

SESG Briefing to the Security Council

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7 August 2014, New York

Mr. President, Distinguished Members of the Council,

I am honored to address the Council today, in my last appearance as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region. I wish to first express my gratitude to the Secretary-General for the privilege of serving in this capacity, and to the Council members, for the resolute support extended to me during the past 18 months. I am pleased to note, as evidenced from this meeting, and the related discussions this afternoon, that the Council's commitment to the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC and the region remains unwavering.

I would also take this opportunity to thank the UK presidency for organizing this special session at a critical moment for peace and stability in the Great Lakes region, just before the Regional Oversight Mechanism meets in New York in September to take stock of the progress made in the implementation of the PSC Framework.

Despite the tremendous human and material resources found in the Great Lakes region, decades of war and deep mistrust had caused great damage and misery, at the same time I assumed duty about 18 months ago. Nevertheless hope was not lost. The Peace, Security and Cooperation (PSC) Framework for the Democratic Republic of

Congo and the Great Lakes region, offered a unique opportunity for comprehensive solutions, at national, regional and international levels, with inclusive and active participation of civil society, including women and youth, in order to bring durable peace, with security, and development, to the DRC and the region. While efforts to implement the PSC Framework have met with anticipated challenges, I remain encouraged by the prospects and opportunities generated by the Framework, and by the significant achievements recorded so far.

Implementing the provisions of the Framework has provided a significant forum, the Technical Support Committee, comprised of principal representatives of Heads of State and Government, under my auspices together with the African Union, to deliberate and offer advice on the actualization of the regional commitments. These periodic high – level interactions, supported by my office in Nairobi, have significantly improved communication flow, mutual understanding, and a heightened sense of urgency for collective actions as reflected in the formulation of the “Regional Action Plan” setting out priority actions, as well as a monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the implementation of the commitments of member states. These have, indeed, been significant preliminary steps for a region known to have gone to war not too long ago in eastern DRC.

Mr. President,

Implementing the PSC Framework in the last 18 has resulted in a strengthening of collective governance and ownership in the region. My efforts have greatly benefited from the proven determination by the leadership in the region to take ownership and responsibility for finding solutions for peace, security and development. This is evidenced by the mini Summit of Heads of State to be convened next week by President Dos Santos, as Chair of the ICGLR, to address the current issues. I therefore wish to take this opportunity to thank in particular, Presidents Eduardo Dos Santos Yoweri Museveni, Joseph Kabila, Paul Kagame, Uhuru Kenyatta, Jakaya Kikwete and Zuma for their untiring efforts to ensure the actualization of the goals of the PSC Framework. I also thank other Heads of State and Government of signatory countries, and the Secretariats of the ICGLR and SADC for the emerging collaboration and synergy, which I have appreciated as vital in order to support the implementation of the Framework.

International support by key partners remains crucial, now and in the immediate future. I would like to thank my colleagues, members of the international team of Envoys, the International Contact Group, the Africa Union Commission, the World Bank, the Africa Development Bank, MONUSCO, and the United Nations Country

Teams in the region, to name only a few, for the useful collaboration and support provided to me in the implementation of my mandate, and for the evolving understanding of the critical need to align respective programmes and policies in the region in support of the PSC Framework.

Equally central to the success of the PSC Framework is the full participation of civil society, particularly women and youth, which are too often left out in critical decision making processes, despite their significant proportional stake in the affairs of the region. I have worked with civil society in the region to establish a Women's Platform for the PSC Framework, not as a separate mechanism but as a reinforcing platform to support all regional and national efforts aimed to give voice and facilitate the active involvement of women in the implementation of the Framework.

National and regional planning workshops are currently ongoing with the support of my office, MONUSCO and the UN Country Teams, for the establishment of a Civil Society Coalition in the region, in order to ensure that governments are held accountable for their commitments under the Framework. I am indeed gratified to see the emerging galvanization of these critical segments of society towards the achievement of the objectives set forth in the PSC Framework.

Mr. President

My last field assignment was to attend the ICGLR Extra-Ordinary Summit to Combat Youth Unemployment in the Great Lakes region, a project supported by the Trust Fund I established in the Office of the Special Envoy to support the implementation of the Framework. I am encouraged by the determination of governments in the region to address the looming danger of a fast growing youth population with stagnant, if not dwindling, opportunities across the region.

