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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
1005TH MEETING

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
21 JUNE 2021

PSC/PR/COMM.1005 (2021)

COMMUNIQUE

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Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at 1005th meeting held on 21 June 2021, on the Situation in the Great Lakes Region.

The Peace and Security Council,

Noting the opening remarks by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Burundi to the AU and PSC Chairperson for June 2021, H.E. Ambassador Joel Nkurabagaya and by the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, as well as the presentations by the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission for the Great Lakes Region and Head of the AU Liaison Office in Bunjumbura, in Burundi, H.E. Ambassador Basil Ekouebe and by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) Director for Peace and Security; **also noting** the statements by the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to the AU, H.E. Ambassador Ngandu'; the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Angola to the AU, H.E. Ambassador Francisco Jose da Cruz, on behalf of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) Chairperson; and by the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General to the AU and Head of the UN Office to the AU, H.E. Madame Hanah Tetteh;

Recalling the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework Agreement for the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Region, signed in Addis Ababa, in February 2013, as well as the Communique of the meeting of the Guarantors of the Framework Agreement, held on 27 January 2017;

Also recalling all its previous decisions and pronouncements on the situation in the Great Lakes Region, in particular, Communique [PSC/PR/COMM.(CMXCIV)], adopted at its 994th meeting, held on 22 January 2021, in which Council reiterated its request for the AU Commission to provide quarterly briefings to Council on the situation in the Great Lakes Region;

Reaffirming AU solidarity with the governments and people of the countries of the Great Lakes Region, as well as the unwavering commitment of the AU to continue to support them in addressing the root causes of the challenges facing their countries;

Acting under Article 7 of its Protocol, the Peace and Security Council:

1. **Welcomes** the progress made on the Great Lakes Region on peace, security and stability, in spite of the challenges related to heinous criminal activities being perpetrated by armed groups active in the Region, natural disasters, including the floods in Burundi caused by the rising waters of lake Tanganyika, as well as the eruption of Nyiragongo volcano in eastern DRC, the outbreak and spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and **notes with deep concern** the attendant humanitarian situation in terms of losses of life, internally displaced persons and refugees;

2. **Also welcomes** the mutual trust and confidence building measures and normalization of relations between the and among the countries of the Region and, in this regard, **commends** the diplomatic initiatives of H.E. President Felix EtienneTshisekedi of the DRC, as well as the mediation efforts being deployed by H.E President Joao Lurengo of the Republic of Angola in his capacity as the Chair of ICGLR;
3. **Further welcomes** the removal of Burundi from the agenda of the UN Security Council and the closure of the AU Human Rights Observers and Military Experts Mission in Burundi on 31 May 2021;
4. **Congratulates** the countries of the Region that have recently organized peaceful and credible elections, in line with the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Democracy and **encourages** them to continue to deepen and consolidate democracy in their countries;
5. **Also commends** the countries of the Region for the collective efforts being deployed in addressing the various security threats facing the Region and **encourages** them to continue to further strengthen their cooperation, enhance their collective security efforts and to remain vigilant;
6. **Welcomes** the launching of the Contact and Coordination Group (CCG) to oversee the implementation of non-military measures to complement military operations against negative forces in the Great Lakes region, as well as the UN Strategy and Action Plan for the Great Lakes Region developed with the support of Member States and the Guarantors of the Framework Agreement; and **stresses** the importance of ensuring respect for the principles of subsidiarity and complementarity in its implementation;
7. **Strongly condemns** the heinous crimes, including illegal exploitation and trade of natural resources of the Region, being committed by the armed groups and negative forces actively operating in the Region and **affirms the readiness** of Council to impose necessary punitive measures, including targeted sanctions, against these groups and all those found to be supporting them;
8. **Encourages** countries of the region to further strengthen their cooperation and collaboration, in order to combat and eradicate more effectively all negative forces and armed groups in the region with a view to silencing the guns in Africa;
9. **Underscores** the need for holistic and inclusive approaches for addressing the underlying structural root causes of the challenges facing the Region and, in this regard, **appeals** to the international community to continue to support the initiatives of the countries of the Region to eradicate the armed groups, negative forces and terrorist groups operating, as well as in addressing the attendant humanitarian situation in the Region, including in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic;
10. **Pays tribute** to the UN Stabilization Mission in the Congo (MONUSCO) Force Intervention Brigade for the sustained efforts to eradicate all negative forces operating in the Region; **pays particular tribute** to all men and women of the Brigade who have paid the

supreme sacrifice; **expresses sincere condolences** to their families and countries of origin; **wishes speedy recovery** to those sustaining injuries;

11. **Commends** the Government of the Republic of Kenya for contributing troops to the MONUSCO Force Intervention Brigade, which significantly further strengthens the capacity of the Brigade to more effectively discharge its mandate;

12. **Underlines the need** to ensure full implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework Agreement for the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Region, Council Framework while welcoming the proposal by the DRC for the Framework Agreement to be reviewed;

13. **Highlights** the importance of enhancing the coordination between the AU Commission and PSC, with the office of the UN Secretary General Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, in particular with reference to the drafting of the action plan of the Great Lakes Region;

14. **Commends** the efforts being deployed by the AU Liaison Office to the Great Lakes Region; **notes with concern** the capacity challenges being faced by the Office and **requests** the Chairperson of the Commission to take necessary steps to mobilize necessary resources to enable the Office to more effectively discharge its mandate and to further enhance the presence and visibility of the AU in the Region;

15. **Requests** the Chairperson of the Commission to mobilize necessary support for the Disarmament Demobilization and Re-integration programmes in the countries of the Region;

16. **Also requests** the Chairperson of the Commission and the international partners, as well as Member States that are in a position to do so, to redouble efforts in mobilizing required support in favor of the countries of the Region, in order to enable them to more effectively address the prevailing humanitarian challenges in the Region;

17. **Looks forward** to the next quarterly briefing on the situation in the Great Lakes Region; and **expresses** its readiness to undertake a field mission to the region to support the positive developments and stand on the challenges; and

18. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the situation.