

Communiqué of the 9th 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

Kampala, 8 October 2018

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 Ninth High-Level Meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism on 8 October 2018 in Kampala, Republic of Uganda. The meeting was convened by H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, with the support of the Guarantor institutions, namely, the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU), the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).
2. Participants (list annexed) reviewed the political and security developments in the region and the progress in the implementation of the PSC Framework since their last meeting held in Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo on 19 October 2017, and:
3. Endorsed the Annual Activity Report as approved by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs/External Relations in their meeting on 6 October 2018 and the recommendations contained therein, in particular the request to H.E. President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda to lead efforts to address displacement in the region, and to H.E. President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya to lead efforts to promote good governance and combat corruption.

Neutralization of negative forces and repatriation of disarmed combatants

4. Condemned the continued activities of negative forces in the region, particularly, the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), the ex M23, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and armed Burundian opposition elements which, in addition to generating insecurity and displacement of the population and illegally exploiting and trading natural resources, fuel mistrust among the countries of the Great Lakes region.
5. Welcomed the UN and SADC joint mission deployed to the DRC to assess MONUSCO's Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) and the progress achieved to date in enhancing the latter's effectiveness, as called for by the eighth high-level meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism. Welcomed the efforts exerted by the DRC towards neutralizing negative forces. Encouraged the DRC, with the support of MONUSCO and its FIB, and in collaboration with the countries of the region, to pursue these efforts. Stressed the criticality of the FIB in the context of any discussion on an exit strategy for MONUSCO. Stressed the need to revitalize efforts to address the threat posed by negative forces, including the ADF. Requested the UN to mobilize support to operationalize and strengthen ICGLR mechanisms, including the Joint Follow-up Mechanism on the ADF based in Kasese.
6. Stressed the need for a new approach, beyond the existing measures, to ensure greater regional cooperation for the full neutralization of the negative forces without delay. In this regard, mandated H.E. President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni to convey to H.E. President Joseph Kabila Kabange the outcomes of the discussions at this ninth high-level meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism, as well as to consult the Chairs of the AU, ICGLR, and the SADC Organ on Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation, with the support of the Guarantor

institutions, on the next steps in joint engagement to address the threats posed by the negative forces in eastern DRC and in the region.

7. Further welcomed the launch of the Follow up Mechanism for the repatriation of former FDLR combatants and their dependents and ex-M23 elements, as directed by the eighth high-level meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism. Took note of the field visits by the Follow-up Mechanism to eastern DRC, Uganda and Rwanda from 24 April to 4 May 2018, and the sensitization campaign and screening activities, which led to the initial return of 13 ex-M23 members from Uganda to the DRC and one ex-M23 member from Rwanda to the DRC, as well as five former FDLR combatants and 22 dependents from the DRC to Rwanda. In light of the modest results despite the good efforts exerted, called on the concerned countries, with the support of the Guarantors of the PSC Framework, to continue to actively cooperate and facilitate the process initiated under the Follow-up Mechanism to put an end to the protracted presence of disarmed FDLR combatants in transit-camps in eastern DRC, and ex-M23 members in Rwanda and Uganda. Re-emphasized the need for the signatory parties of the Nairobi Declarations to fulfil their obligations under this agreement. Noted with satisfaction that all members of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-in Opposition previously accommodated in MONUSCO premises have now left the DRC.

Dialogue and political processes

8. Welcomed the decision of H.E. President Joseph Kabila not to stand for the forthcoming elections in line with the DRC constitution. Took note of the progress made in the preparation for the forthcoming elections in line with the electoral calendar. Encouraged the Government of the DRC and all concerned national stakeholders to continue with their efforts to create conducive conditions for credible, inclusive and peaceful elections on 23 December, in full respect of the 31 December 2016 agreement.

9. On Burundi, welcomed the announcement of H.E. President Pierre Nkurunziza not to present himself as a candidate in the next elections. Called on the Government and all stakeholders to work together in a spirit of cooperation, including through participating in an inclusive dialogue led by the East African Community, to ensure the holding of inclusive, credible and peaceful elections scheduled for 2020 in full respect of the Arusha Agreement.

