Representatives of countries from the Great Lakes region gather in Nairobi to reaffirm their determination to end impunity for human rights violations to advance peace and stability

Nairobi (Kenya), 16 May 2019 – A high-level regional Conference on Justice and Good Governance in the Great Lakes region was convened in Nairobi, Kenya from 13 to 15 May 2019 by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), the Office of the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General for the Great Lakes Region (O/SESG-GL), and the UN Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR). The meeting brought together Ministers of Justice of ICGLR member states, prosecutors, legal experts, representatives of regional courts, national human rights institutions, civil society organizations, and UN partners. The objective was to agree on priority actions to combat impunity and to uphold human rights to consolidate peace and stability in the Great Lakes region.

Mr Huang Xia, United Nations Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, Mr. Andrew Gilmour, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, Ambassador Zachary Muburi-Muita, Executive Secretary of the ICGLR, and Hon. Paul Kihara Kariuki, Attorney General of the Republic of Kenya gave opening remarks. His Excellency Aimé Ange Wilfrid Bininga, the Minister of Justice, Human Rights and Promotion of Indigenous People of the Republic of Congo, in his capacity as Chair of the ICGLR committee of Ministers of Justice, officially launched the Ministerial consultations.

Participants reviewed progress made to combat impunity and uphold human rights in the region, including on access to justice for the most vulnerable groups including victims and survivors of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV). They reviewed the implementation of the relevant ICGLR Protocols and other national, regional, and international frameworks. They agreed on critical priorities to promote justice, and good governance, and to advance the fight against impunity for human rights violations in the Great Lakes region.

Special Envoy Xia indicated that through collective efforts and firm political will the Great
Peace Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC and the region (PSCF).

He further noted that the presence of the high-level delegations from PSC Framework signatory countries was a testimony of the importance that regional leaders attach to fighting impunity and upholding human rights as key contributors to sustainable peace, security and prosperity.

ICGLR Executive Secretary Zachary Muburi-Muita reiterated that combating impunity and upholding human rights are the tenets of any stable and secure society, and stressed that all States are called upon to be custodians of justice and good governance and to commit to fighting impunity in all its forms and manifestations.

The Ministers adopted the Nairobi Declaration on Justice and Good Governance, setting out the steps required to:

- Ensure national, regional, continental, and international legal instruments are adopted and implemented;
- Promote and implement appropriate and effective transitional justice legal framework policies, strategies, and programmes;
- Strengthen or set up effective mechanisms to promote and protect human rights at the country and regional levels;
- Accelerate and enhance the implementation of measures to ensure better and greater access to justice especially for the most vulnerable groups.

The link to the Declaration (ENG and FR) can be found here