

**Communiqué of the Seventh 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**

Luanda, 26 October 2016

1. The Heads of State and Government of the signatory countries of the Peace, Security and Cooperation (PSC) Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the region held the Seventh High-Level Meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism (ROM) on 26 October 2016 in Luanda, Angola. The meeting was convened by H.E. President José Eduardo dos Santos of the Republic of Angola, with the support of the Guarantor institutions, namely, the United Nations, the African Union (AU), the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).
2. The Heads of State and Government and representatives of the following signatory countries participated in the meeting: H.E. José Eduardo dos Santos, President of the Republic of Angola (host); H.E. Idriss Déby Itno, President of the Republic of Chad and AU Chairperson; H.E. Denis Sassou N'Guesso, President of the Republic of the Congo; H.E. Joseph Kabila Kabange, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC); H.E. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia; H.E. William Ruto, Deputy President of the Republic of Kenya; H.E. Gaston Sindimwo, First Vice-President of the Republic of Burundi; H.E. Hasabo Mohamed Abdelrahman, First Vice-President of the Republic of Sudan; H.E. Simplicie Mathieu Sarandji, Prime Minister of the Central African Republic; and H.E. Paul Dlamini, Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Swaziland (representing the Chair of SADC). The following heads of delegation also participated in the meeting: Ms. Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa; Mr. Augustine Mahiga, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Republic of Tanzania; Mr. Sam Kutesa, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uganda; and Mr. Alfred G. Kalisa, Ambassador of the Republic of Rwanda to Angola.
3. The following participants were also in attendance: H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission; Mr. Saïd Djinnit, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region representing the United Nations Secretary-General; Mr. Edem Kodjo, Facilitator of the national dialogue in the DRC; Prof. Ibrahima Fall, AU Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region; Amb. Zachary Muburi-Muita, Executive Secretary of ICGLR; and Mr. Jorge Cardoso representing the Executive Secretary of SADC. In addition, special envoys and senior officials of Belgium, China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and the European Union attended the meeting as official observers. The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) attended as invited guest.

4. The participants in this High-Level Meeting of the ROM reviewed the political and security developments in the region since their last meeting in New York, United States of America, on 29 September 2015 and agreed as follows:

5. Reaffirmed that the PSC Framework remains a vital mechanism to achieve durable peace and stability in the DRC and the region and renewed their full commitment to its implementation. They endorsed the reform of the PSC Framework process, in particular the decision to hold one annual high-level meeting of the ROM hosted by one country of the region, which is preceded by a preparatory meeting at the level of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, in addition to ad-hoc sectorial meetings as may be required.

Implementation of commitments under the PSC Framework

6. Took note of the status report on the implementation of the PSC Framework. While welcoming the progress achieved so far, they noted with concern the continuing challenges in achieving progress therein and committed to accelerating efforts to address the outstanding issues. They directed the Technical Support Committee to submit an updated list of priority activities to advance the implementation of the PSC Framework Regional Action Plan.

7. Commended the Guarantors of the PSC Framework for their continuing joint efforts to ensure the implementation of the decisions of the ROM and policy organs of their respective organizations.

8. Welcomed the successful holding of the Private Sector Investment Conference for the Great Lakes Region in Kinshasa, DRC, on 24 and 25 February 2016, as directed by the Fifth High-Level Meeting of the ROM, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 31 January 2015; and encouraged follow-up action with a view to further promoting the role of the private sector in support of peace and stability in the region.

9. Expressed appreciation to international partners for their commitment to support and facilitate the finalization of the Ruzizi III hydropower plant and encouraged continued efforts at national, regional and international levels to ensure the implementation of the Ruzizi I and II projects.

10. Took note of the Declaration of the Women's Platform for the PSC Framework for the DRC and the region issued on 12 July 2016 in Goma, DRC. They recommitted themselves to strengthening the role and participation of women in political and development processes. They directed their national institutions to follow up on the effective implementation of the Goma Declaration.

