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Provisional

7237th meeting

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New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Simmonds	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
<i>Members:</i>	Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia	Ms. King
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Olguín Cigarroa
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Jordan	Mr. Naber
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Nigeria	Mr. Adamu
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Oh Joon
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Rwanda	Mr. Gasana
	United States of America	Ms. Power

Agenda

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2014/450)

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The meeting was called to order at 9.40 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2014/450)

The President: I wish to warmly welcome the Ministers and other representatives present in the Security Council Chamber. Their participation is an affirmation of the importance of the subject matter under discussion.

In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Africa and Uganda to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Martin Kobler, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mrs. Mary Robinson, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region of Africa, to participate in this meeting.

I would like to recognize the presence in the Council Chamber of Mr. Said Djinnit, incoming Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region of Africa.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2014/450, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I now give the floor to Mr. Kobler.

Mr. Kobler: First of all, let me take this opportunity to congratulate the United Kingdom on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August. I would also like to express my gratitude to the United Kingdom as Council President for drawing the attention of the international community to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

It is nearly five months since I last addressed the Council (see S/PV.7137), and one year since I took up the mantle of Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Much has changed over those 12 months. Developments have taken place that seemed hard to imagine in August 2013. Those developments were achieved not only by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) or the Democratic Republic of the Congo alone. They are the result of a team effort that was led by a master stateswoman, Special Envoy Mary Robinson. Without her, truly, I could not sit before members today with a positive balance sheet. Working hand-in-glove with this special "Special Envoy" over the past year has been a professional and personal privilege. I deeply regret losing her as my partner in our joint endeavour to see lasting peace in the Great Lakes region. But I equally look forward to working with her successor, Said Djinnit, a man well-versed in the intricacies of African politics.

In August 2013, the Mouvement du 23 mars (M-23) was knocking on the gates of Goma. There were daily reports of killings, rapes and displacement, which were causing suffering among the population. The Council had just condemned the bloody attacks by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) on Congolese citizens, which forced 66,000 Congolese to flee their homes. Activities by the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo were on the rise, with reports of attacks on Rwandan territory as well.

Today, through the joint efforts of Congolese military forces and the United Nations force, the M-23 is no more. Today, the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC), at great cost to its troops, has reduced the ADF to a shadow of its former self. Today, almost 4,000 combatants from a variety of Congolese armed groups have surrendered. Today, the FDLR appears to be starting to voluntarily disarm, while almost 500,000 internally displaced persons have returned to their homes.

In August 2013, we could merely imagine an end to the M-23 conflict, let alone the agreement to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate fighters. But today, thanks to the declarations signed in Nairobi last December, that process is well under way. I applaud the efforts of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to fulfil its Nairobi commitments by enacting the amnesty law and by providing former M-23 combatants in Uganda and Rwanda an opportunity to apply for it. However, the implementation of the Nairobi declarations remains too slow. Ex-combatants and their families continue to live in camps under difficult circumstances. The Nairobi declarations clearly stipulate reintegration on an individual basis under the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) scheme. We therefore pay great attention to reports of the return of former M-23 elements across the borders outside the DDR process. I welcome and continue to encourage cooperation among the three Governments to bring this episode to a definite close.

Cooperation between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda is crucial to a sustainable peace. The clashes on 11 and 2 June near Kibumba, in which five FARDC soldiers died, highlight the dangers of unclear borders. I salute the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda for revitalizing their joint border commission, which should lay out a viable road map to delineate that contentious border, which was unfortunately put on ice with the emergence of the M-23.

There can be no doubt that the security situation has vastly improved since this time last year. However, conflict persists. The situation is still fragile and not irreversible. Early-warning mechanisms are in place. Still, when a massacre of 33 people occurs, such as in Mutarule on 3 June, we are often slow to react. It is true the National Police and army were close to the place of the massacre and failed to intervene. But MONUSCO troops were also a mere nine kilometres away, but did not leave the base. There must be accountability for inaction. I am joined today by the Force Commander, General Dos Santos Cruz. We share the same vision and personal friendship. The Force Commander and I visited Mutarule, and I publicly took responsibility and apologized to the communities. At the same time the United Nations commander of the base in Sange, who failed to act, has been relieved of his duties while an internal investigation is under way.

The incident brought to light the need for a paradigm shift in thought and action on the part of United Nations forces — from reaction to prevention, from static to mobile and from a mindset of protection-by-presence to one of protection-by-action. Both the Force Commander and I have instructed our teams, military and civilian alike, to follow one simple rule when lives are in danger: “Don’t ask, act.” I call on all troop-contributing countries to join in that robust peacekeeping approach and in this instruction to actively protect civilians.

The first priority of the Mission has been to put an end to the FDLR. Since 2002, over 11,000 FDLR combatants in the Democratic Republic of Congo were successfully disarmed, demobilized, repatriated and reintegrated into Rwandan society. The Democratic Republic of the Congo estimates that some 1,500 combatants remain in the country. That is all — 1,500 combatants and their dependents. We are now at the endgame. It is time for those 1,500 to stop the fight. It is time for those sought by justice to be put before the appropriate tribunals. It is time for those who can go back to Rwanda to do so. I do welcome Rwanda’s readiness to accept those who go through the DDR process, as it has done with thousands of ex-FDLR combatants before.

In January, I told the Council that military pressure would be necessary to lead to disarmament — it has. The FDLR declared its commitment to disarm, but let us admit that it has done so many times before. It is the declared intention of the Congolese Government for the remnants of the FDLR to be resettled outside the Democratic Republic of Congo. On 27 May, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo presented a plan for voluntary disarmament within a period of 22 days and requested MONUSCO’s logistical support. The plan envisages the regroupment of FDLR combatants in two camps, in North and South Kivu, followed by a quick relocation to a provisional camp in Kisangani — outside the Kivus — until a final solution is found. I made it the Mission’s first priority. Overnight, my team mobilized flights, trucks, food, tents, water, mattresses and blankets and prepared the camps in North and South Kivu. Since then, 186 combatants and 430 dependents have voluntarily disarmed. To date, we have provided security, together with the FARDC, as well as medical services, almost 46 special flights and more than 20 tons of food.

A joint ministerial meeting of the South African Development Community (SADC) and the International

Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) held on 2 July in Luanda extended the timeline from 22 days to six months, starting on 2 July. The FDLR interpreted that decision as a call to stall the process. In addition, the perceived absence of military pressure has thrown the process into a freezer. Since 2 July, there has been no movement to the provisional camp in Kisangani, according to the plan of the Government. It is telling that the week after the Luanda decision, the FDLR cancelled three meetings. Since then, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, SADC and MONUSCO have undertaken many missions to convince the FDLR to move forward. Their leadership largely ignored those delegations. It refuses to give the order to transfer the first groups out of the preliminary camps, preventing any further disarmament. That is a serious signal of non-cooperation. Standing still means we are moving backwards. Experience, however, has shown that only a combination of political and military pressure has led to disarmament and demobilization. I am therefore grateful for the consensus among the SADC and ICGLR members States, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, that the military option remains firmly on the table should the process continue to stall.

I am furthermore concerned about the security of those residing in the camps. The FARDC and MONUSCO do their best to provide a secure environment. However, the smaller the number of ex-combatants and their dependents in those regroupment camps and the faster they move to more secure areas, the better.

The SADC-ICGLR community calls for a three-month review in October. That must be the moment for a serious assessment of the credibility of the disarmament process. It must also be the moment to decide whether to proceed further. I applaud Minister Tshibanda N'Tungamulongo for setting up coordination meetings, bringing together the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, SADC, the ICGLR and MONUSCO. I am confident that the mini-summit in Luanda next week will bring about the necessary decisions to move the process ahead.

I am also extremely grateful for the close cooperation of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo with us, bringing about a peaceful solution. I am also very grateful for the commitment of President Kabila Kabange to resort to joint military action should peaceful means fail. Together we must agree on criteria to assess the credibility of the current disarmament

process and converge on a common course of action if it is deemed insufficient.

I suggest the following criteria: the number and quality of surrendering combatants and their weapons; the handover to international courts of those who are indicted; the restoration of Government authority over vacated areas; the immediate cessation of human rights violations in the area; the disengagement from illicit economic activities; and the cessation of new recruitment.

Meanwhile, I suggest joint military action against those FDLR factions not willing to disarm and to act against those who continue to commit human rights violations. The end of the FDLR will be a turning point that will fundamentally alter the security situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. If we get that right, the gains will be evident: peace, stability and prosperity in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo for the benefit of the population, which has suffered so much. But if we get it wrong, the conflict will drag on. We must all commit all we have to making this work.

My messages to the various groups are the following.

To the FDLR, it must seize this last opportunity and move forward with the process. All combatants, including leaders, must disarm now. All human rights violations must stop now. Those who are indicted must face justice in international courts.

To the Congolese Government, this is also their process. We are there to support them every step of the way. But we look to them to bring all those involved — regional and international partners and the FDLR alike — into agreement on the way ahead.

To the SADC and the ICGLR, I want to express my deepest appreciation and support. Success depends on their sustained engagement and support. They must do all they can to jointly pressure the FDLR to engage; the three-month review must seriously assess the credibility of the disarmament process.

To regional actors, they should use the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region and the good offices of Angolan President dos Santos as Chair of ICGLR to find sustainable compromises on the competing interests that have brought instability to the Democratic Republic of the Congo for decades.

Finally, to the international community, I ask that they open their doors to offer a final destination for ex-combatants unable or unwilling to return to Rwanda — offer a peaceful future for their children and the children of the region.

We have rapidly climbed a steep slope towards stabilization in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. I welcome the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plan, finalized in July, as a critical step in stabilizing the east. As it becomes operational, more and more combatants may trade their swords for ploughshares. But reintegration programmes for ex-combatants have a price tag. I cannot emphasize enough how important it is that donors quickly support the Government's plan.

With the expulsions of various armed groups from areas in North Kivu, islands of stability have begun to emerge from a sea of volatility. State authority is gradually returning. Nearly 1,000 national police have either returned or were deployed for the first time. And with them has come an improvement of security in some areas and a return of the displaced. I encourage the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to prioritize the return of Congolese police and civil servants to consolidate those gains.

In the markets, as travel throughout the province has become easier, goods such as clothes, shoes, books and medicines are increasingly available. Similarly, farmers are able to safely work in their fields, traders bring more goods to market, and prices of foodstuffs have fallen 20 per cent, 30 per cent and as much as 50 per cent. A mother in Kiwanja Rutshuru buying staples for her family would see her bill drop 25 per cent.

However, gains remain fragile. Splinter groups and remnant armed groups continue to harass the civilian populations and remain involved in criminal activities, including the illicit exploitation of natural resources, smuggling and illegal taxation.

At the national level, elections dominate the political discourse. Through good offices, I have aimed to reconcile differences. Only through inclusive dialogue can we hope to set the foundation for a free, fair and credible electoral process, the outcome of which will contribute to more, not less, stability.

It is important that the opposition be given space to express itself. The MONUSCO electoral incidents task

force is closely monitoring the situation, in particular with regard to the recent arrest of Member of Parliament Ewanga.

It is important that electoral decisions be based on the Congolese Constitution, which aims at creating a durable foundation for a new republic and to prevent a return to the undemocratic practices of the past. The publication in May of an electoral calendar for local elections is a good first step. I understand the Government's budgetary and legislative constraints to publishing a global calendar. But donors clearly understand that a road map through 2016, with adequate financial commitment by the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is a prerequisite for their support.

Security sector reform has gotten a bad rap in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. But behind that imposing name lies a simple aim — to make people feel safe to live their lives; to go to school, to work or to market; to raise their families without fear; and to trust that their police and military are there to protect them. The reform of the security sector is also the precondition for an exit of MONUSCO from the country. Only an efficient rapid-reaction force can replace the MONUSCO Force Intervention Brigade.

Progress is still slow. Nonetheless, I welcome the recent Government participation in the security sector reform task force and its readiness to work together to define standards and to develop a road map for moving forward. I have confidence that MONUSCO's newly reinforced security sector reform unit will build on those developments.

(spoke in French)

I have been in this post for a year. I am pleased to see some tangible progress. A sizable number of armed groups has been relegated to the history books. Others will follow them. Moreover, a growing number of Congolese women and men are able to envisage a better future. Nonetheless, those positive developments are but the beginning of the establishment of a lasting peace in the Great Lakes region.

Together, we continue to work on that each day. Allow me to add that this progress is, among other things, the result of daily commitment and unwavering determination on the part of all United Nations personnel in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I would like particularly to recognize and highlight the importance of the delicate, often invisible work

of the community liaison assistants. Those national colleagues are the organic link between MONUSCO's forces and the people they protect.

