



OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL ENVOY FOR THE GREAT LAKES REGION



THE UN REGIONAL STRATEGY'S ACTION PLAN: WHERE ARE WE?



The Action Plan of the UN regional Strategy was adopted in July 2021. Guided by the priorities of the countries of the region, it comprises five clusters for the period 2021-2023, namely: (i) promoting dialogue and strengthening trust; (ii) reducing the threat posed by armed groups; (iii) promoting a sustainable and transparent management of natural resources, as well as trade and investment; (iv) finding durable solutions to forced displacement; and (v) promoting regional preparedness to public health crises.

The objective of the Action Plan is to translate the Strategy's vision of a peaceful and prosperous Great Lakes region into feasible, impactful and timebound priority actions for the period leading to the 10th anniversary of the PSC Framework in 2023.

In December 2021, the first phase of the Action Plan concluded. Most of the 27 priority activities planned between July and December by UN entities in collaboration with regional and international partners were either launched, as scheduled, or implemented.

Flagship initiatives completed during this first phase included the operationalization of the Contact and Coordination Group on non-military measures, which aims to complement military initiatives through a holistic approach. Another noteworthy milestone was the high-level workshop on natural resources, co-organized by the Office of the Special Envoy and ICGLR in Khartoum in late August, which resulted in over 30 recommendations geared towards disrupting the link between the smuggling of high-value minerals and the financing of armed groups.



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In addition, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) launched a study with ICGLR on refugees in protracted displacement situations and at risk of statelessness. Other initiatives included training activities organized for women entrepreneurs and representatives of the private sector, continued engagement and capacity-building initiatives with national human rights institutions, as well as sustained advocacy in favor of greater vaccine equity. While not all initiatives could be realized as planned, partly as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the implementation of the Action Plan is off to a promising start.