



PRESS RELEASE

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Regional leaders meet in Nairobi, Kenya, to fight youth unemployment

Nairobi, 24 July 2014 – Outgoing Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region of Africa, Mrs. Mary Robinson, addressed the extraordinary Summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) taking place in Nairobi, Kenya, between 19 and 24 July 2014, to address the question of youth unemployment, and to make recommendations on how to mitigate its effects on individual countries or on the region as whole, where over half of the population is made up of young people, and unemployment rate is around 34%.

The summit resulted in the establishment of a “Youth Forum” of the member States of the ICGLR with headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. It will seek to: (1) provide a platform for interactive and meaningful youth engagement in the ICGLR member states; (2) be a key facility for information and research on youth development and empowerment; (3) advocate for, and recommend policies that promote youth development in member states; (4) support and enhance capacity and skills development for youth in the region; (5) advocate and work against all forms of sexual and gender-based violence and the protection of civilians including youth, women and children; and (6) ensure effective resource mobilization for the programmes and projects of the Youth Forum.

“This extraordinary Summit represents the culmination of much hard work and reflects progress in regional cooperation, which I am very pleased to see. I congratulate the Heads of State and

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Government for dedicating time and resources to reflect on Youth Employment, a critical requirement for conflict reduction and economic development advocated by the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region. It is important that it becomes a Framework of Hope for young men and women in the Region,” Special Envoy Mary Robinson said in her keynote address.

On 24 February 2013, 11 countries of the ICGLR signed the Peace, Security and Cooperation (PSC) Framework Agreement for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region, thus committing themselves to collaborate and improve the overall security situation in the region. “In a world in which ‘older men declare war’... and ‘the youth have to fight and die’, decades of conflicts in the region have exacted unacceptable toll on young people with millions dead and many more without hope. As we make efforts to bring about durable peace, security and recovery in the region, it is only fair and appropriate that we address the issue of youth employment,” Mrs. Robinson said.

The special summit on the “Fight against Youth Unemployment through Infrastructure Development and Investment Promotion” saw the participation of Presidents Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya, as the event host, and Yoweri Museveni of Uganda. Other participants included youth representatives of the ICGLR member countries, as well as representatives of the African Union, the African Development Bank, the World Bank, the International Labor Organization, and several members of the diplomatic corps present in Kenya.

ICGLR instruments advocate the need to involve the youth in the social, political and economic life of the Great Lakes region. This summit is a result of the 4th Ordinary Summit held in Kampala, Uganda, on 15-16 December 2011, during which ICGLR Heads of State and Government directed the Regional Inter-Ministerial Committee to consider the issue of employment, particularly youth employment within the framework of infrastructure development and investment promotion. The same recommendation was reiterated during the last summit held in Luanda, Angola, on 15 January 2014, following which the Heads of State and Government decided to hold a “Special Summit on Youth Employment”, which Kenya offered to host.

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The Member States of the ICGLR include 12 core countries, namely Angola, Burundi, Kenya, Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of Congo, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

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