

Communiqué of the Fifth High-Level Meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region

Addis Ababa, 31 January 2015

1. We, signatories of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region, held the Fifth Meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism (ROM) on 31 January 2015 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in the margins of the 24th Summit of the African Union (AU). The meeting was jointly convened by the Chairperson of the AU Commission, H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma and the United Nations Secretary-General H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

2. The Heads of States and Government and the representatives of the following signatory countries participated in the meeting:

Democratic Republic of the Congo
Republic of Angola
Republic of Burundi
Republic of the Congo
Republic of Kenya
Republic of South Africa
Republic of the Sudan
Republic of South Sudan
United Republic of Tanzania
Republic of Uganda
Republic of Zambia

3. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) participated in the deliberations.

4. We met today in the margins of the 24th Summit of the AU Summit and discussed issues pertaining to the commitments of the signatory parties to the Peace, Security and Cooperation (PSC) Framework Agreement, including the disarmament and demobilisation of armed groups, as well as regional economic cooperation.

5. We reaffirmed that the PSC Framework remains a viable and effective mechanism to achieve durable peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the region, and renewed our commitment to its implementation.

6. We reaffirmed our respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of the DRC and all the countries in the region.

7. We welcomed the holding of free and democratic elections in the Republic of Zambia and congratulated H.E. Mr. Edgar Lungu on his election as President of the Republic of Zambia.

8. We took note of the reports on the disarmament process of the *Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda* (FDLR) and the status of implementation of the Nairobi Declarations, as presented by the ICGLR and the Government of the DRC, respectively.

9. We welcomed the announcement by the Government of the DRC, under the authority of H.E. Mr. Joseph Kabila, on the launch of military operations against the FDLR, conducted by the *Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo*, with the support of the United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in agreement with the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council, the decisions of the AU Peace and Security Council and that of the ICGLR and SADC. We urged the Government of the DRC to carry out these operations in strict observance of the human rights of civilian populations in the affected areas.

10. We commended the efforts of MONUSCO and its Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) in neutralizing all the negative forces including the FDLR. We expressed our appreciation and gratitude to the FIB TCCs for their sacrifices and their continued commitment.

11. We noted with concern that there were still many challenges to overcome in the implementation of the PSC Framework since its signing nearly two years ago, including the slow progress in the implementation of the Nairobi Declarations of 12 December 2013 occasioned by the parties, the continued presence of illegal armed groups in eastern DRC, and the violence and human rights violations they perpetrate against innocent civilians.

12. We expressed our deep concern over the current security situation in eastern DRC, especially in the Beni area of North Kivu, due to the continued presence of armed groups which has resulted in the brutal killing of over 250 civilians, including women and children. We further condemned the attack carried out in Burundi by an unidentified armed group on 30 December 2014.

13. We called for investigations by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in relation to the killings and violence in and around Beni, and urged the Government of the DRC and MONUSCO to take decisive actions in order to neutralize all hostile forces in eastern DRC in accordance with the decisions taken by the region and the UN Security Council.

14. We deplored the persistence of violence against women and young girls and stressed the need to strengthen legislative and judicial mechanisms to fight impunity.

15. We noted the need for an increase in the number of projects that can contribute significantly to the economic development of eastern DRC and the region and urged the World Bank and other multilateral financial institutions to continue efforts in cooperation with the UN Country Teams and Regional Agencies and the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region in this regard.

16. We urged the Government of the DRC with the support of MONUSCO to continue its efforts to extend state authority to all areas in eastern DRC, and to further strengthen security and judicial institutions. We encouraged all signatories of the PSC Framework to cooperate and take necessary measures to neutralize illegal armed groups.

17. We re-emphasized the commitment by all signatory countries to neither harbour nor provide protection of any kind to persons accused of war crimes, crimes against humanity, acts of genocide or crimes of aggression, or persons falling under the UN sanctions regime.

18. We noted the lack of commitment by the FDLR to comply with the decisions of the Security Council and the region. We underscored the need to neutralize the FDLR and all other armed groups as a top priority in order to support stability in the DRC and the wider Great Lakes Region.

19. We recalled the relevant provisions of UN Security Council Resolutions 2098 (2013) and 2147 (2014), and further welcomed the Security Council Presidential Statement of 5 November 2014 which expressed deep concern over the lack of progress in the voluntary disarmament process of the FDLR, as assessed by the Joint ICGLR and SADC communiqué of 20 October 2014.

