

Press statement on the situation in the Great Lakes region

The members of the Security Council met on 3 October 2019 to discuss the situation in the Great lakes region and the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation (PSC) Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region. They were briefed by Mr Huang Xia, Special envoy of the Secretary General for the Great Lakes region.

The members of the Security Council welcomed the recent positive developments in the Great Lakes region, particularly the diplomatic efforts facilitated by Presidents Lourenço of Angola and Tshisekedi of the DRC that led to the quadripartite summit on 12 July in Luanda between Angola, DRC, Rwanda and Uganda, and to their follow-up summit on 21 August in Luanda. They welcomed the joint communique signed on 12 July in that regard and the commitments of the Heads of State to work towards creating a conducive environment for political and economic cooperation, to resolve their differences peacefully, and to support the DRC in its efforts against the Ebola virus epidemic. The members of the Security Council further welcomed the 21 August Memorandum of Understanding between President Museveni of Uganda and President Kagame of Rwanda. They looked forward to its implementation which will contribute to ease their economic and political relations, for the benefit of the whole region.

The members of the Security Council welcomed the renewed national and regional commitment by the DRC and its neighbors to work towards stability and development in eastern DRC, in line with the objectives of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework.

The members of the Security Council encouraged the region and the international community to seize the current momentum to make progress in overcoming challenges to peace and sustainable development. They welcomed further efforts to foster sustainable economic development as a driver for regional peace and to address the root causes of conflict, including through economic cooperation and integration, and support to national initiatives which further improve good governance, anti-corruption, transparency and the economic level-playing field. They stressed that such initiatives will boost social and economic development throughout the region and contribute to lasting peace.

The members of the Security Council condemned all armed groups operating in the DRC, and welcomed the commitment of the signatories of the PSC framework to address the threat posed by these armed groups. They welcomed the commitment of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to support countries of the International Conference for the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) in that regard, as expressed during its 39th summit in Dar Es Salam, Tanzania, on 17-18 August. They reaffirmed that the PSC Framework remains an essential mechanism to achieve durable peace and stability in the DRC and the Region. They welcomed the commitment of its signatories towards its full implementation, and reiterated their call to all signatories to fulfil promptly, fully and in good faith their respective commitments under this Framework in order to address the root causes of conflict and put an end to recurring cycles of violence, and promote lasting regional development. They reiterated that there is no purely military solution to these problems and that the elimination of the threat posed by armed groups will require an integrated and regional approach and strong political engagement by the governments of DRC and the

region, with support of MONUSCO and the Special Envoy of the Secretary General for the Great Lakes. They called for continued regional and international support for initiatives aimed at promoting inclusive dialogue amongst national stakeholders in order to bring peace and stability in the region. They welcomed the work of the United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), especially in the eastern part of the country.

The members of the Security Council reiterated their concern regarding the humanitarian situation, the continued threat posed by the Ebola outbreak and the measles and cholera epidemics in the region. They expressed concern at the lack of funding to respond to this situation and reiterated their appeal to donors and partners to continue providing the necessary support in order to close the humanitarian funding gap as quickly as possible. They further emphasized the need for continued cooperation and coordination with and between the countries of the Great Lakes region in order to enhance regional preparedness and sustainably address disease outbreaks.

The members of the Security Council expressed concern over persistent challenges to the exercise of basic political freedoms and human rights in parts of the Great Lakes region. They stressed the importance of open political space to ensure the full and free participation of political parties, civil society and the media as well as the full participation of both men and women in political processes. They further urged international and regional support for strengthening and improving capacity for elections and governance in the countries of the region, and called on member states in the Great Lakes region to take steps to ensure that electoral processes promote peace and security through timely, peaceful, inclusive and credible elections, in line with countries' own constitutions and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, as applicable. They recognized that the strengthening of regional cooperation in the field of justice would contribute to the fight against impunity, and through reinforcing the confidence of the people of the region in the reliability of judicial institutions, sustain reconciliation between communities and play an overall stabilizing role.

The members of the Security Council reiterated their continued support and commitment, in collaboration with the African Union, ICGLR, SADC and other relevant international and regional organizations to continue to work together to support the Governments of DRC and the region towards the full implementation of the national and regional commitments under the PSC Framework. They further reiterated their full support to the Special Envoy of the Secretary General in fulfilling his mandate to address the remaining challenges in implementation of the PSC Framework and to promote peace and stability in the region, including through good offices, coordinated strategies and shared information with MONUSCO, UNOCA and other UN entities.