Fast-tracking the implementation of the development pillar of the PSC Framework remained a key priority of my efforts. When people have livelihoods, and the economy grows, the clouds of violence and insecurity inevitably lift. To that end, I have worked with the current Chair of the ICGLR, President dos Santos and the ICGLR Secretariat to ensure progress is achieved on the planned Private Sector Investment Conference for the Great Lakes region, endorsed by the Regional Oversight Mechanism. On 11 June, in conjunction with the UN Global Compact, I convened a Roundtable on responsible investment in the Great Lakes region in Addis Ababa, which drew over 100 participants from the private, and public sectors, signatory countries, development partners, and

regional and international development finance institutions. In September, Angola will host a ministerial-level Regional Consultation that will bring together the PSC Framework signatory countries, private sector representatives and international development partners in order to endorse an Investment Opportunity Brief for the region and finalize discussions for the Investment Conference.

Distinguished Members of the Council,

While some progress has been achieved thus far, much more work is required in the days ahead, and serious challenges confront the attainment of irreversible peace, security and development in the region as envisaged by the PSC Framework. If not immediately and effectively addressed, these challenges have the potential to undo the progress achieved, and ultimately undermine peace and security.

These include, the slow implementation of the provisions of the Nairobi Declarations that followed the conclusion of the Kampala Dialogue, the humanitarian situation, including the state of human rights, persisting impunity and the ongoing plight of refugees and IDPs, restoration of state authority in eastern DRC, acceleration of security sector reform, and the FDLR voluntary disarmament process. In addition, the region faces political tensions and general anxiety generated by transitional politics and

electoral calendars in several signatory countries in the next couple years, and, the prevailing mistrust in the region.

I call on the parties, with the support of the ICGLR Chair, to follow-up rapidly on the recent technical visits to Uganda and Rwanda by a DRC delegation, in order to begin the process of repatriation of former eligible M23 members and to implement other provisions of the Nairobi Declarations. There should be a timetable and careful monitoring of implementation of this process. I take note of the recent progress by the DRC National Oversight Mechanism to conclude benchmarks and indicators of progress for national commitments. This will need to be followed up by concrete actions in order to address root causes as provided by the PSC Framework. My office is currently engaged at the working level, with relevant UN focal points at the regional level to take stock of the refugee and IDP situation. The findings should provide the necessary background for further engagements at Summit level in the region.

Council members will recall that on 31 May I had welcomed the FDLR announcement of voluntary surrender. However, the process has yet to gain sufficient traction to show it is credible. If anything, it has created a worrying dynamic in the region, and beyond, that needs to be carefully observed and handled in order to preserve the earlier consensus building generated within the region on illegal armed groups, and to remain focused on relevant Security Council Resolutions on the neutralization of the

FDLR in eastern DRC. The position taken have been very clear, that all negative forces must be removed, and it is hoped that the forthcoming mini Summit will give a clear signal in this regard.

With regards to the electoral calendars in the region, I note the positive steps taken in Burundi, notably with regards to improvements in the electoral framework and the adoption, by consensus, of the electoral code. However, much more needs to be done by the Government to curb politically motivated armed violence. It will be critically important to work with authorities, not only in Burundi, but in all other countries in the region where elections are scheduled in the next few years, in order to ensure adequate political space, including individual and group freedoms, necessary for free and fair elections.

Mr. President,

The PSC Framework offers solutions to cycles of conflicts that were decades in the making. It would not be realistic to expect that solutions would come overnight. We must therefore take a long term view to ensure tangible returns on the commitments made in this historic PSC Framework for the DRC and the region. We must continue to nurture the Framework and work with the leadership in the region, for as long as it takes,

in order to reap the required benefits for the peoples of the region who continue to bear the consequences of conflict.

I call on the distinguished Council to extend to my successor, Mr Said Djinnit, all the support required to carry out his mandate as the Special Envoy. He will lead a fine team in Nairobi, and benefit as I did from the support of the senior leadership in the UN

In closing I would like to thank the Chef De Cabinet, Office of the Secretary-General, the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Field Support, and my Special Adviser, Modibo Touré, and staff members in Nairobi as well as Martin Kobler and his team in MONUSCO, for their tireless efforts to support the implementation of my mandate.

I firmly believe that working together with the region, and with a common approach and political will, the PSCF is a Framework of Hope that will ensure that we reach that point, in Seamus Heany's words: "when hope and history rhyme".

I thank you for listening.

