

REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL SUPPORT COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONAL OVERSIGHT MECHANISM OF THE PEACE, SECURITY, COOPERATION FRAMEWORK FOR THE DRC AND THE REGION

NAIROBI, KENYA, 24 JUNE 2013

Introduction

1. At its first meeting held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 26 May, the Regional Oversight Mechanism of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region (thereafter PSC Framework) decided to establish a Technical Support Committee (TSC) to help define the benchmarks and follow-up measures for the implementation of the PSC Framework. The Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General, Mrs. Mary Robinson, convened the first meeting of the TSC, in Nairobi, Kenya, on 24 June 2013, in which senior officials from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of Angola, the Republic of Burundi, the Republic of the Congo, the Republic of Rwanda, the Republic of South Africa, the Republic of South Sudan, the United Republic of Tanzania, the Republic of Uganda, the Republic of Zambia participated¹.

2. The meeting was co-chaired by the Special Advisor of the UN Special Envoy, Assistant Secretary-General Modibo I. Touré, and the AU Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region, Ambassador Boubacar Gaoussou Diarra. Also in attendance were the Executive Secretary of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICLGR), Prof. Alphonse D. Ntumba Luaba, the Executive Secretary of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Dr. Tomaz A. Salomão, as well as senior officials from the UN Department of Political Affairs, MONUSCO, ICGLR and SADC.

Opening session

3. The Co-Chairs welcomed the Committee Members and delivered introductory remarks. In his remarks, Special Advisor Touré conveyed a message from Special Envoy Robinson, stressing that the meeting was a significant step and calling on the participants' sense of collective responsibility to ensure that the PSC Framework would really be what she termed a "Framework of hope". The Special Advisor expressed his appreciation with the strong skills and competencies of the senior representatives of the signatories of the PSC Framework in attendance, noting that this was an indication of the importance given by the Heads of State to the process. He stressed that this was possibly one of the last chances to find a solution to years of continuous conflict and violence in eastern DRC.

¹ The Central African Republic was suspended by the African Union. See annex 1 for the full list of participants.

4. The AU Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region stated that the PSC Framework was the first comprehensive and multi-dimensional agreement. As illustrated by the recent joint visit to the region by the UN Secretary-General and the World Bank President, it was critical to generate peace dividends. He noted that the Committee would have, amongst other tasks, to address two important questions: i) how to articulate actions implemented by the National Oversight Mechanism and the Regional Oversight Mechanism of the PSC Framework; and ii) how to create a platform for partners to support the DRC in implementing its commitments. He also recalled that the Regional Oversight Mechanism would meet in September on the margins of the UN General Assembly to adopt the final benchmarks.

5. In his remarks, SADC Executive Secretary, Dr. Salomão expressed his organization's support to the entire process, including through the contribution of some of its Member states to the Intervention Brigade. He called on the TSC to develop benchmarks in a pragmatic way so as to make a visible difference from what was done in the past. Noting the importance of the meeting, ICGLR Executive Secretary Prof. Luaba reiterated that the PSC Framework was possibly the last chance offered to DRC and the region.

6. As per the Chair's suggestion, the agenda of the meeting was amended. The TSC agreed to listen first to the participants who had prepared draft proposals on the benchmarks, including the DRC delegation, the ICGLR Secretariat and the Office of the UN Special Envoy. Participants also agreed that the TSC Secretariat would present a consolidated document for discussion which would include key elements of the different presentations. The Chair encouraged the Committee to develop benchmarks that were credible, implementable and measurable. Finally, participants agreed that it was necessary to take stock of, and learn from, past experience to better address recurring challenges.

Discussions

7. The DRC representative made a presentation and shared a matrix (*tableau de bord*) with implementation responsibilities at the national, the regional and the international level. The ICGLR representative presented the input of his organization, which was subsequently endorsed by the SADC representative. Finally, the representative of the UN Department for Political Affairs briefed about the proposal of the Office of the UN Special Envoy.

8. Following a break, during which the Secretariat combined the three inputs, the Committee reconvened in plenary session to review the draft consolidated document. The Secretariat presented a working document outlining benchmarks and follow-up measures along three thematic areas related to the national, regional and international commitments under the PSC Framework., i.e. (i) political and security matters, (ii) regional economic integration and (iii) judicial cooperation within the region.

9. In the discussion that ensued in a cordial atmosphere, participants welcomed the three presentations made, including the matrix (*tableau de bord*) proposed by the DRC, and the Secretariat's harmonization efforts. They commented on the proposed benchmarks and follow-up measures and added a few more. Noting that there were a lot of similarities amongst the inputs provided, participants stressed that the final document would have to be further shortened and should include a timeline for each benchmark. Some participants cautioned against the temptation to provide too many details and benchmarks that were not in line with the PSC Framework. By contrast, others participant stated that the benchmarks and follow-up measures should be explicit and specific, so as to avoid misinterpretation in the implementation process.

10. There was a consensus on the need to encourage existing regional peace efforts to tackle the crisis in eastern DRC, including the Kampala talks between the DRC Government and M23, the tripartite framework between Angola, the DRC and South Africa, the Oyo Quadripartite process initiated by the Republic of the Congo as well as any other similar initiatives. Participants also noted the importance of the regional mechanisms created to build confidence between the countries, such as the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism and the Joint Intelligence Fusion Centre, both based in Goma. They, however, recognized that those regional mechanisms needed to be strengthened. There were also comments and recommendations on economic projects, including regional economic integration, and the critical role of regional organizations such as CEPGL which should be revamped at the highest political level. Finally, participants called on multilateral and bilateral donors' support for the successful implementation of the PSC Framework.

Closing session

11. After intensive plenary discussion, the Secretariat included all inputs provided by participants into the draft consolidated document. Participants acknowledged that, given the time constraint, it would be impossible to address all the issues on the table and complete the development of benchmarks during the first TSC meeting. As per the Chair's proposal, participants agreed to provide additional comments and inputs on the draft consolidated document by 5 July 2013. The Chair encouraged each delegation to provide an annex with a short list of priority benchmarks, with timeline and responsibilities clearly assigned to each benchmark. The Secretariat will further synthesize those inputs into a consolidated document and send it back to the delegation by 12 July 2013. Participants agreed to meet on 22-23 July, in Nairobi, to review the consolidated document which will be submitted for approval to the ICGLR Heads of States, during their Summit in Luanda, Angola, on 31 July. The proposed benchmarks and follow-up measures will then be presented to the Regional Oversight Mechanism on the margins of the UN General Assembly, in New York, in September.

Nairobi, 2 July 2013