10. Noted with concern the fragile security situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) and called on the armed groups to put an immediate end to their violent acts, and to fully commit to the dialogue process facilitated by the panel of facilitators of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation. Acknowledged the consultations among CAR armed groups held in Khartoum to support preparations for the dialogue led by the African Initiative. Further welcomed the decision by the African Union and the United Nations to jointly nominate a Special Envoy to promote efforts to achieve success of the African Initiative. Stressing the importance of an inclusive dialogue, noted that the African Initiative is the viable framework to achieve durable peace in the country under which all peace efforts should be incorporated.

11. Welcomed the initialling of the revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (2015) on 28 August in Khartoum and the final signing at the 33rd IGAD Summit on 12 September in Addis Ababa. Called on the signatory parties to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Agreement and its dissemination at grassroots level. Encouraged those who have not yet signed the Agreement to do so. Commended the Governments of Sudan and Uganda for facilitating the talks, with the support and cooperation

of the other IGAD member states, and encouraged international partners to help the signatory parties achieve a lasting end to the crisis in South Sudan. Further acknowledged the positive steps taken by the Government of South Sudan and the parties towards the implementation of the Agreement, including the establishment of the National Transitional Political Committee, the release of prisoners of war and political detainees, and progress in the ongoing National Dialogue.

12. Stressed the need to ensure that electoral and political processes in the region are inclusive, as exclusion of national stakeholders leads to perpetuating instability.

Strengthening the bonds of friendship and cooperation in the Great Lakes region

13. Noted the conclusions of the seminar jointly convened by the UN and the AU on 26-27 February 2018 in Addis Ababa to mark the fifth anniversary of the PSC Framework, notably the relevance of the PSC Framework as a complementary instrument to the ICGLR Pact in support of peace and stability in the region; the importance of peace in the DRC for overall stability in the Great Lakes; the need to involve women, youth and civil society, including the private sector, in peace and political processes, and; the need to address issues that contribute to mistrust among the DRC, Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi. Highlighted the need for greater demonstration of political will and building of trust among the core countries of the region as critical elements to fulfil the ambition of the PSC Framework and the ICGLR Pact. In that regard:

- i. requested H.E. President Denis Sassou Nguesso, outgoing Chair of the Regional Oversight Mechanism and Chair of the ICGLR, in liaison with H.E. President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, incoming Chair of the Regional Oversight Mechanism, to consider taking initiatives to strengthen the bonds of friendship and cooperation between the core countries of the region, building on his previous efforts.
- ii. encouraged signatory countries to ensure that existing bilateral joint commissions meet regularly to discuss issues of common concern, and promote and follow up bilateral cooperation; and
- iii. encouraged signatory countries to ensure that tripartite commissions and other relevant mechanisms meet regularly to expedite efforts aimed at the repatriation of refugees and to seek durable solutions to the problem of refugees in the region.

Promoting the role of women in peace and political processes

14. Welcomed the address by the women representative of the Great Lakes region on the conclusions of the UN-AU-ICGLR solidarity missions undertaken by representatives of the Women's Platform in South Sudan, Burundi, the CAR and the DRC. Encouraged the countries of the region to continue to expend every effort to achieve full gender parity and in the interim, ensure a minimum of 30% representation of women in peace and political processes within five years by 2023.

Next high-level meeting of the ROM

15. Extended their gratitude to H.E. President Denis Sassou Nguesso for his invaluable efforts and engagement in his capacity as outgoing chair of the Regional Oversight Mechanism.
16. Welcomed the offer by the DRC to host the Tenth High-Level Meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism in 2019 and encouraged other countries to consider hosting future such meetings.
17. Extended their gratitude to H.E. President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni and the Government and people of the Republic of Uganda for the generosity in hosting the ninth meeting of the ROM and expressed their appreciation to all those who contributed to the success of the meeting.