I also thank the President and my colleagues on the Security Council, whose firm, decisive support gives us heart and allows us to advance with confidence and energy towards the fulfilment of our mandate.

The President: I thank Mr. Kobler for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mrs. Robinson.

Mrs. Robinson: I am honoured to address the Council in my last appearance as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region on Africa. I must confess that I am actually suffering withdrawal pains, and I am sure that they will become even more severe over the coming weeks. I would like to echo what Martin Kobler said and express my deep appreciation for the close working relationship I have with him and his colleagues in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). I would also like to express my gratitude to the Secretary-General for the privilege of serving in this capacity, as well as to the Council members, for the resolute support extended to me during the past 18 months. I am pleased to note, as evidenced from this meeting and the related discussions this afternoon, that the Council's commitment to the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region remains unwavering.

I would also take this opportunity to thank the United Kingdom presidency for organizing this special meeting at a critical moment for peace and stability in the Great Lakes region, just before the Regional Oversight Mechanism meets in New York in September to take stock of the progress made in the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework.

Despite the tremendous human and material resources found in the Great Lakes region, decades of war and deep mistrust had caused great damage and misery at the time I assumed duty, about 18 months ago. Nevertheless, hope was not lost. The Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes Region offered a unique opportunity for comprehensive solutions at national, regional and international levels, with the inclusive and active participation of civil society, including women and youth, in order to bring durable peace with security and development to the Democratic Republic of the

Congo and the region. While efforts to implement the Framework have met with anticipated challenges, I remain encouraged by the prospects and opportunities generated by the Framework and by the significant achievements recorded so far.

Implementing the provisions of the Framework has provided a significant forum, the Technical Support Committee, comprised of principal representatives of Heads of State and Government, under my auspices together with the African Union, to deliberate and offer advice on the actualization of the regional commitments. These periodic high-level interactions, supported by my office in Nairobi, have significantly improved communication flow and mutual understanding, and have heightened the sense of urgency for collective actions, as reflected in the formulation of the regional action plan setting out priority actions, as well as a monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the implementation of the commitments of member States. Those have indeed been significant preliminary steps for a region known to have gone to war not too long ago in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Implementing the Framework in the last 18 months has resulted in a strengthening of collective governance and ownership in the region. My efforts have greatly benefited from the proven determination by the leadership in the region to take ownership and responsibility for finding solutions for peace, security and development. Evidence of that is the mini-summit of Heads of State to be convened next week by President dos Santos, as Chair of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), to address the current issues. I therefore wish to take this opportunity to thank, in particular, Presidents Eduardo dos Santos, Yoweri Museveni, Joseph Kabila, Paul Kagame, Uhuru Kenyatta, Jakaya Kikwete and Jacob Zuma for their untiring efforts to ensure the actualization of the goals of the Framework. Indeed, I thank all other Heads of State and Government of signatory countries, and the secretariats of the ICGLR and the Southern African Development Community for the emerging collaboration and synergy, which I have appreciated as vital in order to support the implementation of the Framework.

International support by key partners remains crucial, now and in the immediate future. I would like to thank my colleagues, members of the international team of envoys, the International Contact Group, the African Union Commission, the World Bank, the

Africa Development Bank, MONUSCO and the United Nations country teams in the region, to name only a few, for the useful collaboration and support provided to me in the implementation of my mandate, and for the evolving understanding of the critical need to align respective programmes and policies in the region in support of the Framework.

Equally central to the success of the Framework is the full participation of civil society, particularly women and youth, who are too often left out in critical decision making processes, despite their significant proportional stake in the affairs of the region. I have worked with civil society in the region to establish a women's platform for the Framework, not as a separate mechanism but as a reinforcing platform to support all regional and national efforts aimed at giving voice to women and facilitating their active involvement in the implementation of the Framework.

National and regional planning workshops are currently ongoing with the support of my office, MONUSCO and the United Nations country teams, for the establishment of a civil society coalition in the region, in order to ensure that Governments are held accountable for their commitments under the Framework. I am indeed gratified to see the emerging galvanization of those critical segments of society towards the achievement of the objectives set forth in the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework.

My last field assignment, a short time ago, was to attend the extraordinary summit of the ICGLR on the fight against youth unemployment in the Great Lakes region, a project supported by the trust fund I established in the Office of the Special Envoy to support the implementation of the Framework. I am encouraged by the determination of Governments in the region to address the looming danger of a fast-growing youth population with stagnant, if not dwindling, opportunities across the region.

Fast-tracking the implementation of the development pillar of the Framework remains a key priority of my efforts. When people have livelihoods and the economy grows, the clouds of violence and insecurity inevitably lift. To that end, I have worked with the current Chair of the ICGLR, President dos Santos and the ICGLR secretariat to ensure progress is achieved on the planned private sector investment conference for the Great Lakes region, endorsed by the Regional Oversight Mechanism. On 11 June, in conjunction with the United Nations Global Compact, I

convened a round table on responsible investment in the Great Lakes region in Addis Ababa, which drew over 100 participants from the private and public sectors, signatory countries, development partners and regional and international development finance institutions. In September, Angola will host a ministerial-level regional consultation that will bring together the Framework signatory countries, private sector representatives and international development partners in order to endorse an investment opportunity brief for the region and finalize discussions for the investment conference.

While some progress has been achieved thus far, much more work is required in the days ahead, and serious challenges confront the attainment of irreversible peace, as my friend and colleague Martin Kobler has already indicated. If the issues are not immediately and effectively addressed, the challenges have the potential to undo the progress achieved and ultimately undermine peace and security.

Those challenges include the slow implementation of the provisions of the Nairobi declarations that followed the conclusion of the Kampala dialogue, the humanitarian situation, including the state of human rights, persisting impunity, the ongoing plight of refugees and internally displaced persons, the restoration of State authority in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, the acceleration of security sector reform and the voluntary disarmament process of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR). In addition, the region faces political tensions and general anxiety generated by transitional politics and electoral calendars in several signatory countries in the next couple of years, along with the prevailing mistrust in the region.

I call on the parties, with the support of the ICGLR Chair, to follow-up rapidly on the recent technical visits to Uganda and Rwanda by a delegation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in order to begin the process of repatriation of eligible former members of the Mouvement du 23 mars and to implement other provisions of the Nairobi declarations. There should be a timetable and careful monitoring of the implementation of that process. I take note of the recent progress made by the National Oversight Mechanism of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in concluding benchmarks and indicators of progress on national commitments. That should be followed up by concrete actions in order to address root causes, as stipulated in the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. My

office is currently engaged at the working level with the relevant United Nations regional focal points in taking stock of the refugee and IDP situation. The findings should provide the necessary background for further engagements at summit level in the region.

Council members will recall that on 31 May I welcomed the announcement by the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda of their voluntary surrender. However, the process has yet to gain sufficient traction to show that it is credible, and Martin Kobler has again shown the very worrying lack of progress in recent weeks. If anything, the process has created a worrying dynamic in the region and beyond that must be carefully observed and handled in order to preserve the earlier consensus-building on illegal armed groups generated within the region, and to remain focused on the relevant Security Council resolutions on neutralizing the FDLR in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The positions taken have been very clear that all negative forces must be removed, and it is hoped that the forthcoming mini summit will give a clear signal in that regard.

Concerning electoral calendars in the region, I note the positive steps taken in Burundi, notably those having to do with improvements in the electoral framework and the adoption by consensus of the electoral code. However, the Government must do much more to curb politically motivated armed violence. It will be critically important to work with the authorities, not only in Burundi but in all the other countries in the region where elections are scheduled over the next few years, in order to ensure adequate political space, including individual and group freedoms, necessary for free and fair elections.

The Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework offers solutions to cycles of conflicts that were decades in the making. It would not be realistic to expect solutions to arrive overnight. We must therefore take a long-term view if we are to ensure tangible returns on the commitments made in this historic plan for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. We must continue to nurture the Framework and work with the leadership in the region for as long as it takes, in order to reap the necessary benefits for the peoples of the region, who continue to bear the consequences of conflict. I call on the Council to extend to my successor, Mr. Said Djinnit, all the support he will need to carry out his mandate as Special Envoy. He will lead a fine

team in Nairobi, and will benefit, as I did, from the support of the senior leadership at the United Nations.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Chef de Cabinet of the Office of the Secretary-General, the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Field Support and my Special Adviser, Modibo Touré, and staff members in Nairobi, as well as Martin Kobler and his team in MONUSCO, for their tireless efforts to support the implementation of my mandate. I firmly believe that through working together with the region, and with a common approach and political will, we have a framework of hope that will ensure that we reach that point in Seamus Heaney's poem when "hope and history rhyme".

The President: I thank Mrs. Robinson for her briefing.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, Minister of Defence of Angola and representative of the Chair of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region.

Mr. Lourenço (Angola) (*spoke in Portuguese; interpretation provided by the delegation*): We appreciate the invitation to participate in this meeting on the security situation in the Great Lakes region, and to discuss our shared concerns about issues relating to peace, stability and development in Africa.

This meeting is being held in a complex international context that calls for special attention and serious intervention on the part of the international community if an effective solution is to be found to conflicts that pose grave threats to international peace and security. We commend the fact that resolving conflicts in Africa is a focus both for the United Nations and for various political institutions and entities dedicated to peace, solidarity and the common good and united in their efforts to eradicate such conflicts.

Such situations are caused by negative factors that require our attention and intervention if we are to change them and be able to build a better and safer world for all. The Republic of Angola will continue to contribute actively to efforts seeking to attain and maintain stability worldwide by shouldering its international responsibilities, in particular with regard to Africa and within the regional framework in which it operates, including the Southern African Development Community, the Economic Community of Central African States, the Commission of the Gulf of Guinea

and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region.

Although there have been some problems with the stabilization process in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, when it comes to achieving peace in the Central African Republic and South Sudan we believe there can be positive developments if the international community can exert firm pressure and intervene appropriately, and if all stakeholders take the political negotiations seriously and fairly and respect all agreements made. We believe that through constructive dialogue and joint measures, we can take into account the legitimate concerns and interests of all parties involved and find just and lasting solutions. In that regard, the Republic of Angola therefore reiterates its support for the efforts being made in the aforementioned countries to achieve peace, stability and prosperity. They should receive urgent assistance, particularly technical and humanitarian, designed to contribute to effective resolution of their political and social problems and support their plans for sustainable development.

Since Angola assumed the rotating chairship of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, it has spared no effort to find durable solutions to ending war in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and finding consensus and convergence in the Central African Republic and South Sudan. However, we are concerned about the slow progress of the voluntary surrender and disarmament, with a view to repatriation, of the members of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda; the numbers of those for whom this has been achieved are still far fewer than the estimated force of about 1,500 armed men and their families.

Under the initiative of His Excellency President José Eduardo dos Santos, in his capacity as Chair of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, Angola has had the honour to host various summits of Heads of State and Government to discuss issues of peace in the central region of our continent generally and the Democratic Republic of the Congo in particular. The Republic of Angola will continue to adhere to and support the international community's initiatives and actions aimed at restoring and maintaining peace and stability in Africa and the world in general and at promoting enhanced understanding and cooperation among nations in order to build a better world for all. I am certain that this meeting dedicated to peace

and security in the Great Lakes region can contribute substantially to achieving the noble goals of peaceful coexistence, harmony, understanding, solidarity and development.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

It is a huge honour to preside over a Security Council meeting at a time when we have a unique opportunity to bring peace and stability to the lives of so many. I am grateful to the Special Representative and Special Envoy for their words to the Council this morning. I would like to pay particular tribute to Mary Robinson for her determined and dedicated pursuit of peace in the Great Lakes region. We are fortunate that we have such an excellent replacement in Mr. Said Djinnit. I also thank Martin Kobler for his tireless work to implement the mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and I endorse his words on the killings at Mutarule. The protection of civilians is central to MONUSCO's work and it is vital that United Nations peacekeepers fulfil that responsibility.

We have all often said that there currently exists a rare opportunity to break the cycle of violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. But it is worth reminding ourselves why that moment of opportunity exists.

In February 2013, in Addis Ababa, when the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region was signed, few imagined the progress we see today: progress against armed groups, where over 4,000 individuals have come forward for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; progress by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo towards implementing its commitments under the Framework, including a national dialogue to build broader engagement; and progress on preventing sexual violence in conflict, with the implementation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo national action plan led by the President's personal representative. That progress has been led by the region.

I want to be clear and to emphasize the importance I attach to the region leading the work and my gratitude for the progress that has been delivered thanks to the commitment and energy within the region.

