, the Security Council encourages the continued efforts of United Nations organisations, in accordance with their mandates, and acting in close cooperation with the regional and sub-regional organisations, in supporting the resource-endowed countries to transform the entire natural resource extraction continuum from illegal exploitation into a legal productive use of natural resources in order to provide legal socio-economic opportunities with a view to contributing to conflict prevention, conflict resolution, peacebuilding and post conflict reconstruction.

“The Security Council urges the signatory states of the PSC Framework, regional organisations and the international community to coordinate their efforts to undercut the economic lifelines of armed groups that benefit from the illegal exploitation and trade in natural resources, and prevent the exploitation of women and children in the trade of these resources. The Security Council encourages the governments of the Great Lakes Region and guarantors of the PSC Framework to jointly address illegal exploitation and trade of natural resources and promote the transparent and lawful management of natural resources by improving and reinforcing the security around mining regions; seeking rapprochement between mining communities, local authorities and security actors to resolve conflicts and promote the rights of persons belonging to communities around mining regions; identifying and encouraging all stakeholders to guarantee transparent and responsible mineral sourcing supply chain due diligence; supporting the strengthening of national border control and sustainable regulatory and customs frameworks; and the adoption of government revenue targets to finance development.

“The Security Council welcomes measures taken by the governments of the region to implement the OECD due diligence guidelines including adopting the Regional Certification Mechanism of the ICGLR into their national legislation and further recognises the importance of commodity monitoring and certification schemes, such as the Kimberley Process, and the positive role of voluntary initiatives aimed at improving revenue transparency, such as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI).

“The Security Council recalls that individuals and entities may be designated by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1533 \(2004\)](#) for supporting individuals or entities, including armed groups or criminal networks, involved in destabilising activities in the DRC through the illicit exploitation or trade of natural resources, including gold or wildlife as well as wildlife products.

“The Security Council welcomes the United Nations Strategy for Peace Consolidation, Conflict Prevention and Conflict Resolution in the Great Lakes Region, presented to the Security Council by the Secretary-General, which identifies 10 priorities structured around three pillars: peace, security and justice; sustainable development and shared prosperity; and resilience to longstanding and emerging challenges. The Security Council also welcomes the

Strategy's Action Plan which, amongst immediate priorities, foresees the launching of the Contact and Coordination Group to oversee the implementation of non-military measures to complement military operations against armed groups in the Great Lakes Region as a key vehicle to enhance regional cooperation against the threat posed by armed groups. The Security Council encourages ownership and political will by the signatory states of the PSC Framework to ensure effective implementation of the Strategy and its Actions Plan.

“The Security Council urges the international community and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) to contribute technical and financial support for the implementation of the United Nations Strategy for Peace Consolidation, Conflict Prevention and Conflict Resolution in the Great Lakes Region and its Action Plan covering the period 2021-2023, as an effective platform for supporting national and regional commitments, through a cohesive and coordinated approach, to enable regional states to address the root causes of conflicts, promote regional integration and economic development, and bring about sustainable peace in the Great Lakes region. The Security Council further encourages the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region to continue to lead efforts towards the effective implementation of the Strategy and its Action Plan.

“The Security Council notes the progress made in the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in the Great Lakes region to improve women's visibility, representation, empowerment and resilience, and urges for increased efforts in promoting the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in political processes, conflict prevention, mediation, resolution, peacebuilding, post-conflict reconstruction, development and at all levels of decision-making. The Security Council further encourages the regional member States and the international community to create economic opportunities for women and strengthen their capacity in order to ensure women's full and active participation in economic life, including in cross border trading, commercial exchanges and the productive utilisation of natural resources to further women's leadership as agents of sustainable development.

“The Security Council welcomes the Khartoum High-Level workshop on natural resources held from 31st August to 2nd September, 2021, and recognises the increased cooperation between ICGLR and other partners on strengthening the implementation of the tools of the Regional Initiative against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources. The Security Council encourages the strengthening of regional coordination and partnerships among member states and stakeholders towards the productive and transparent management of natural resources and further urges the international and regional community to support in strengthening the capacity of the ICGLR to accelerate the implementation of the Regional Initiative against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources. The Security Council calls on the Secretary-General to continue to provide support to the ICGLR's Regional Initiatives against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources through the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General's good offices and engagements with countries of the region, sub-regional organisations, development partners and other relevant stakeholders to find a holistic approach aimed at strengthening transparency and formal cooperation mechanisms on natural resources across the value chain.

“The Security Council encourages the Secretary General to continue to support, in collaboration with the guarantors of the PSC Framework, the governance mechanisms of the PSC Framework for the DRC and the region, notably the Regional Oversight Mechanism as a platform to assess the progress,

challenges and shortcomings in the implementation of the Framework. The Security Council looks forward to the 10th High Level Meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism meeting scheduled to take place in Kinshasa, DRC in December 2021.

“The Security Council reiterates its full support to the Special Envoy of the Secretary General for the Great Lakes region in fulfilling his mandate to address the remaining challenges in implementation of the PSC Framework and to promote peace and stability in the region.

“The Security Council further requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide updates on the progress of the implementation of the PSC Framework, in his periodic reporting on the Great Lakes Region.

“The Security Council reaffirms its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of all States in the region and emphasises the need to respect fully the principles of non-interference, good-neighbourliness and regional cooperation.”
