

**PRESS STATEMENT BY THE UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL ENVOY OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR THE GREAT LAKES REGION ON THE 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

**Nairobi, 24 October 2020** – I join my voice to the global campaign celebrating the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the United Nations (#UN75). Since the signing of the groundbreaking and visionary United Nations Charter in 1945, the Organization has been committed to bringing the world together in pursuit of peace and security, human rights, social progress, and better standards of life in larger freedom.

This commitment has also guided the Organization's efforts in support of the people and Governments of the Great Lakes region, where the United Nations has been present for over six decades. Concrete steps towards cross-border cooperation and integration have been taken by stakeholders at all levels, with women and youth increasingly being recognized and involved as key agents of change. The desire for progress is visible.

At the same time, challenges persist just as new ones have emerged in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, whose far-reaching economic and social impacts are testing the capacities of countries around the globe, including in the Great Lakes region.

The 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the United Nations therefore provides a timely occasion to reaffirm our collective commitment to the principles of the United Nations Charter, to remain committed to multilateralism and to demonstrate international solidarity during these unprecedented times so that together we create *The Future We Want* with *The UN We Need*.

As Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region, I will spare no effort to ensure the *Future* of a peaceful, inclusive, prosperous, and resilient region becomes a *Now* for all the people and communities in the Great Lakes region.

Concretely, this will mean building on the region's thrust towards greater cooperation to address, once and for all, the challenges and threats to peace and stability where they persist and to preserve and consolidate the gains achieved to date.

I am particularly proud that this celebration of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary occurs in the same breath as the development of the United Nations Strategy for Peace Consolidation, Conflict Prevention and Conflict Resolution. This Strategy, developed at the request of the Secretary-General, and enriched by wide-ranging consultations within the region and beyond, aims to draw the utmost from the United Nation's varied and large footprint in the region to better serve the people and countries in their quest for peace, stability and sustainable development.

The Strategy will seek to promote and further dialogue, justice, and community-based recovery and development programmes, but it will also bolster support towards greater cooperation to overcome the obstacles that hamper this richly endowed region from reaching its vast potential, including by supporting efforts against those who continue to threaten peace and security, such as armed groups and criminal networks.

I call on all friends and partners of the people and Governments of the Great Lakes to join us in this endeavor so as to translate the vision of the UN Charter into an everyday life reality in the region.

Together we will succeed.