Today, because of the progress made so far and the moment of opportunity we now have, we can imagine

a position in two years time where all armed groups, including the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), are no longer a threat and there is an end to impunity; the completion of the electoral cycle in accordance with a Constitution in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is achieved; and where MONUSCO's drawdown is a realistic proposition, with the Congolese security forces taking an ever greater responsibility for the country's security.

But to seize the opportunity with the determination and vigour it deserves and to make progress at the speed it deserves, what we need to achieve by the end of the year is clear: the full and swift implementation of the Kampala dialogue — particularly the status of repatriation of former Mouvement du 23 mars combatants and the full and swift disarmament of the FDLR. As the Secretary-General notes in his report (S/2014/450), they continue to pose a significant threat. We have mandated MONUSCO to use unilateral force to neutralize all armed groups. We should be prepared to use it if the disarmament process fails to be swift or credible, in the same way we have used it to secure progress against other armed groups that pose an equal threat to the protection of civilians. There should also be the full and swift implementation of national commitments, including the wider reforms needed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to consolidate the progress made so far.

We will have lost this opportunity if in two years time we cannot look back to further, real and tangible progress. Despite the excellent progress achieved, the report of the Secretary-General is clear that in many instances progress is too slow and extremely fragile.

We must stay strong in pursuit of peace. Three principles should underpin our work for the next two years, so that the opportunity becomes reality: first, support for the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo as it undertakes a programme of reform and implements its national commitments; secondly, support for the regional processes as they cooperate across borders; and, thirdly, support for MONUSCO as it continues to transform and become more effective at fulfilling its mandate.

The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the wider region and MONUSCO bear a huge responsibility for progress upon their shoulders as do, indeed, all members of the Council. Through the interventions that will be made during the debate, I hope they will know that they have the full support of

the Security Council. When the Council next reviews progress, I hope that it will be to hear how progress has been full and swift.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I shall now give the floor to the other members of the Security Council.

Mr. Lamek (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like, at the outset, to thank you, Sir, for your presence among us today, which bears witness to your commitment to the Great Lakes region and especially to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I also thank Mrs. Mary Robinson, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region of Africa, and Mr. Martin Kobler, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as the Ministers who have honoured the Council by participating in the meeting.

The path undertaken in just over 18 months in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is remarkable. In November 2012, Goma — the main city in the eastern part of the country — fell into the hands of a rebel group in less than 24 hours, and almost all of the Kivus was controlled by various armed groups that competed in carrying out violent, barbaric attacks against civilians.

Today, the Mouvement du 23 mars (M-23) has been defeated and a number of armed groups have surrendered their weapons. The Congolese Government, thanks to its armed forces and with the support of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) is gradually regaining control of a part of its territory that has been out of reach for too long, while displaced persons have started a timid return to their villages.

But enormous challenges remain, and together we must work towards durable progress. The commitment of the international community, notably the Council and the deployment of the largest United Nations peacekeeping operation, should help to put an end to the spiral of violence in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo in support of the Congolese Government, whose action is clearly essential.

There are both short- and long-term challenges to overcome. In the short term, as stated by the Special Representative and the Special Envoy, the fight against armed groups must continue in accordance with resolutions 2098 (2013) and 2147 (2014).

Although the M-23 has been militarily defeated it has not disappeared. The demobilization of combatants is incomplete and the prospects for the military regrouping of the M-23 remains a significant threat. It is crucial to ensure that the signatory parties to the Nairobi declarations implement the relevant provisions in that regard. On the one hand, we call upon the Democratic Republic of the Congo to boost efforts to operationalize the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme; on the other hand, we call on Uganda and Rwanda to work together to ensure a definitive end to the group's actions.

The major offensive launched by the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) with the support of MONUSCO against the Allied Democratic Forces has dealt a blow to the group. It resulted in heavy losses among the FARDC, and we salute them for their courage during the difficult combat.

We also cannot forget actions taken against various Mai-Mai groups, including the Mai-Mai Cheka and the Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain, which have also spread terror among the local population.

Finally, regarding the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), the Council's mandate has for many years been exceedingly clear. Resolution 2147 (2014) requires the immediate and permanent demobilization of the FDLR. We have taken note of the decisions of the Southern African Development Community and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region to extend the process for an additional six months, with a meeting scheduled at the end of three months. The time frame for the process, in which regard the FDLR has shown no tangible sincere commitment, seems inconsistent in view of the tensions and abuses on the part of the FDLR for more than 20 years. Only the swift disarmament of that armed group, and the other groups, will reduce tensions and restore confidence in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the region. Maximum pressure must focus on the FDLR leadership to ensure its good faith commitment. The military option must remain on the table.

In the medium- and long-term, only the implementation of the structural reforms set forth in the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region

in Addis Ababa will guarantee peace and lasting security in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Security sector reform regarding the police and the army, good governance, decentralization, judiciary and local administration are not only slogans that the international community likes to chant; they are also conditions for a long-term solution for the country's development. There is no way out of the crisis without effective capacity-building for the Democratic Republic of the Congo to guarantee the protection of its people throughout the country and continue the fight against corruption and trafficking. The good conduct of the electoral process is an essential aspect of peace and stability. This process must be conducted in accordance with constitutional rules and in the spirit of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, to which the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a signatory. In particular, a credible and legitimate road map should be drawn up as quickly as possible, including a timeframe and a specific budget for the elections.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo has a key role to play in the implementation of all of those reforms. MONUSCO is there to support and assist it, but cannot act in its stead. We reiterate our full support for Martin Kobler and his activities. We would like to pay particular tribute to his efforts, along with those of the Force Commander, to ensure that MONUSCO's protection-of-civilians mandate is implemented. Mr. Kobler's response following the Mutarule incident was commendable, and he has our full support in his dialogue with the troop-contributing countries for the implementation of the mandate with which we have entrusted him.

It is up to us all, in the Council and in the region, as well as neighbours, donors and troop-contributing countries, to provide Mr. Kobler with the means to undertake his broad-reaching mission. The commitment of the United Nations must be durable and determined and live up to the hopes raised by the successes achieved in recent months.

Finally, I, too, wish to pay tribute to Mary Robinson for her commitment and her tireless efforts over the past 18 months to build trust between the leaders of the region and to implement the Addis Ababa Framework Agreement, which we are convinced remains pivotal to the sustainable settlement of the crisis in the Great Lakes region. We wish every success in this endeavor to his successor, Mr. Said Djinnit.

Ms. King (Australia): I wish to thank you, Sir, for presiding over today's debate. Your presence here today is a clear reflection of your Government's commitment to peace and security in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I would also like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Kobler, Special Envoy Robinson and Minister Lourenço for their briefings and acknowledge Angola's crucial role as Chair of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR). I wish also to acknowledge the presence in the Chamber of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) Force Commander, General dos Santos Cruz.

The participation of ministers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region underlines the importance of reinvigorating the momentum and political will needed to definitively break the cycle of violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The conflict's staggering toll is a searing reminder of the stakes involved: over 5 million lives lost, millions displaced and horrific human rights abuses perpetrated with impunity against men, women and children.

We have seen some promising signs of progress: the defeat of the Mouvement du 23 mars (M-23); the weakening of the Allied Democratic Forces; and important strides made by the Democratic Republic of the Congo with the passage of the amnesty law, ongoing police reforms and steps to re-establish State authority in areas formerly controlled by armed groups.

But we know all too well that these gains are fragile and reversible, as Special Representative of the Secretary-General Kobler has reminded us this morning. A myriad of armed groups still operate in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Civilians continue to face horrific acts of violence, as the recent massacre in Mutarule and the instability in Katanga testify, and the pace of key reforms is far too slow.

I would like to focus on three areas where urgent progress is crucial if the elusive goal of peace, stability and development in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is to be achieved. We must seize the current window in advance of the upcoming electoral cycle.

First, with respect to the Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR), no one underestimates the destabilizing impact that the FDLR has had on the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

and the region. The Council has been clear on the imperative of ending this threat once and for all. We welcome the first steps taken towards disarmament of the FDLR, but the initial surrender of close to 200 low-ranking FDLR combatants, while positive, falls well short of our ultimate objective.

The agreement reached at the July ICGLR-Southern African Development Community ministerial meeting on a six-month period for the FDLR to voluntarily surrender and disarm could potentially deliver a solution to the FDLR issue that avoids further bloodshed. That would be welcome, given how entrenched FDLR combatants are in their local communities.

For the initiative to be effective, it is essential that there be no ambiguity and no preconditions to the disarmament. But the current signals of non-cooperation are worrying. We must closely monitor and assess the results achieved, including through the three-month midterm review in October, and be clear in our definition of success: that is, real and full disarmament, not tactical deceit by the FDLR to regroup. The criteria set out by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Kobler seem appropriate and should be applied. We must continue to apply pressure and maintain a credible military option, as we have mandated in resolution 2147 (2014).

The process can be transformative; other armed groups are watching closely. But the risk of failure, and the destabilizing precedent this could set, are also real.

Secondly, regarding the implementation of the Nairobi Declaration, we have seen the impact of concerted military action by the Congolese armed forces and the Intervention Brigade in defeating the M-23, and the subsequent surrender of some 4,000 members of armed groups. A total of 250,000 people have been able to return home in North Kivu and 500,000 in South Kivu.

We welcome the steps taken by the Democratic Republic of the Congo to implement the provisions contained in the Nairobi Declaration, including on amnesty. It is crucial that M-23 elements be repatriated from Rwanda and Uganda and that further progress be made to operationalize the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme. Effective DDR would not only prevent the re-emergence of another M-23-like rebellion, but would also provide an important incentive to other armed elements to abandon their predatory way of life.

Finally, let me touch on accelerating the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. The Framework included clear commitments from all relevant parties, for the first time, to integrate political, security and development efforts — an essential nexus to tackle the root causes of violence. Eighteen months on, there has been some progress, but key reforms are lagging, in particular regarding the Democratic Republic of the Congo security sector and the establishment of a rapid-reaction force, a vital component of MONUSCO's exit strategy.

The Framework requires political will, together with human and financial resources, to be successful. MONUSCO and its Intervention Brigade have acted as a circuit-breaker, creating the political space to pursue the necessary reforms. The ground-breaking decision by the Council to establish the Brigade was the right one, but the opportunity it creates must be seized. We thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Kobler for his reaffirmation today of the MONUSCO leadership's commitment to ensuring a robust approach by the whole Mission to the protection of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's civilians, which is, as we all know, the core of the Mission's mandate.

The true litmus test of the Framework will be the improvement it provides in the lives of civilians: the provision of basic social services by the Government, reform of State institutions, the strengthening of the rule of law and effective accountability.

Let me end by paying tribute to outgoing Special Envoy Mary Robinson for her efforts to deliver a framework of hope and for her important work to champion women's participation in all aspects of the peacebuilding process; these efforts must continue. We wish her well in her new position, and we look forward to working with Said Djinnit. His engagement with regional leaders, civil society and other stakeholders will be crucial to ensuring that the framework of hope truly delivers on its promise.

Ms. Powers (United States of America): I wish to thank Minister Simmonds of the United Kingdom for having convened this important event. I should also like to thank Angolan Defence Minister Gonçalves Lourenço; the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mr. Tshibanda N'tungamulongo; South African Defence Minister Mapisa-Nqakula; and Ugandan State Minister Okello for making the time to join us today at this critical meeting. I also thank Special Representative Martin

Kobler, Special Envoy Mary Robinson and Force Commander Dos Santos Cruz for all of their herculean efforts to ensure that the people of the Great Lakes finally once day get to live free from fear and free from want.

A year and a half ago, leaders from across the region came together to create an ambitious agreement to break the horrific and long-running cycle of violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework Agreement that they signed was predicated on the understanding that not only the region but the entire international community had a stake in forging a durable and lasting peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, an understanding reflected in the significant, unprecedented support that the accord received from the African Union, the United Nations, the World Bank and other partners.

In the time since, significant progress has been made towards that collective goal. With strong support from the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the Democratic Republic of the Congo's military defeated the Mouvement du 23 mars (M-23), which is currently being demobilized, as well as several other armed groups. MONUSCO'S Force Intervention Brigade has demonstrated that with a robust mandate, peacekeepers can effectively protect civilians from atrocities. They have performed with bravery and competence, putting their lives on the line for people from a country that is not their own.

We welcome MONUSCO's commitment to investigating any and all occasions when civilians are massacred when United Nations peacekeepers are nearby, as well as Special Representative Kobler's call today to shift from a mindset of protection by presence to one of protection by action.

