



JOINT PRESS RELEASE

JPR21 - 27.02.2018

Five years on, the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC and the region remains central to achieving lasting peace

Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), 27 February 2018 – On the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework (PSCF) for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the region, stakeholders and experts met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 26-27 February, to review progress in the implementation of the agreement, and make recommendations on the way forward.

Representatives of the signatory countries, the Guarantors of the Framework agreement (the United Nations, the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, and the Southern African Development Community), experts, representatives of civil society and international partners participated in the event.

The meeting was addressed by Moussa Faki Mahamat, AU Commission Chairperson, and Jean-Claude Gakosso, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Congo representing President Denis Sassou-Nguesso in his capacity as Chair of the ICGLR and the Regional Oversight Mechanism of the PSC Framework. Said Djinnit, United Nations Special Envoy for the Great Lakes region, Basile Ikouebe, AU Special Representative for the Great Lakes region and Wilbert Ibuge, representing the Executive Secretary of SADC also attended the meeting.

Participants recognized some progress in the implementation of the PSC Framework, including in the neutralization of some negative forces and in cooperation on security, economic, and judicial matters. The signatory countries' ownership of the PSC Framework has increased, as evidenced by the seventh and eighth Summits of the Regional Oversight Mechanism which took place in Luanda (Angola) and Brazzaville (Republic of Congo), in October 2016 and October 2017. Regional institutions are

playing an increasingly key role in the search for lasting peace and stability in the Great Lakes Region.

It was noted, however, that progress is modest in light of the high expectations and hope raised by the signature of the PSC framework. Five years on, important challenges remain. Conflicts in South Sudan and the Central African Republic persist, political and electoral crises in the DRC and Burundi breed increasing tensions, armed groups continue to pose a serious threat in eastern DRC, and the illegal cross-border activities impact on trust and confidence building between member states. As a consequence, over 11 million people are now forcibly displaced within the region.

It was concluded that the PSC Framework remains a viable framework to help the countries and institutions in the region achieve peace and stability, in line with the objectives of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region.

Participants emphasized that signatory countries individually and collectively must demonstrate greater political will and intensify their efforts to fully implement the national and regional commitments they signed up to in 2013.

This has to include sustained efforts to neutralize the negative forces in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and complete the repatriation of foreign disarmed combatants.

Participants also reaffirmed the importance of building confidence and trust in the region, which is critical to achieving peace and stability.

Participants acknowledged the centrality of the DRC in the PSC Framework and urged key actors to refocus their efforts on the full implementation of the 31 December 2016 agreement, including the prompt implementation of confidence building measures. On Burundi, it was acknowledged that the persisting crisis requires decisive action and progress in the mediation efforts of the East African Community. The importance of continued engagement and support by regional institutions and international partners to both processes was reaffirmed.

The importance of youth and employment, of women participants in peace and political process, and of ensuring space for civil society engagement was recognized as requiring urgent attention by the countries in the region. Participants also encouraged a greater role for the private sector in contributing to peace and stability, reiterating the need for countries and regional institutions to create better conditions for investment.

Participants acknowledged the important role of the Guarantors of the PSC Framework and urged them to strengthen their collaboration to advance peace and stability in the Great Lakes Region. They also called for sustained support of international partners.

The critical role of the AU in promoting peace on the continent was recognized, and gratitude expressed for hosting the event in commemoration of the 5th anniversary of the signature of the PSC Framework.