11. Also took note of recent positive steps in enhancing judicial cooperation in the region and reiterated the need to pursue those efforts to ensure early and effective progress in the fight against impunity for serious crimes and violations of human rights, including sexual and gender-based violence.

12. Welcomed the launching by the United Nations Secretary-General of the Great Lakes Regional Strategic Framework during an open debate of the Security Council on prevention and resolution of conflicts in the Great Lakes region, held in New York on 21 March 2016 and chaired by the Republic of Angola; and encouraged the United Nations to continue to streamline and harmonize the efforts of its various entities, in close consultation with the countries of the region, with a view to supporting development efforts throughout the Great Lakes region.

13. Also welcomed the proposal by the United Nations Secretary-General for a separate annual session of the United Nations Security Council on the Great Lakes region, in addition to the regular briefings on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the situation in the DRC.

Neutralization of negative forces and repatriation of disarmed combatants

14. Welcomed ongoing cooperation and joint operations of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) and MONUSCO against the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), among others, and encouraged them to further strengthen their cooperation.

15. Welcomed initiatives by the Guarantors of the PSC Framework in support thereof, which led to the meeting of Ministers of Defence of ICGLR and SADC countries held in Nairobi, Kenya, on 20 July 2016. In this connection, they endorsed the recommendations of the Nairobi meeting of Ministers of Defence which, inter alia:

- Tasked the chiefs of the defence staff to carry out field visits to affected areas in eastern DRC and develop recommendations to further strengthen operations against armed groups;
- Called on the Intelligence and Security Services to strengthen existing coordination and information-sharing mechanisms;
- Called for sustained robust advocacy and the implementation of the repatriation of surrendered FDLR combatants in the DRC to Rwanda or for resettlement in a third country outside of the region;
- Acknowledged the crucial role played by the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism (EJVM) as a confidence-building tool in the region, and called on the representatives of the Guarantors of the PSC Framework and ICGLR member States to continue robust advocacy and resource mobilization efforts in support of the mandate and activities of the EJVM;
- Emphasized the need for signatory countries to abide by all their commitments under the PSC Framework and the ICGLR Pact in relation to negative forces, in particular regional commitment

number 2 of the PSC Framework “to neither tolerate nor provide assistance of any kind to armed groups” and therefore countries in the region should not provide asylum to ex-combatants who have been granted amnesty;

- Noted the need to identify countries, companies and individuals that trade and benefit from illicit economic activities of the negative forces in the region and to bring sanctions to bear through appropriate mechanisms; and

- Further encouraged the ICGLR Executive Secretary and the United Nations Special Envoy to convene a dedicated meeting on the illegal exploitation and trade of natural resources.

16. Welcomed the establishment of a Joint Follow-up Mechanism between the DRC, Kenya, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda to address the growing threat posed by the ADF in eastern DRC and across the region, in line with the decisions of the Sixth Ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of the ICGLR, held in Luanda, Angola, on 14 June 2016.

17. Further reiterated the need to ensure progress in the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, repatriation and resettlement of disarmed combatants.

18. Encouraged the concerned countries, with the support of the Guarantors of the PSC Framework and MONUSCO, to accelerate the repatriation of disarmed combatants present in eastern DRC and neighbouring countries, notably former FDLR combatants and the ex-M23 combatants.

19. Further welcomed the joint evaluation meetings held in Kinshasa on 27 and 28 May and 27 and 28 June 2016 between representatives of the Government of the DRC and the delegation of the ex-M23, under the auspices of the DRC National Oversight Mechanism with the support of the Guarantors of the PSC Framework, to review the status of implementation of the Nairobi Declarations and discuss ways to overcome pending challenges, including the repatriation of ex-M23 combatants. They called on the Guarantors to pursue this initiative.

Review of developments in the region

Relations between countries of the region

20. Encouraged countries of the region to intensify their efforts aimed at further improving relations through bilateral channels and existing regional mechanisms, in line with the letter and spirit of the ICGLR Pact on Security, Stability and Development and the PSC Framework. In this regard, they welcomed recent high-level meetings between leaders of the region to enhance confidence and cooperation between their countries.