However, significant obstacles continue to stand in the way of peace in the Great Lakes region, which undermines the hard-won progress of our collective effort. The greatest threat is posed by the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), whose members continue to carry out serious human rights violations and sow fear across the Democratic Republic of the Congo. For example, according to the report of the Secretary-General, in April, the FDLR abducted at least 60 civilians in the Walikale territory (S/2014/450, para. 69). Their crime was refusing to carry out forced labour. The FDLR also continued to forcibly recruit children.

Those abuses, in turn, fuel more intercommunal violence, displacement and fear, and foster a climate in which new armed groups are likely to emerge. The longer FDLR militants remain at large, the greater the risk to all that has been achieved up to now.

The FDLR leadership must be held accountable for their crimes, beginning with Sylvestre Mudakumura, who was charged by the International Criminal Court on nine counts of war crimes, including murder, mutilation, torture and rape. He should be immediately handed over.

We have heard here today an alarming report from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. The FDLR has interpreted the recent announcement of a six-month timeline as a call to stall the process. As Special Representative Kobler has put it, standing still means we are moving backwards. We cannot move backwards. Spoilers will re-enter the game. Yet we hear that the FDLR is cancelling meetings and ignoring international delegations. Any demobilization process must lay out specific time-bound benchmarks.

In the 20 years since the genocide in Rwanda, the FDLR has made many promises to disarm. Results are all that matter, and military pressure is needed, we have found, for results to be obtained. We have seen that with the M-23, we have seen it with the Allied Democratic Forces, and we will need to see it applied against any and all FDLR holdouts.

The six-month timeline should not be treated as a grace period during which military pressure on the FDLR is suspended. Given the FDLR's track record of committing atrocities at the same time that it claims to be demobilizing, that would put even more innocent civilians at risk and undercut broader efforts to establish peace and stability. Therefore, even as the demobilization process is under way, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and MONUSCO must continue to apply robust and persistent military pressure on the FDLR, specifically against those parts of the FDLR that have refused to engage in a process of demobilization.

Another obstacle is posed by members of the M-23 who remain in Rwanda and Uganda. Members eligible for amnesty should be promptly repatriated, while those who are not must be held accountable for their crimes. We call on the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with cooperation from Uganda and Rwanda, to finalize implementation of the process.

Beyond the urgent objective of ending the violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, countries in the region can also advance peace, stability and prosperity by continuing to shore up democracy and good governance. In the next three years, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi and Rwanda will all hold elections. While we all know that elections alone do not make democracy, concrete steps may be taken today to help lay the foundation for free, fair and participatory processes in accordance with international standards. To that end, it is critically important that electoral calendars be determined promptly and that opposition parties be guaranteed space for equal participation.

It is also crucial that countries across the region continue to shore up what President Obama called the ingredients of progress — the rule of law, open Government, accountable and transparent institutions, strong civil societies and respect for the universal human rights of all people. As he made the case to nearly 50 Heads of State from Africa this week in Washington, D.C., while hosting the Africa Leaders summit, those ingredients promote not only free societies but also vibrant economies.

A year and a half ago, the commitments contained in the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework Agreement were just that — commitments, words on paper, aspirations. That, today, so much progress has been made towards making them real is a result of unprecedented regional leadership and cooperation, robust peacekeeping and a two-track approach that couples demobilization with significant military pressure. That formula has worked so far, and if it is applied to the FDLR and the remnants of other armed groups, the end of one of the longest and deadliest conflicts in the work is within reach. We must not stop yet.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China thanks Special Representative Kobler, Special Envoy Robinson and Angolan Minister of Defence Gonçalves Lourenço for their briefings. We welcome the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans of South Africa and the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Uganda at today's meeting.

Since the beginning of the year, the situation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has seen continuous improvement. The Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic

Republic of the Congo and the Region has gradually been implemented. The international community, including the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations such as the African Union and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, has made great efforts to that end, which China greatly appreciates.

The Great Lakes region is at the centre of the African continent. For historical and ethnic reasons, countries in the region have frequent interactions. Their destinies are inextricably interwoven. Right now, the region has a good opportunity to put an end to its long-term turmoil. The international community should coordinate its efforts on three fronts so as to push for the realization of lasting peace, stability and development in the region.

First, with respect to common security, the international community should advocate in favour of the concept of common security, comprehensiveness, cooperation and sustainable development, and respect and guarantee every country's security. In the Great Lakes region, the international community should encourage countries concerned to resolve their differences and disputes through discussion and consultations and increase mutual trust, resolve divergences and promote security through dialogue.

Secondly, in the area of common development, the Great Lakes region is endowed with rich resources and an enormous potential for development. The international community should concretely help countries in the region realize development and address the root causes of conflict, such as poverty. While pursuing their own development, countries in the region should also actively strive to achieve development for all so that the fruits of development can bring more and greater benefits to the people of every country.

Thirdly, with respect to win-win cooperation, working together will make countries stronger, while isolation will make them weak. Countries should abide by the basic policy of win-win cooperation in handling their international affairs. We hope that members from the region will establish a new concept of win-win in bilateral, multilateral and common endeavours and through regional cooperation platforms, such as the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, and jointly promote regional peace, security and development.

China attaches great importance to its ties with Africa. I firmly support Africa in resolving African issues in an African way, while we implement the China-Africa Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Security initiative in an in-depth manner and further increase our support for the creation of a collective security mechanism in Africa. In the meantime, we will continue our cooperation with the rest of the international community so as to jointly promote peace, stability, prosperity and development in Africa.

Mr. Cherif (Chad) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to warmly welcome you, Under Secretary Simmonds, and congratulate you and your delegation on the United Kingdom's presidency of the Security Council this month. I would also like to welcome the other ministers present here today and the Special Representative and Special Envoy of the Secretary-General. I thank His Excellency Mr. Gonçalves Lourenço, Minister of Defence of Angola; Mr. Martin Kobler, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and Mrs. Mary Robinson, former Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to the Great Lakes Region, for their statements.

Chad welcomes the consensus achieved by Congolese political leaders that enabled the Government to implement certain commitments it had undertaken vis-à-vis the international community, namely, the establishment of an inclusive national political dialogue, the establishment of the Independent National Electoral Commission, the publication of a partial election calendar and the application of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process.

We would also like to congratulate the Government for the efforts it has made to implement the decentralization policy requested by the United Nations. The Administration now has a presence throughout the eastern provinces of the country, which had long been occupied by armed groups. The Administration's presence in the eastern provinces is not only tangible proof of the effective restoration of State authority in that part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but has also brought about a climate of peace and trust with positive results, in particular the voluntary and gradual return of refugees and displaced persons in accordance with international humanitarian law and international refugee law. Its presence also serves to guarantee the

protection of civilians, the fight against sexual violence and the strengthening of infrastructure development, agricultural activities and rural access to electricity to promote microindustry, microfinance, professional training and regional integration.

However, we condemn the delays that can be seen in terms of security-sector reform, even if significant progress has been made in training and providing equipment to the police. In that regard, we encourage the Government to pursue the processes of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security-sector reform in order to ensure sustainable peace and security in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We welcome the cooperation between the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the Government that enabled the weakening and elimination of several armed groups, namely, the Mouvement du 23 mars (M-23), the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and the Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain (APCLS).

Furthermore, we are concerned by the activities of certain armed elements, who continue to foster a climate of insecurity in the eastern part of the country and in Katanga. The threats against the headquarters of the United Nations country team and MONUSCO in North Kivu are a perfect example of that.

Chad welcomes the initiative by the Congolese Government to uphold human dignity and justice in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in order to fight effectively against impunity. In that vein, three laws that would create specialized mixed chambers to adjudicate cases relating to crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes are currently being examined by the National Assembly. Dozens of court registrars and judicial clerks have also been deployed in the military and peace tribunals.

Chad is pleased by the progress made by MONUSCO in implementing its mandate and with respect to its own reconfiguration and the handover of its tasks to the United Nations country team. We welcome the contribution made by MONUSCO to the release of 21 children, including four girls, from armed groups and their return to their respective families. Chad urges the United Nations, the African Union, the countries of the Great Lakes region and other partners of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to support the

Congolese Government in completing the process of normalization and peacebuilding in that country.

To conclude, allow me to pay well-deserved tribute to Mrs. Mary Robinson for the excellent work she has carried out during her mission and to wish every success to her successor, Mr. Said Djinnit.

Mr. Naber (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): We thank you, Sir, for having convened this debate today and congratulate you on your presidency of the Security Council for this month. Allow me to begin by thanking His Excellency the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Martin Kobler; the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, Mrs. Mary Robinson; and His Excellency the Minister of Defence of Angola and representative of the Chair of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, Mr. João Gonçalves Lourenço, for their very valuable briefings.

My delegation has taken due note of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2014/450), which describes the most recent developments concerning the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). My delegation would like to pay tribute to MONUSCO's achievements in ensuring stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including the overall improvement of the security situation as compared to last year, in particular in terms of the defeat of the Mouvement du 23 mars.

At the same time, we would like to express our concern regarding the threat that armed groups continue to pose to civilians, in particular in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Indeed, the Allied Democratic Forces continue to be a threat in North Kivu through their targeting of United Nations staff and facilities. That is in addition to the threat posed by the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) and the tenuous security situation in southern and central Katanga.

Here, we welcome the new configuration of MONUSCO, which has helped stem the threat to civilians through coordination with humanitarian agencies and the promotion of prevention and early-warning mechanisms.

Furthermore, the military situation has improved overall with respect to the Congolese armed forces.

We also welcome efforts to support reconciliation. We should support MONUSCO in its disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts, in particular with respect to the FDLR.

As there have been reports of certain Government officials being involved in acts of violence and large-scale violations, we call upon MONUSCO to undertake investigations regarding those allegations and to continue its efforts to promote the protection of civilians and facilitate dialogue while focusing on prevention through military and civilian cooperation and the strengthening of efforts to combat impunity, so that perpetrators of human rights violations are held to account.

The Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region continues to play a key role in supporting the peace and stability process of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in particular and of the region in general. In that regard, we pay tribute to Mrs. Mary Robinson's efforts to build confidence and to promote cooperation among the States of the region, as well as to strengthen peace. In that context, my delegation calls for the increased effectiveness of the revised International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy.

Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea): Let me begin by expressing my sincere appreciation to you, Sir, and the presidency of the United Kingdom for having convened this important debate today. We especially welcome the presence of Minister for Africa Mark Simmonds. We are also grateful for the briefings by Special Representative Martin Kobler, Special Envoy Mary Robinson and Minister of Defence Gonçalves Lourenço in Angola's capacity as Chair of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR). We also appreciate the presence of high-level ministers from Africa, which is testimony to the importance of regional cooperation.

Emerging from a recurring cycle of conflict and violence, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has made meaningful progress in a relatively short period of time. Although there are still a number of daunting challenges ahead, we believe that the positive steps taken by the Democratic Republic of the Congo, along with the active engagement of international and regional actors, provide a new window of opportunity for future progress. To ensure that such momentum continues, it is essential to address the threats posed by armed groups in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Even after the defeat of the Mouvement du

23 mars, the increasing threats posed by other armed groups, particularly the Allied Democratic Forces and the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), continue to be an obstacle to peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to the stability of the Great Lakes region as a whole.

In the light of that, we support the ongoing successful military operations by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo. The recent surrender of FDLR combatants is certainly a welcome development that should lead to the complete disarmament of the entire FDLR, including its leadership. We also share the Secretary-General's view that the military option must remain open should the voluntary process prove unsuccessful within the envisaged time frame.

However, none of the military actions will be sustainable if they are not accompanied by concerted political efforts. Improving governance and restoring State authority in the areas retaken from the armed groups are of vital importance. As the Democratic Republic of the Congo moves towards elections, scheduled for 2015 and 2016, we support the Congolese authorities in leading an inclusive and transparent electoral process and expect MONUSCO's good offices to play an important role in that regard.

The Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region is path towards the region's brighter future and gives us hope for durable peace and stability. As we now enter the second year of the Framework, it is essential to accelerate dialogue and to build trust among the neighbouring States, thereby ending the cycles of conflict in the region. In that regard, it is noteworthy that regional dialogue, led by Angola's chairmanship of the ICGLR, provides a unique opportunity to resolve regional conflict through the instruments of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework.

Finally, we would like to thank Special Envoy Mary Robinson for her leadership and dedication to peace and stability in the Great Lakes region. We wish her all the best in her new undertakings. We also welcome the appointment of Mr. Said Djinnit as the new Special Envoy of the Secretary-General and look forward to his contribution to the peace and long-term stability of the region.

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): Allow me to begin by thanking Special Representative of the Secretary-General Martin Kobler, Special Envoy Mary Robinson, Minister João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço and Force Commander Dos Santos Cruz for all their dedicated work aimed at advancing peace, stability and security in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the region.

