



Statement by the co-Guarantors on the occasion of the 8th anniversary of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC and the region

++_+_+_+_+_+_+_+_+_+_+_+_+_+_+_+_

We, the representatives of the Guarantor institutions¹ of the Peace, Security and Cooperation (PSC) Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the region, signed on 24 February 2013 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, take this opportunity to renew our commitment to support the signatory countries with a view to its full implementation.

The commitments made under this "Framework of Hope" by the countries and organizations of the region and the international community are indeed today as yesterday, crucial avenues for achieving lasting peace and stability in the eastern DRC and the region. Ending the activities of armed groups, pursuing an inclusive political dialogue that recognises the importance of the contribution of women and youth, strengthening security cooperation, and promoting regional economic integration remain essential objectives.

We are particularly pleased that in recent years, dialogue and cooperation have gained greater focus to the point of becoming a central modus operandi for the resolution of the major challenges of the region. Progress has also been achieved in areas such as security and economic cooperation. Finally, we note with satisfaction that the countries and peoples of the region have continued to demonstrate resilience and determination in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and are taking courageous measures to contain its negative socio-economic effects. We commend the signatory countries and peoples of the region for all the efforts and achievements, and strongly encourage them to stay the course.

Despite this progress, we also recognise that much more needs to be done towards a region totally at peace with itself, as a prosperous and stable region. Challenges still exist, as evidenced in particular by the persistence of the activities of the so-called negative forces, the continued illegal exploitation of natural resources, the strained relations between certain countries in the

¹ The United Nations, the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) are co-signatories of the PSC Framework otherwise known as the co-Guarantors.

region, the still large number of refugees and displaced persons, as well as the persistence of the violation of human rights, particularly the unacceptable levels of Sexual and Gender Based Violence against women and girls.

The Framework Agreement, like regional instruments such as the 2006 International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) Pact and its various Protocols, remain highly relevant and offer adequate tools to enable signatory countries and peoples of the region to tackle these persistent challenges, despite the current health context. Aware of these challenges and of the complex environment of the Great Lakes region, we reiterate our determination to support the signatory countries and civil society actors in their quest for security, development, and stability.