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Government officials and partners from Africa's Great Lakes region confirm local integration as a viable solution to displacement

Nairobi, 7 June 2016 - Government delegations from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia, hosts to over 3.4 million displaced persons from the Great Lakes region, met on 6-7 June 2016 to share experiences on initiatives they are taking to promote local integration as a solution for displaced persons.

In the Great Lakes Region of Africa the number of displaced persons is rising and displacement is often a long-term issue, with some people remaining displaced for close to 20 years. One durable solution to addressing protracted displacement is local integration in communities and countries of asylum.

The two-day workshop was co-hosted by the Office of the United Nations Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Bank. Also in attendance were senior representatives from national governments and key partners engaged in finding durable solutions to long-standing displacement in the region.

World Bank Country Director Diarietou Gaye noted that the Great Lakes region has some of the most advanced examples of inclusive approaches to displaced persons in the world, while highlighting that the region can serve as an example to many. UNHCR Regional Coordinator Stefano Severe stressed the need for workshops like this one as a valuable way to help kick start a process of deepened mutual learning and regional cooperation on solutions for forced displacement.

In his opening remarks, United Nations Special Envoy Said Djinnit emphasized the importance of addressing the root causes of displacement and finding durable solutions to this problem. In line with the Peace, Security, and Cooperation Framework for the DRC and the region, and the UN Great Lakes Regional Strategic Framework, he called on the governments of the region and all partners to take a serious look at finding more regional, innovative and durable solutions to displacement in the Great Lakes region.

The workshop took note of the progress made by the governments in attendance and their commitment to local integration as a viable solution to displacement. Governments

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recognized that local integration can yield many benefits for refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the host countries. At the same time, they noted the legal, political and financial challenges faced when putting local integration into practice. As an outcome for the workshop, governments and partners committed to continue working together and to facilitate smooth and durable local integration where appropriate.

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