



PRESS RELEASE

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Paving the way for a Private Sector Investment Conference in the Great Lakes region in Kinshasa on 24-25 February 2016

New York, 23 June 2015 - With a population of over 370 million, the Great Lakes region of Africa represents an increasingly educated, youthful, fast growing, and urbanized middle class segment of the continent's population, providing over US \$200 billion purchasing power and a substantial market. Thus, Africa's Great Lakes countries are not only a reservoir of labour, they are also increasingly providing effective demand and high returns on investment, mainly in seven key sectors: Agriculture; Energy; Finance; Information, Communication and Technology (ICT); Infrastructure; Mining and Tourism. This observation was highlighted by the United Nations Special Envoy for the Great Lakes region, Said Djinnit, at the Second Business for Peace Annual Event that took place in New York on 23 June 2015, under the theme of "Building Peace, Realizing Sustainable Development".

A repository of vast natural resources, the Great Lakes region represents an enormous potential for agricultural development, but also for mineral extraction and tourism. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), three countries -- namely Angola, Kenya and South Africa -- of the four principal investment destinations in Sub-Saharan Africa between 2007 and 2013 were in the Great Lakes region.

The annual event, organized by the UN Global Compact to also mark their 15th anniversary, brought together over 250 business people, civil society organizations, investors, government and UN representatives from around the world, to reflect on how business can play an important role in supporting peace and stability, rule of law and good governance.

"I thank the UN Global Compact for agreeing to continue work with us in support of the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework (PSCF) agreement,

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particularly with a view to strengthening economic cooperation, expand trade opportunities and promote job creation as a way of supporting long-term stability and peace in the region,” Special Envoy Djinnit said.

With this objective in mind, the Office of the UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes is working with the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and other concerned regional organisations including the AU, SADC as well as the UN Global Compact and other partners to organize a Private Sector Investment Conference for the Great Lakes in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), on 24-25 February 2016. The conference is expected to be a milestone marking the long-term collaboration between companies, investors and other stakeholders in the region. “Advancing responsible investment in the region will require the engagement of everyone, including governments, companies, investors, civil society, the UN and other stakeholders, as an essential element for peace and stability in the Great Lakes,” Mr. Djinnit further noted.

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