It has been heartening to listen to the briefings earlier this morning. The recent developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo offer a window of opportunity and a sense of a different future, from improving economic growth and recovering markets to progress in tackling armed groups, including the defeat of the Mouvement du 23 mars (M-23) and actions against the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). It is of paramount importance that the Democratic Republic of the Congo, together with regional and international partners, continue its efforts to tackle the multiple challenges in a determined manner and that the momentum of implementing the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region be maintained. Continued close cooperation among the countries of the Great Lakes region and an increased sense of national and regional ownership are key to sustaining progress.

We commend the efforts undertaken by regional organizations, in particular the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union. Such efforts remain key, as the country is entering an electoral cycle, leading up to the general elections of 2016. It is essential to ensure that the electoral processes are peaceful, transparent and fully inclusive with a clear calendar and in accordance with the relevant constitutional provisions. We recognize the role of the good offices of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in the preparation of those elections.

Even as we welcome the encouraging signs of progress in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we must bear in mind that the country continues to face significant challenges. Its security situation continues to be affected by the operation of some 40 armed groups, especially in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with grave consequences for local populations, including massive displacements. While the overall number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) has decreased, we remain concerned

about the man-made humanitarian crisis in Katanga, where the number of IDPs has seen an alarming increase. We need to ensure that protection efforts and humanitarian aid reach those in need in that part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo as well.

We commend the efforts that led to the defeat of M-23 and the important actions undertaken jointly by MONUSCO and the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) over recent months, including against the Allied Democratic Forces — National Army for the Liberation of Uganda. Those advances were achieved at a human cost to the FARDC itself and offer a window of opportunity for extending and strengthening State authority in the areas freed from armed groups.

As other speakers have said, the unconditional and voluntary disarmament of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) remains key. It must be credible and time-bound, carried out within the shortest possible time frame, involving the FDLR leadership, and include the formal handover of all vacated territories. We stress the importance of the continued involvement of the countries of the Great Lakes region and SADC in those processes. As noted by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and others, should the voluntary process of FDLR disarmament prove unsuccessful, military operations against it remain an option.

My delegation stresses the importance of accelerating the implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, as well as security sector reform. The technical committee for army reform, established in April this year, should draw up a work plan and proceed with its implementation without any delay. Broader reforms aimed at strengthening public finance management, consolidating State structure, a presence across the country, respect for the rule of law, justice and accountability are required in order to anchor the fragile progress achieved. My delegation notes the concerns expressed in Secretary-General's report (S/2014/450) with regard to the slow implementation of the 100 priority recommendations.

Long-term stability inevitably hinges on addressing the root causes of the conflict. The ownership and management of land and natural resources are often at the core of conflict. Transparency and accountability for the extraction and management of natural resources must be ensured. Combating illegal logging, the illegal extraction of natural resources, poaching and the illicit

ivory trade and disrupting the chains of illegal trade in such resources must be tackled with resolve and determination. We welcome the actions undertaken by the Democratic Republic of the Congo to increase the transparency of the supply chains of natural resources, as well as MONUSCO's assistance to that end. We also welcome the fact that the Democratic Republic of the Congo is now a full member of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.

Safeguarding peace and security requires addressing the issues of justice and accountability. The people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo have suffered badly and continue to suffer from persistent human rights violations, including abductions, killings, expulsions, child recruitment, sexual violence and rape. MONUSCO's determination to enhance the protection of civilians through a more mobile, flexible and robust approach and the Mission's eastward reconfiguration have already yielded results and remain key for ensuring the effective protection of civilians. We welcome a reinforced Mission-level presence in Goma and are convinced that will be an effective deterrent against would-be perpetrators of human rights abuses and violations. At the same time, we note that putting an end to impunity and ensuring accountability constitute another element of deterrence.

We welcome the recent appointment by President Kabila Kabange of a special representative on sexual violence and child recruitment and hope her mandate will be strong enough to effectively combat these abhorrent crimes. A lot remains to be done in that respect. As noted in Secretary-General's report, so far the military court has delivered two rape convictions. Rape victims across the country remained countless, though, and evidence supporting that is ample. We therefore hope that the pursuit of justice for rape victims will continue.

We welcome the steps taken by the Congolese Government to implement the action plan to prevent child recruitment and tackle other grave violations against children. As the Secretary-General's report notes, five FARDC and one Congolese National Police element were convicted by the Bukavu military court of raping children. We encourage the Democratic Republic of the Congo authorities to continue their efforts in pursuing justice for child recruits and child victims. We also stress the importance of an expeditious implementation of the provisions on a children's birth registration system.

Ensuring accountability for gross human rights violations, war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is paramount for restoring confidence in State institutions and sustaining peace efforts.

Mr. Olguín Cigarroa (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Mr. Martin Kobler, Mrs. Mary Robinson and Mr. João Gonçalves Lourenço, Minister of Defence of Angola, for their briefings. We would like to welcome Lieutenant General dos Santos Cruz and commend him for his outstanding and dedicated work. We also commend the staff of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the country team for their work.

We wish every success to Mrs. Mary Robinson in her new role, and we welcome the appointment of Mr. Said Djinnit, which coincides with a crucial stage marked by the defeat of the Mouvement du 23 mars (M-23). That defeat must be used to foster inclusive dialogue, ensure funding for the country team's electoral tasks and mobilize political, governmental and regional backing to support the sustainable implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region, including the participation of women and civil society.

MONUSCO must use all its capabilities to carry out the effective disarmament of the Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda in line with the Nairobi plan, to close the gap between demobilization and reintegration, and to neutralize the Allied Democratic Forces and other groups, in order to make progress in the implementation of the third disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plan and the action plan to prevent child recruitment.

The number of internally displaced persons has decreased to 2.6 million, but we are concerned about the increase in the number of internally displaced persons in Katanga province as a result of the attacks of the Bakata Katanga, among others. That is why we must examine and geographically refocus the humanitarian and financial efforts to address the special needs of women and girls, including survivors of sexual violence, a struggle to which President Kabila is committed.

Although the Democratic Republic of the Congo has made gradual progress in complying with the six national commitments of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, signed more than a year

ago, key reforms in areas such as justice and security have been slow. In that regard, we value the reform and training of the police sector, but we reiterate our concern over the delays in the deployment of the army battalions that are to make up the rapid-reaction force.

MONUSCO and the country team must continue to support structural reforms and decentralization, including in the mining sector, which requires the implementation of mechanisms to regulate and supervise the supply chain, to prevent and avoid the illicit trafficking of minerals, which finances armed groups, many of which recruit and use children.

In conclusion, we reiterate the importance of protecting the civilian population and of continuing to fight against impunity. In recognizing the sovereignty of national institutions, we share the Secretary-General's disappointment over the verdicts delivered in the trials for the killings and mass rapes in Minova, and we hope that they will serve as an impetus to carry out reforms to ensure the independence of the judiciary and the court of appeals.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the international community's active efforts to normalize the situation in the Great Lakes region, namely, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That constructive commitment is demonstrated, among other things, by the decisions taken at the July summit of Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Defence of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the Southern African Development Community and the recent visit to the subregion of the group of envoys led by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mrs. Robinson. We commend Mrs. Robinson for her energetic efforts in this crucial role and wish every success to her successor, Mr. Djinnit.

We call on all parties to fully uphold the agreements undertaken in the Framework agreement, including respect for territorial sovereignty, non-intervention in one another's internal affairs and the establishment of confidence-building measures between countries of the subregion. In that context, we are concerned by the armed clashes on the Congolese/Rwandan border in June. All sides must absolutely demonstrate full restraint and take steps to de-escalate the situation, including through drawing upon the Joint Verification Mechanism and what is set out in the Framework Agreement.

We note significant progress in implementing the military component of the Framework Agreement, including the successful defeat of the Mouvement du 23 mars (M-23) and the Allied Democratic Forces. There is a need to continue the operation to neutralize other armed groups that are acting in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Of equal importance is amnesty for former fighters who did not perpetrate serious crimes, as well as their disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. We hope to see the successful implementation of the national plan for 2014 to 2017, recently adopted by the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which should include the participation of 12,000 combatants. There is also a need to ensure the repatriation of approximately 100 former M-23 fighters from Uganda and Rwanda.

We note the beginning of the voluntary disarmament of the Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda, which should be concluded by the end of this year. If insurgents think of pretexts to draw out the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, then perhaps pressure must be brought to bear on them, including military pressure.

However, it is clear that there can be no military solution to the conflict. There is a need for comprehensive efforts to eradicate the root causes, including by strengthening State institutions in the liberated areas. Of particular importance is speeding up the implementation of the recommendations of the 2013 National Dialogue, including the establishment of a Government of national unity, security-sector reform and the resolution of pressing social and economic issues.

United Nations peacekeeping efforts play an important role in ensuring stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We support efforts to focus basic energies and resources on the east of the country, where they are most relevant.

We note the successful joint operation between the Congolese army and the Force Intervention Brigade of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) to weed out armed groups. However, we believe that the primary responsibility for combating armed groups and stabilizing the situation lies with the Congolese. In that connection, success will depend on, among other things, the establishment of a rapid-reaction force.

On a practical level, we suggest that, as the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo normalizes, the issue of optimizing the troop level of MONUSCO, which is at present the largest United Nations peacekeeping mission in the world, be addressed. That is all the more relevant if we take into account the pressing need to deploy United Nations peacekeeping presences in other flashpoints in Africa.

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda): Mr. President, let me begin by thanking you and the entire delegation of the United Kingdom for having convened this important debate on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region. I would also like to thank The Honourable João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, Minister of Defence of Angola and Chair of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), as well as Martin Kobler, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Mrs. Mary Robinson, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region of Africa, for their respective briefings.

Before I start, allow me to also acknowledge the presence among us of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, His Excellency Mr. Raymond Tshibanda N'tungamulongo; Her Excellency Ms. Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, Minister of Defence and Military Veterans of South Africa; and the Ugandan Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Henry Oryem Okello.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend Mrs. Robinson for her dedication to peace and security in the Great Lakes region for the past 16 months — actually, I would say for over a decade, since she was the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva; we both served there. I thank her warmly for her dedication and personal support for peace in the Great Lakes region. I would also like to pay tribute to His Excellency José Eduardo dos Santos, President of the Republic of Angola and Chair of the ICGLR, for his wisdom and commitment to peace and security in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Rwanda was pleased to see that the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) has achieved some progress on important fronts, as outlined in the Secretary-General's report (S/2014/450), including working towards ending gross human rights violations and consolidating State authority in eastern

Democratic Republic of the Congo. The setting of a time frame for the organization of local elections, the Government's increasing presence in areas cleared of armed groups, including the islands of stability supported by MONUSCO, military operations against the Ugandan Allied Democratic Forces-National Army for the Liberation of Uganda — these are all positive and encouraging developments.

However, there is still much to be done, as we have heard in the reports of extremely slow security-sector reform, the horrific crimes against civilians that continue to be carried out by armed groups in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the pervasive impunity that accompanies these crimes. It is true that MONUSCO is on the ground protecting civilians, but we should not forget that the primary responsibility to protect the Congolese people lies, of course, with the Government, which should redouble its efforts in implementing and enforcing accountability and justice mechanisms.

There is another area of extreme importance which, unfortunately, has not seen progress: the neutralization of the 1994 genocidal movement, namely the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR). This is one of the oldest armed groups in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, which settled in that area after committing the 1994 genocide against the Tutsis in Rwanda. Despite its claims of readiness to disarm, the FDLR continues to recruit and train combatants, including children. The genocidal organization FDLR's voluntary disarmament is the latest among the many distractions that have stood in the way of a solution to the FDLR problem for two decades.

General disarmament and surrenders have been taking place under political and military pressure for many years. As stated by Special Representative Martin Kobler, more than 11,000 former FDLR combatants have been successfully repatriated since 2002 through the Mutobo Demobilization Centre, which the Council visited in October last year. Most of those who surrendered, including top commanders, have peacefully reintegrated into society. There is a tendency to create a false dichotomy between the military operation against the FDLR and voluntary surrender. Yet this is not an either/or situation. On the contrary, the two actually contribute to each other. The main reason that more than 10,000 ex-FDLR have disarmed and returned voluntarily to Rwanda over the past 10 years is that political and military pressure, or

the credible threat thereof, have consistently triggered mass surrenders of demotivated genocidal forces, namely FDLR combatants.

On the other hand, the example set by successful repatriation and reintegration within Rwandan society presented a strong incentive for further surrenders. I wish here to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Kobler for sharing the statistics on the repatriation of FDLR combatants since 2002, most of whom repatriated owing to the pressure, I think, of the joint Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) and Rwanda Defence Force military operations of 2009, code named “Umoja wetu”.