20. We commended the Guarantors of the PSCF for the meeting on 1 December 2014 in Addis Ababa to assess the situation of armed groups and the decision to forge a common position to resolve all issues relating to the implementation of the PSC Framework Agreement, including the neutralisation of illegal armed groups.

21. We welcomed the commencement of the voluntary and transparent repatriation of ex-M23 combatants from Uganda to the DRC and commended H.E. President Joseph Kabila and H.E. President Yoweri Museveni for this progress. We called on the Government of DRC, Rwanda and Uganda to complete the repatriation process in a voluntary and transparent manner in line with the Nairobi Declarations. In this regard, we noted the Protocol signed on 16 December 2014 by the DRC, Uganda, and witnessed by ICGLR and SADC and encouraged the signatories to adhere to their commitments. We encouraged the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General to assist the ICGLR Secretariat and the DRC National Oversight Mechanism in their mandates to ensure the effective implementation of the Nairobi Declarations.

22. We reiterated our appreciation and support to the Chair of ICGLR, H.E. President José Eduardo dos Santos of Angola and the Chair of SADC, H.E. President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, and requested them to continue their role in ensuring that ICGLR and SADC countries scale up regional consensus on extending full support to the efforts of the FARDC and MONUSCO's Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) to neutralise all armed groups, including the FDLR and ADF.

23. We encouraged efforts aimed at building confidence between countries of the region. In this regard, we commended President dos Santos for his efforts to promote dialogue among leaders of the region and called on his good offices as Chair of ICGLR to work with the Chair of SADC, the AU and UN to foster dialogue and accelerate steps aimed at addressing the root causes of the conflict, and to promote confidence building activities through regional economic cooperation.

24. We noted the report of the Regional Consultation hosted by the Government of Angola and jointly organized by the ICGLR and Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary General for the Great Lakes Region in Luanda, Angola on the 17-18 December 2014 to discuss the Investment Opportunities Brief (IOB) for the proposed Great Lakes Private Sector Investment Conference (GL-PSIC) to be held in the second half of 2015.

25. We endorsed the proposals to organize the GL-PSIC and noted the interest expressed by the DRC, Kenya, Rwanda,, Uganda and Zambia in hosting the event as well as the proposed modality for choosing the venue of GL-PSIC. We urged the Office of the Special Envoy and the ICGLR Secretariat to fast-track the process and to facilitate the organization of the conference with the host country by the end of 2015.

26. We commended the joint efforts of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary General for the Great Lakes Region, the ICGLR Secretariat, the World Bank Group, the UN Global Compact, the UNDP African Facility for Inclusive Markets, the Office of the AU Special Representative for the Great Lakes and the Government of Angola on the IOB. We called on the guarantors of the Framework and on the entire international community to support the convening of the Great Lakes Private Sector Investment Conference.

27. Reiterating the importance of ownership in the PSC Framework, we called for greater involvement of Heads of State in championing the implementation of the various activities provided for in the plan of action of the PSC Framework.

28. We underscored the importance of supporting the activities in the Plan of Action for the implementation of the Framework and encouraged signatory countries and all partners to contribute to the Trust Fund established for this purpose by the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region.

29. We expressed our continued concern over the prevailing situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) and encouraged the Transitional Government to pursue efforts aimed at promoting national dialogue and reconciliation. We expressed our support to Regional efforts led by H.E. President Denis Sassou Nguesso for dialogue and reconciliation in CAR.

30. We expressed our concern over the continued deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in South Sudan and reaffirmed our support to the efforts led by H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn, Prime Minister of Ethiopia, in his capacity as chair of Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to encourage the cessation of hostilities in order to advance the IGAD led peace process.

31. We extended our heartfelt condolences to the People and Government of the Republic of Zambia on the passing of His Excellency, the late Michael Chilufya Sata, former President of the Republic of Zambia, who passed away on 28 October 2014.

32. We condemned the series of terrorist attacks and killings in the continent of Africa and the attacks on 7 January 2015 in the Republic of France and expressed our condolences to the affected Governments and peoples.

33. Finally, we extended our deep appreciation to the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations for co-hosting the ROM and expressed our gratitude to all those who contributed to the success of the meeting.

34. We agreed to hold our next meeting in New York in the margins of the UN General Assembly, in September 2015.

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