Burundi

21. Welcomed the improvement of the security situation in Bujumbura; called on all Burundi to seek only peaceful solutions to address their grievances and to commit to inclusive dialogue; reiterated their support to the East African Community facilitation led by Mr. Benjamin Mkapa, former President of the United Republic of Tanzania; and looked forward to the continuation of the dialogue. They encouraged the Government of Burundi and all Burundi to extend full cooperation to the Facilitator with a view to expediting the dialogue process, in line with the Constitution of Burundi and the 2000 Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

22. Condemned the violence that erupted in the DRC on 19 and 20 September 2016 and called on all parties to seek only peaceful solutions to the political crisis in line with the Constitution of the DRC and Security Council resolution 2277 (2016). They expressed their support to the efforts of the AU Facilitation led by Mr. Edem Kodjo, supported by the International Support Group, as well as the efforts of H.E. President José Eduardo dos Santos of Angola, Chair of the ICGLR, and H.E. President Denis Sassou N'Gusso of the Republic of Congo.

23. Noted with appreciation the encouragement by the SADC Summit, held in Swaziland on 30 and 31 August 2016, for all DRC stakeholders to participate in the national dialogue and to agree on a concrete road map leading to the holding of elections; and renewed their call on all stakeholders to uphold the principles, ideals and aspirations of the Congolese people as enshrined in the Constitution and in accordance with SADC and AU principles and guidelines governing democratic elections, and in line with Security Council Resolution 2277 (2016).

24. Congratulated President Joseph Kabila Kabange for having convened the national dialogue; commended all stakeholders who took part in the national dialogue; welcomed the signing on 18 October 2016 of the Comprehensive Political Agreement on the organization of peaceful, credible and transparent elections in the DRC; noted with appreciation the confidence-building measures taken so far by the Government; and encouraged the latter, together with other stakeholders, to take additional confidence-building measures.

Central African Republic

25. Welcomed the efforts by the Government of the Central African Republic (CAR) to promote dialogue and reconciliation and extend state authority throughout the country; called on all armed groups to engage in dialogue with the national authorities to ensure peace and stability; stressed the need for sustained attention on the threat posed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in parts of CAR and throughout the region and called on countries in the region to continue to cooperate towards neutralizing

the LRA, including through continued support to the AU Regional Task Force for the elimination of the LRA.

South Sudan

26. Expressed serious concern at renewed fighting between Government and Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition (SPLM/A-IO) forces, as well as intercommunal violence in several parts of South Sudan. Called on all South Sudanese stakeholders to immediately cease fighting and continue to faithfully implement the commitments undertaken in the Agreement for the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan; and looked forward to the early conclusion of discussions between the Government of South Sudan and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the United Nations on the deployment of a Regional Protection Force.

27. Took note of the extraction by MONUSCO on humanitarian and security grounds of a number of SPLM/A-IO elements that crossed into the DRC without authorization, and their subsequent disarmament and relocation from the border so as not to present a threat to South Sudan; also took note of the position of the Government of the DRC not to allow a prolonged stay of these elements on its territory; and urged the region, IGAD member States, the African Union and United Nations to assist the Government of the DRC in finding a durable solution for the removal of SPLM/A-IO elements from the DRC as soon as possible.

28. Encouraged the Government of South Sudan to continue its efforts to disarm the Sudanese negative forces present in South Sudan and to facilitate their repatriation.

Next high-level meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism

29. Called on member States to express their interest in hosting future high-level meetings of the ROM, in line with the decisions of the Sixth High-Level Meeting of the ROM, held in New York on 29 September 2015, and the Sixth Ordinary Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the ICGLR, held in Luanda on 14 June 2016.

30. Welcomed the offer made by the Republic of Congo to host the Eighth High-Level Meeting of the ROM at a date to be determined.

31. Extended their deep appreciation to H.E. President José Eduardo dos Santos and the Government and people of the Republic of Angola for hosting the ROM and expressed their gratitude to all those who contributed to the success of the meeting.

Luanda, 26 October 2016