It would have been good, in order to have a full picture of the situation, if this graph were accompanied by statistics on FDLR recruitment and on the atrocities committed since 2002. Then we would better understand the urgency of the matter. But even with these statistics, it is clear that military pressure seems to be the only viable option that can force the génocidaires to repatriate.

Having said that, by entertaining the FDLR genocidal forces’ diversionary manoeuvres that are neither new nor credible, regional international actors are further complicating and prolonging a conflict for which the region has already paid a tragic cost. Even more disturbing is the fact that such an attitude might be setting the stage for further conflicts in the region, as some actors driven by hidden agendas may take advantage of the genocidal movement, the FDLR’s presence, to pursue their own negative goals.

Rwanda knows first-hand what it takes to build a nation from the ashes. We know that the focus should be on national reforms, the reintegration of former rebels, neutralizing remaining groups and establishing State authority. That is why we are committed to carrying out all the tasks required of us as per the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework Agreement in order to ensure that the region is moving towards peace and stability throughout its borders. From 18 to 20 July, a delegation from the Democratic Republic of the Congo Government, assisted by officials from MONUSCO, the ICGLR and the Office of the Special Envoy, carried out the registration and initiation of the armies to process the ex-Mouvement du 23 mars (M-23) elements interned in Rwanda.

When 453 ex-combatants, including all their former leaders, were registered and filled out their

application forms, the process generated some positive expectations on the part of the ex-combatants. Some of the junior members who were not present during the exercise have expressed interest in joining the process. Signatories to the Framework Agreement and others should ensure that reasonable incentives are put in place and maintained for the ex-combatants to remain committed to the implementation process. As an active member of the ICGLR, a committed signatory to the Framework Agreement, and the Government that has been carrying a heavy burden by receiving, disarming, moving away from the border and managing ex-M-23 combatants without any international support, we are determined to support the implementation of the Kampala dialogue declarations and have requested that its application be extended to include the ex-FARDC General Laurent Nkunda.

We firmly believe that the international community should engage with signatories in general collaborative terms. They should build on regional initiatives to achieve sustainable peace by addressing the root causes of crises in the Great Lakes region. Chief among those causes in the past two decades are the active presence of the genocidal forces, FDLR, in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The synchronization of international and regional efforts is paramount to avoid the progress achieved being diluted or reversed. For example, the implementation of concrete resolutions agreed upon unanimously during the ICGLR Summit in Luanda in March was unfortunately diverted by unrelated agendas, some of which only serve to worsen existing problems.

The international community, through its special envoys or other channels, should make greater use of good offices to ensure that key actors in the region continue to work in the spirit of confidence-building, ownership and accountability.

I conclude by warmly welcoming Ambassador Said Djinnit, the new Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region. I have no doubt that his expertise and extensive experience have prepared him for the job. We have high hopes for the Ambassador and the new team. We look forward to working with them so that we may see all of our efforts bear fruit for the benefit of the Congolese people, the Congolese Government and for all the people of the region.

Mr. Adamu (Nigeria): I welcome and thank you, Sir, for taking the time to preside over this important meeting. I would also like to thank Special

Representative of the Secretary-General Martin Kobler and Special Envoy Mary Robinson for their briefings. I wish to thank His Excellency Mr. João Gonçalves Lourenço for his statement. I also acknowledge the presence of other ministers who have set aside time to participate in this discussion.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo has made remarkable progress in overcoming decades of violence and instability. Recent developments further offer the hope that enduring solutions will yield dividends in the search for permanent peace in the country. The sustained engagement of the international community will be required to complete that process.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo has demonstrated its firm commitment to the success of the electoral process, which is critical to peace and stability in the country. The internal processes, such as the proposed amendments to the Constitution and reform of the judiciary, will serve as confidence-building measures to engender broad-based participation in the process. Such reforms must therefore attract the support of all the relevant stakeholders. Other proposed reforms relating to adjudication on genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes against civilians should be predicated not only on constitutional provisions but should also be in consonance with the relevant international instruments.

Security sector reform is increasingly being recognized as an important vehicle for supporting the security and safety of the State and its people. That is why we applaud the robust efforts of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in reforming its police sector. We consider initiatives in that area as essential to consolidating State authority and we encourage the Government to mobilize adequate resources in order to enable similar reforms of the defence sector. We believe that once that is accomplished, the process of establishing a rapid reaction force to assume the functions of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) will be facilitated.

Nigeria shares the aspirations of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to assume full responsibility for the stabilization and reconstruction of liberated areas. The effective implementation of all aspects of that initiative, including the establishment of Government structures at all levels, is critical for the consolidation of State authority.

The activities of armed groups continue to constitute both security and humanitarian challenges in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. We therefore welcome the attention of elements of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda-Forces Combattantes Abacunguzi to disarm and embrace dialogue and negotiations. We encourage the Government of Democratic Republic of the Congo, in partnership with MONUSCO, to facilitate the disarmament process. In the interim, we support the joint discussion between the Congolese defence Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo and the Uganda People's Defence Force towards neutralizing threats emanating from the Allied Democratic Forces armed group in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. We anticipate similar actions between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other Governments of neighbouring countries in order to completely eliminate threats posed by armed groups in the region.

On the humanitarian dimension, we note the decline in the number of internally displaced persons from 2.9 million to 2.6 million. More, however, remains to be done to further reduce that figure and to ameliorate the conditions of so many people who remain vulnerable to various threats and human rights abuses. We nevertheless take positive note of the initiatives of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of the Congo in creating a mixed commission to manage the humanitarian situation caused by the movement of citizens of the Democratic Republic of the Congo from the Republic of the Congo. We urge the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to continue to pursue mutual beneficial arrangements with other regional actors in mitigating any humanitarian concerns emanating from conflicts in the region.

We remain supportive of the continued diplomatic efforts in Kinshasa between the team of special envoys, including those from the African Union, the European Union, the United States, and the relevant stakeholders, for the implementation of the key objectives of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework Agreement. We also welcome the holding of the seventh meeting of the Technical Support Committee of the Regional Oversight Mechanism in Goma in May, designed to assess progress on the implementation of the regional action plan. Both initiatives are intended to give impetus to the promotion of peace, security and

stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region and they enjoy our full support.

Nigeria commends MONUSCO for its continued logistical, political and technical support to the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is pertinent to point out that MONUSCO's reconfiguration process should not, by virtue of pursuing efficiency in terms of resource deployment, impede the implementation of resolution 2147 (2014). In that regard, it is essential that the execution of Council mandates be facilitated by adequate resource allocation.

Finally, Nigeria pays tribute to Special Envoy Mary Robinson for her very active engagement in the peace process in the Great Lakes region. Her efforts have led to the present level of progress in the region, and we wish her all the best in her future endeavours. We also pledge our continued support to Special Envoy Said Djinnit as he assumes the mantle of leadership of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to acknowledge your presence here today, Secretary Simmonds, to preside over our debate, inasmuch as it reflects the importance for the Security Council of today's topic. That importance has also been highlighted by the delegation of the United Kingdom under the leadership of Ambassador Sir Mark Lyall Grant, to whom we express our renewed respect.

We appreciate the briefings made by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), Mr. Martin Kobler; by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region of Africa, Mrs. Mary Robinson; and by the Minister of Defence of Angola, Mr. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, participating in his capacity as Chair of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. I would also like to take this opportunity to commend the leadership and applaud the excellent work accomplished by Mrs. Robinson and to wish her successor, Mr. Said Djinnit, the utmost success as he assumes this new, enormous responsibility. I would also like to welcome the ministers joining us today from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Africa and Uganda.

We would recall that when Argentina joined the Security Council in January 2013, the Mouvement du 23 mars (M-23) had just launched its offensive against

the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It had seized the city of Goma and controlled a large part of the country, with a high number of internally displaced persons, numerous casualties as a result of the hostilities, and incessant ongoing suffering in the refugee camps. There has been great progress since. With the help of MONUSCO and its international partners, especially the other countries of the region, the M-23, as Mr. Kobler noted, has been defeated. And the Democratic Republic of the Congo has achieved important gains in the realms of security and reconciliation and in rebuilding a State of law that respects and promotes the rights of all.

With respect to the reporting period, we welcome the progress achieved and the extension of State authority into the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We note in particular the extension until 2017 of the stabilization and reconstruction programme for areas emerging from armed conflict, which is currently focused on restoring State authority in areas previously controlled by armed groups, facilitating the return of refugees and displaced persons, protecting civilians, combating gender-based, sexual and sexist violence, and promoting socioeconomic reconstruction and developing the country's infrastructure. Despite that progress, the Allied Democratic Forces, the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda and other armed groups continue to pose a real threat to efforts to pacify the country and, most urgently, bring the situation to an end. For that reason, we call on MONUSCO to continue its activities in support of the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo while also working to promote the disarmament and the demobilization of rebel groups.

Argentina is concerned by the lack of progress reported in reforming the security sector, in particular with respect to the formation of a rapid-response force to take over the responsibilities currently being shouldered by MONUSCO's Force Intervention Brigade. The formation of such a force by the Democratic Republic of the Congo is an obligation that emanates from resolutions 2098 (2013) and 2147 (2014) to replace the Force Intervention Brigade, which, Argentina would like to remind the Council, was established as an exception in response to the singular circumstances the country faced.

With regard to the humanitarian situation and human rights, the statistics showing progress, for example in the percentage of the population that is internally

displaced, are of little comfort to the 2.6 million people currently in that situation — a situation that requires not a military but a political solution based on dialogue and trust, the state of law and social inclusion. For that reason, the decision by the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and regional agreements are vital for sustainable development policies in the economic, social and environmental areas that will contribute to eradicating poverty and that will guarantee social inclusion without discrimination. To repeat, what is needed is not militarization but the cooperation of the international community, especially South-South cooperation, based on the principles of solidarity, equality and national ownership without conditions. Those are valuable and strategic paths that need to be broadened without, of course, discounting or disregarding the importance of triangular or North-South cooperation.

I see that the light is blinking. However, I cannot refrain from mentioning that we are concerned, and that we are prepared to contribute to the fight against impunity.

A theme that also concerns you, Mr. President, is the issue of serious violations and abuses of human rights, including rape and kidnapping, that are being committed not only by armed groups but also by the Congolese security forces. That must come to an end. The multiple abductions in the past few days of women and girls in the region of Okapi, in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, for the purpose of sexual slavery, accompanied by sexual torture and sexual humiliation, cannot go unpunished and must be eradicated. We urge the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to investigate those acts and bring those responsible to justice while also reinforcing policies of prevention and protection of the human rights, especially those of women and children. We echo the call of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, who on 21 July presented her fifth report on the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We recognize that hundreds of children have been freed, but that is not enough. To free hundreds of children to be children, not soldiers, requires that we too strengthen our cooperation to find a solution to the more than 4,000 cases of boys and girls being recruited and abused by armed groups and security forces. That can come about only through the effective exercise of their rights as children.

In conclusion, so long as the threat of armed groups persists, Argentina considers it a priority, in the first place, that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo should resolve the root causes of the conflict by implementing the reforms set out in the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes Region. Secondly, all signatories must fulfil their regional commitments, including respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of their neighbouring countries. Thirdly, we, the Security Council, must continue to support that process. Argentina believes that in this particular case we are working constructively and headed in the right direction, ensuring that peace and security can be rebuilt through the rule of law and regional cooperation in the Great Lakes region and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I would like to apologize to the President for the time I took with my statement even though the light was flashing.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the United Kingdom for organizing this debate during its presidency of the Security Council, and you, Mr. Simmonds, for your presence here today. My thanks also go to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mr. Martin Kobler, for his committed leadership of the work of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), and to the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes, Mrs. Mary Robinson, who has rekindled the flame of hope during her tenure. I am also grateful to Mr. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, Minister of Defence of Angola, for the regional perspective he has shared with us today in his capacity as representative of the Angolan chairmanship of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region.

Luxembourg welcomes the progress made in the security area since the military defeat of the Mouvement du 23 mars (M-23) and in the joint military action undertaken since the beginning of the year by MONUSCO and the the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC), particularly against the Allied Democratic Forces. The United Nations Mission's robust action aimed at improving the protection of civilians deserves to be emphasized. It is important that progress now also be made in

restoring the State's authority in the eastern part of the country, since that is vital to ensuring the provision of basic services to the population and launching an economic recovery that will enable it to offer tangible opportunities, particularly for young Congolese people.

At the same time, we encourage the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to redouble their efforts, in collaboration with Uganda and Rwanda, to implement the programme of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration for the members of M-23. Not only will the success of the programme prevent its members from resuming armed combat, it will also encourage the members of other armed groups to lay down their arms and reintegrate into civilian life.

The voluntary disarmament of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), which began on 30 May, must be completed without preconditions and according to a specific timetable. To that end, it is crucial that the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo maintain their commitment, with MONUSCO's backing, and that the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the Southern African Development Community continue to support the process. If the desired results do not materialize, the use of a military option for neutralizing the FDLR should remain on the table. As Special Representative Kobler said, it is time to bring the FDLR to a definite close once and for all.

Women and children are still the chief victims of the fighting that continues to convulse the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Women are still martyrs to intolerable levels of sexual violence. Children are still recruited and used by the FARDC and the armed groups. The Secretary-General's most recent report on the situation of children in armed conflict (S/2014/453) cites more than 4,000 cases of recruitment and use of children between January 2010 and December 2013. Murders, mutilations, sexual violations and abductions of children are numbered in the hundreds. More than 180 schools have been attacked and looted or used for military purposes, putting schoolchildren in danger and depriving them of their right to an education.

Given such violations, we must act. The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is committed to that, and we welcome it. In 2012 it signed an action plan to halt and prevent the recruitment and use of children as well as sexual violence committed by its armed forces. In general, we encourage the

Congolese authorities to make every effort to put an end to impunity. In that context, the trial of military personnel for the rapes, murders and looting committed in November 2012 at Minova has left a bitter taste in our mouths. The verdicts handed down illustrate the importance of furthering judicial reform if impunity is to be combated more effectively.

Neutralizing the armed groups in the eastern part of the country is not enough. The root causes of the conflict must also be addressed by implementing the reforms that the Congolese authorities committed to when they signed the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. More must be done in that regard, and that applies in particular to reforming the army and establishing a rapid-reaction force, which is an essential element of MONUSCO's exit strategy.

We remain committed to the Democratic Republic of the Congo's democratic path and to the proper management of the electoral cycle, which should culminate in the holding of legislative and presidential elections in 2016. It is up to the Congolese authorities to prepare and establish an electoral schedule in compliance with constitutional provisions. We welcome the role in this area of the good offices of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework remains the cornerstone of peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. It is the responsibility of the Framework's signatories to fully honour the commitments they have made both at the national and regional levels, including deepening economic integration so as to ensure that the people see the benefits of the peace dividend quickly. We express our support and best wishes to Mr. Said Djinnit as he prepares to take up the torch from Mary Robinson in order to keep this framework of hope alive.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Raymond Tshibanda N'tungamulongo, Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Francophonie of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. N'tungamulongo (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to undertake the pleasant duty of expressing my delegation's satisfaction at seeing the Security Council presided over during this month of August 2014 by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland,

a country with which we have excellent relations, characterized by mutual trust and respect. I would also like to thank you, Mr. President, for holding this important meeting of the Council on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, giving us the opportunity to assess together the progress that is under way and to agree on the measures needed to put the Great Lakes region irreversibly on the road to peace, stability, economic recovery and lasting development.

I commend the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to resolution 2147 (2014) (S/2014/450), which discusses the implementation of the commitments made under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as the progress made by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in implementing its mandate. I also welcome the statements just made by Mr. Martin Kobler, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and by Mrs. Mary Robinson, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region of Africa, on the current situation in the region — the problems that persist, the difficulties and obstacles that must be overcome and the immense opportunities for peace that the Security Council and all the parties involved must take advantage of so that all the peoples of the Great Lakes region can enjoy the fruits of the peaceful coexistence they have been deprived of for too long.

Regarding my country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it should be noted that, generally speaking, remarkable efforts have been made and significant results achieved in normalizing the domestic political landscape, implementing the institutional reforms necessary for strong, lasting and socially shared growth, as well as in improving relations with our neighbours. This is true in all sectors and aligns with all of my country's national and regional commitments under the provisions of the Framework agreement.

With regard to the security sector, it should be noted that in terms of the army, the recruitment and training of new units to form the rapid-reaction force is in most part under way and progressing satisfactorily. The same is true regarding the police, including restructuring and setting up new command posts subsequent to the December 2013 orders, the community policing experiment and the adoption of the law on the police reform programme.

In view of the neutralizing of armed groups and other negative entities that have been the cause of 20 years of sorrow in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, fraught relations among regional States and the reintegration of their ex-combatants to the benefit of the general DDR III plan approved by Cabinet ministers in December 2013, the following significant advances deserve to be mentioned.

First, pre-disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) operations that are entirely funded by the Democratic Republic of the Congo are under way. The identification and assessing of former combatants from most of the national armed groups is taking place in reception centres, followed by transfer to an evaluation centre; those efforts should accelerate in the weeks to come.

Second, the final version of the unique, comprehensive DDR III plan was presented to partners and donors on 11 July, with a view to closing out the fund.

Third, the identified rehabilitation centres will soon be operationalized.

Fourth, having refused voluntary disarmament under the ultimatum presented to them and to all of the other negative forces by His Excellency Joseph Kabila Kabange, President of the Republic, or disarmament by force, the Ugandan rebels Allied Democratic Forces — National Army for the Liberation of Uganda were targeted by military operations and removed, at great cost, from the area they had occupied for decades. The FARDC is continuing the final phase of search operations with a view to completely eradicating that negative force.

Fifth, the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), which remains a major concern to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other countries in the region, instead responded to the ultimatum by choosing voluntary disarmament, which they solemnly announced in a letter addressed to most of the signatories of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region. They then began the voluntary disarmament process as of the date announced, that is, 30 May. To date, 250 FDLR forces have been disarmed — out of the 1,400 to 1,500 that remain active — accompanied by over 400 family members, including women and children. They have deposited weapons and assembled in regroupment sites secured by the FARDC and MONUSCO, and

await transfer to temporary relocation sites far from our border with Rwanda, from where they will eventually be repatriated to their country of origin or channelled to third countries outside of the Great Lakes region.

The non-negotiable option is that they cannot return home; in the interest of regional peace and to build confidence among the States of the region, FDLR elements, once disarmed and demobilized must leave Congolese territory and find refuge in a distant country where they could not reasonably be considered a serious security threat to Rwanda, and thus will cease to provide a pretext for destabilizing activities in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Sixth, the Ministers of Defence and Foreign Affairs at the joint meeting of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) held on 2 July in Luanda were conscious of the enormous risks to which all military operations — particularly one against the FDLR, who live with their families among the Congolese population — would expose civilians. They viewed that as much from a moral point of view as from an international law perspective, as it is improper to engage in military operations against people unless they are criminals — as in the case of FDLR members — or those who wave a white flag and have chosen voluntary disarmament and started to carry it out. The Ministers therefore decided to give a chance to the FDLR voluntary disarmament option. They set a date of six months from 2 July 2014, by which time the FDLR must voluntarily disarm or risk military action and forced disarmament. Under the time frame it could be completed earlier, however the maximum time cannot exceed six months. The Ministers also decided that an interim assessment would take place in October, at the initiative and on the part of the ICGLR and SADC, two regional entities that, together with the United Nations and the African Union, form the guarantors of the Addis Ababa Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region.

Seventh, to ensure consistent and efficient monitoring of the FDLR voluntary disarmament process, it is important to ensure credibility by generating tangible results. We have launched a monitoring mechanism that includes representatives of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUSCO, the ICGLR and SADC. It is responsible in North Kivu and South Kivu, just as well as in Kinshasa — for ensuring

an effective disarmament process and taking corrective measures as necessary to achieve success. Meetings of the mechanism occur almost daily in the field, in the form of ongoing constructive engagement with the FDLR leadership to accelerate their disarmament and demobilization. Weekly meetings take place in Kinshasa between our colleagues in charge of operations, while monthly meetings are held at the strategic and policy levels. I preside in person over the monthly meetings, which in addition to Government representatives include all ICGLR and SADC ambassadors and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. The first such meeting took place on 14 July, less than two weeks after the Luanda decision. The second took place on 2 August, while the next one is scheduled for 2 September. I can assure the members of the Council that the FDLR has nothing to fear. They should look forward to the holding of those meetings, where the voluntary disarmament process is regularly evaluated without any hesitation.

It should be noted that at the end of the 2 August meeting, as a specific response to the stagnation we seem to have observed, we decided to send a delegation of representatives from the coordination mechanism to evaluate the process at this stage, to encourage the FDLR to move quickly to generate greater numbers and to firmly remind them that the military option remained on the table and could be activated at any moment if their conduct did not lend credibility to the voluntary disarmament process and that they had no other option but to disarm voluntarily or face the FARDC and the Intervention Brigade. We also charged our respective experts with developing indicators of progress — or benchmarks — that could objectively measure credibility and effectiveness of the FDLR voluntary disarmament process.

Similarly, to conclude with the important issue of neutralizing the FDLR, allow me to say that there is no State or people more aware than the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its people of the urgent need to neutralize the FDLR, since it is the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its people that have suffered the most from the activism of that negative force since its arrival on Congolese territory. It is a group that arrived in our country without our having invited it in, and our decision to push it back over the border was in response to the international community's pressing demand.

Allow me also to remind the Council that more than any other State of the region, the Democratic Republic of the Congo was in the frontline for making the principle of the creation of a neutral international force acceptable, for making such a force operational by accepting its transformation into the Force Intervention Brigade within MONUSCO, and for convincing the Security Council of the need to give the Intervention Brigade an unprecedented aggressive mandate, with the explicit objective of driving out all the negative forces, including specifically the FDLR. Let us be reassured that we will not stop before we have been successful in that endeavour.

On another level, pursuant to the Nairobi declaration, an amnesty law was promulgated on 11 February 2014 by our Head of State. To date, several decrees on amnesty have been published by the Ministry of Justice, and hundreds of prisoners who qualified for the amnesty, including former members of the Mouvement du 23 Mars (M-23), were in fact released. The result for that group would have been even more remarkable were it not for the initial lack of cooperation of one of the countries where they had sought refuge, namely, Rwanda, which for months had refused to allow Government envoys from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to have any contact with former M-23 members on its territory and prevented them from filling out the individual commitment forms required by law for them to be eligible for amnesty. I must say, however, that the situation was recently corrected, thanks to the intervention of the Special Envoys, and that our envoys recently travelled to Rwanda and were able to start the work. Progress should therefore be made in the coming weeks in terms of recognizing the amnesty of former M-23 member located in Rwanda.

With respect to the justice sector, reforms are also under way, including the establishment of the Constitutional Court and the appointment of its members. The same is the case with regard to the fight against sexual violence and child recruitment, which is of primary concern to the Head of State and the Government of my country. That is the reasoning behind the recent appointment by the President of an adviser on sexual violence and child recruitment.

With regard to the strengthening of State authority, the implementation of State administrative instruments continues in the territories taken back from former M-23 fighters and other armed groups. Furthermore, skills and resources will gradually be transferred to

the provinces and decentralized territorial entities, especially in such leading sectors for development as primary and secondary education, health, agriculture and rural development. Finally, the progress in the decentralization process should be included in the calendar for the next parliamentary session.

The Democratic Republic of Congo is entering a new phase that is characterized by the elections cycle scheduled to take place in 2015-2016. The draft law on the organization of the elections has been submitted to Parliament. The schedule for municipal, urban and local elections was published on 26 May, while that of other elections will be passed on by the sole competent authority, the Independent National Electoral Commission.

In accordance with the tradition that is today well established in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, my Government intends to promote a political dialogue open to all and transparent for all Congolese stakeholders. We are counting on the widest possible support for the electoral process, as well as the expected assistance from the United Nations and the international community, in order to hold free, transparent and democratic elections that take into account the country's stability and security requirements.

We are aware that the need to consolidate peace and stability in our country goes hand in hand with that of the entire African subregion to which we belong, in particular those that are close to us in the Great Lakes region. We must therefore look for a new momentum based on a new regional security order, on the enlargement and integration of economic and commercial space, on democracy and good governance and on stabilizing and improving the collective management of social and humanitarian problems. It is clear that there is still some way to go and that efforts will be required from all, with each of our countries making internal adjustments and adapting to the rules of peaceful coexistence between States. I want to reiterate once again the unwavering commitment of my country to follow those rules and work tirelessly for peace and stability in the Great Lakes region.

In that regard, I would also like to affirm once again before all present in this Chamber that the Democratic Republic of the Congo is more determined than ever to neutralize the FDLR by any means necessary. However, as it did for the M-23 and the Allied Democratic Forces—National Army for the Liberation of Uganda,

military force — necessary but insufficient — only makes sense as a last resort solution.

That being the case, in view of lower security risks and the progress made in strengthening national capacity in all sectors, I appeal on behalf of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for a substantial scaling down of the strength of MONUSCO. The Council should agree that it would provide significant savings for the benefit of maintaining peace in other theatres in Africa and in the rest of the world, which today have greater need of United Nations forces than we do.

I cannot conclude without paying glowing tribute to Mrs. Mary Robinson, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region of Africa, and to express to her all the gratitude of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the excellent work done during her term, which we would have liked to see continue, as well as for her total dedication to the cause of peace in our country and the subregion. We console ourselves by noting that her new functions will address an area — climate change — that will keep her in contact with the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which is known for its extraordinary biological diversity, so essential for the future of humankind and which is, as Council members know, the world's second set of lungs.

I would also like to welcome the fact that the Secretary-General found her a worthy successor in the person of Mr. Said Djinnit, whom we know well from his time at the African Union. He has perfect knowledge of region, and I do not doubt for a moment that he will live up to the hopes for peace, security and shared prosperity of the populations of the long-suffering Great Lakes region. We wish him every success in his work and promise him the unreserved support of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Henry Okello Oryem, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Uganda.

Mr. Okello Oryem (Uganda): Allow me to start by acknowledging the presence of my fellow Ministers — my brother His Excellency Mr. João Lourenço, Minister of Defence of Angola and Chair of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region; and my senior and elder brother His Excellency Mr. Raymond Tshibanda N'tungamulongo, Minister

for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Francophonie of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Let me take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, and your country, the United Kingdom, on the assumption of the Security Council presidency for this month and on having organized this important debate on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region. Let me also thank Mr. Martin Kobler, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), for his briefing. I wish to commend Her Excellency Mrs. Mary Robinson for her tireless efforts in ensuring the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region. I have no doubt that her efforts have achieved credible results in realizing peace and security in the region. I wish her all the very best in her new assignment. I would also like to congratulate Mr. Said Djinnit on his appointment as the new Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region and to assure him of Uganda's full support and utmost cooperation.

The Great Lakes region has experienced recurrent and devastating armed conflicts, as well as humanitarian crises, resulting in social and human destruction. In various parts of the region, the legacy of colonialism, ethnic conflict, weak State structures, transnational crime and terrorism, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the illegal exploitation of natural resources have given rise to a vicious cycle of violence, instability, displacement and institutional collapse. The state of peace and security in Africa, in particular in the Great Lakes region, remains a worrying phenomenon, with successes and continuing challenges. Indeed, the establishment of many regional and subregional organizations, such as the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), the East African Community, the Southern African Development Community, to mention but a few, and their great and promising achievements in the region should be venerated.

However, there are diverse challenges, which are often based on confrontation and rivalries to the detriment of concepts and ideological orientations that are more receptive to the exigencies of peaceful solutions anchored in dialogue, the peaceful settlement of disputes, compromise and a win-win proposal for mutual benefit. I wish to cite quote one of our founding fathers, Kwame Nkrumah, who stated,

“The survival of free Africa, the extending independence of this continent and the development towards that bright future on which our hopes and endeavours are pinned depend upon political unity.”

There is no doubt that Africa, in particular the Great Lakes region, has consolidated its efforts to address challenges and combat conflicts, giving impetus to the regional dimension. During its chairmanship of the ICGLR, Uganda spearheaded the Kampala dialogue and ensured that the parties to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, that is, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Mouvement du 23 mars (M-23), were brought to the table to peacefully resolve their conflict. It is worth noting that the Nairobi declarations were the result of the tireless effort and commitment of the Government of Uganda, in particular President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, in facilitating dialogue between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the M-23. It is therefore incumbent on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the M-23 to ensure the full implementation of the Nairobi declarations. The tasks and responsibilities were fully outlined in the declarations. It is therefore important to take stock of the status of compliance and implementation.

On the basis of our observation and engagements over recent years, there is no doubt that there is a desire and commitment on the part of the region and international partners to resolve conflicts in the region. That desire and commitment are well expressed in previous and recent regional efforts undertaken to ensure security, stability and development in the Great Lakes region.

However, if commitments and agreements such as the Nairobi declarations are not fully implemented, they create a gap, allowing for a relapse into conflict in the region. We commend the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations Force Intervention Brigade for the joint operations against the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and urge continued efforts in dealing with other armed groups to pacify and stabilize the region.

The repatriation of former M-23 combatants remains unresolved. Uganda received them but feeding them and looking after them have exerted pressure on our meagre resources. We therefore call on the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to expedite the repatriation process as much as possible. It is even more disheartening that the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo has chosen to

make false and unfounded allegations against Uganda that the M-23 are moving freely in Uganda despite the close cooperation provided by my Government to make available all the detailed information, such as the list of former combatants, the weapons and many other elements, that was communicated to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It truly casts doubt on the intention and purpose of the Group of Experts.

The main challenge to the region is the lack of guaranteed ways to finance the efforts and development projects, especially the implementation of the Nairobi declarations and the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. Commendable work has been carried out by the Technical Support Committee in that regard. That all requires stable funding. More genuine support from development partners and the international community is therefore paramount. Last year, on a trip to the Great Lakes region, the World Bank President, Mr. Jim Yong Kim, announced that \$1 billion would be made available for development projects in the Great Lakes region. However, more financial commitments are still necessary in order to provide infrastructure and other development programmes in the region. It is even more important that the pledges be fulfilled.

For our part, Uganda established the ICGLR regional training facility on sexual and gender-based violence in Kampala to train judicial officers, social and medical workers, police and prison officers and many others to prevent crimes of sexual violence. We welcome the support of the World Bank for the regional training facility and call upon all development partners and the international community to support its activities and operationalization.

Finally, I wish to emphasize the following issues. It is necessary to support and strengthen regional and subregional organizations, owing to their comparative advantage, proximity and complementarity to the role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security. The Nairobi declarations and the national commitments of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework must be speedily implemented. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process for former M-23 combatants must be expedited. There is a need for the joint and coordinated effort of the United Nations and regional mechanisms, such as the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism, MONUSCO and the joint intelligence fusion centre. The Force Intervention Brigade, MONUSCO and the

Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo must continue to pursue the armed terrorist groups in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, such as the ADF. The Security Council must give regional groupings, such as the ICGLR Committee of Ministers of Defence, the opportunity to regularly brief it on peace and security in the Great Lakes region. There must be sustainable and predictable funding for regional initiatives and efforts.

In conclusion, we are convinced that fostering strategic partnerships will bolster the effective maintenance of international peace and security. We therefore call for regular interaction, coordination and consultation between the Security Council and regional and subregional organizations on matters of peace and security. That will enable us to augment complementarities and avoid the duplication of efforts. The Council should strive to be more even-handed and transparent in its approach and decisions so as to dispel the perception that on some issues under its consideration, vested interests override fairness.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Mashabane (South Africa): We would like to thank you, Mr. President, for inviting us to participate in this debate. My delegation would like to express its congratulations to the Mission of the United Kingdom on assuming the presidency of the Council for this month. In the same breath, we would like to congratulate the previous presidency of the Council, held by the delegation of Rwanda. We appreciate your prioritizing this matter, Mr. President, and scheduling this debate. We are particularly pleased that you, Sir, personally came to preside over the debate.

We would like to pay tribute to Mrs. Mary Robinson, the outgoing Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, for her hard work and political commitment to the resolution of the challenges facing the Great Lakes region. A lot of work has been done and a lot of ground covered in the past 18 months during her tenure in this role. We would also like to welcome the recent appointment of Ambassador Said Djinnit as the new Special Representative, and we look forward to working with him. We also thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mr. Martin Kobler for his comprehensive briefing and appreciate the work that he continues to do. We take note of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2014/450) in that regard. We also want to thank the Minister of Defence of Angola for his

briefing in his capacity as Chair of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR).

The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) is one of the oldest and the largest United Nations peacekeeping missions in the world and on our continent, Africa. We are pleased with the progress that has been made in the past decade and in the past few years. The security situation in the region and in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains fragile, but there is no doubt that significant progress has been made. The recent strengthening of MONUSCO and its mandate by the Council has contributed a great deal to the progress that has been made. In that regard, South Africa would like to express its appreciation to the Security Council for its continued cooperation with and support for regional efforts and initiatives aimed at the resolution of the challenges in the region and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

South Africa attaches great importance to peace and security on the continent in general and in the Great Lakes region in particular. It is for that reason that we continue to be committed to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. We are of the firm view that its successful implementation will go a long way towards comprehensively addressing the challenges facing the region and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

South Africa's position is informed by the decisions that were taken at the recent ministerial meeting of the ICGLR and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) on the political and security situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the continued voluntary disarmament and demobilization of the Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR). The ministerial meeting was mandated by the ICGLR/SADC summit that took place last year in Pretoria. We remain convinced of the political correctness of the decisions that the ministerial meeting took to the effect that the disarmament of the FDLR should take place within the framework of six months, beginning on 2 July, with a midterm review. It is therefore the responsibility of all of us — the stakeholders — to jointly and collectively define the criteria and terms of the review that will be done in three months.

South Africa appreciates the manner in which the Security Council has so far cooperated with the

regional organizations in addressing the challenges in the region and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Given the critical stage that we have entered in all our efforts as part of the international community, it will be critical that we continue to build and consolidate this cooperation, which is based on mutual respect and an appreciation of the divergent roles of the various stakeholders. In that regard, we would like to emphasize the significance of respecting the decisions that the two regions — the ICGLR and SADC — have taken and will continue to take. On our part, we will continue to appreciate the broader role of the international community, particularly the Security Council and MONUSCO.

South Africa remains committed to efforts to bring peace and stability to the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We will continue to contribute whatever resources at our disposal that are required for that purpose, including our participation in MONUSCO and its Force Intervention Brigade.

We would like to call on the international community and the United Nations to continue to provide the much-needed resources for the implementation of the disarmament process.

In conclusion, South Africa remains committed to finding a lasting and durable solution to all the challenges facing the Great Lakes and the Democratic Republic of the Congo within the context of regional mechanisms. We are convinced that in the next few months and years as we move forward, the people of the Congo, who have suffered many years of instability and insecurity, will appreciate the collective efforts of the international community, the region and their national leadership.

The President: The representative of Rwanda has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda): It is not a big issue; I just wanted to make a slight clarification. I want to thank you, Mr. President, and assure you that I will not take much of your time. Allow me to make just one clarification on what our good friend Minister Tshibanda N'tungamulongo has said with regard to the denial by Rwanda of a team from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to meet the ex-combatants.

The Council will recall that on 24 April, at around 4 p.m. Kinshasa time, our Embassy in Kinshasa received a note from the Democratic Republic of the Congo Ministry of Foreign Affairs announcing its

intention to send to Rwanda a 10-man team in the days ahead, without indicating specific dates. The following morning at 8:45 a.m. exactly, on 25 April, the Congolese team showed up at our border, before the Democratic Republic of the Congo Embassy in Kigali was even able to submit a formal request to the Government of Rwanda.

On the same day, our Ministry of Foreign Affairs wrote back to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo noting that the delegation had showed up ahead of the request pertaining to the visit and that therefore no arrangements had been made to receive them. The letter also requested the Democratic Republic of the Congo to propose a suitable date for the delegation's visit. That was done and the visit took place, finally, from 18 to 20 July.

The President: The representative of Democratic Republic of the Congo has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

I now give him the floor.

Mr. Tshibanda N'tungamulongo (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): I said earlier that the visit did finally take place and that the work was mostly done, and that we should see some progress. I would prefer to remain on that positive note. I do not intend to engage in a polemic. What I said earlier was just to establish the facts. Regrettably, I must say that there are corrections to be made with regard to what the Ambassador just said. The note verbale was sent after an agreement was reached that the mission would go there. There were exchanges between the various officials, who requested confirmation through a note verbale. Therefore, the agreement had already been reached that the visit would take place.

The second thing is that, in the response, it was not just a question of saying that they arrived too soon. With regard to going to Rwanda, we have an Embassy, which was supposed to play a key role in instructing people on how they should fill out various forms, and Embassy personnel was to be instructed by our envoys. Therefore, supposing that the Government of Rwanda was not prepared, for some unknown reason, regarding the Mouvement du 23 mars before the meeting with our envoys, their envoys could have started to work with our Embassy.

In Rwanda's response, it asked us to go through the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism, which has absolutely nothing to do with this process. Thanks to

the intervention of the Special Envoys, that request, which had nothing to do with the process, was lifted, and the people left and were able to do their work.

As I said, I do not want to insist on this; I just wanted it to be understood that even though this was done in Uganda, in Rwanda progress was not made on that issue. That was not on account of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. However, with that established,

I prefer to look to the future, rather than to dwell on the past.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.