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**QUADRIPARTITE SUMMIT OF THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY,
ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF CENTRAL AFRICAN STATES,
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE GREAT LAKES REGION
AND SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY,
UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE AFRICAN UNION,**

LUANDA, ANGOLA, 22 TO 28 JUNE 2023

STATEMENT OF DR. ALHAJI SARJOH BAH, DIRECTOR OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT DIRECTORATE

- **Representatives of AU member states, RECs/RMs;**
- **Representatives of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda;**
- **Chair of the PSC for the month of June 2023;**
- **Our Host, the Government of the Republic of Angola,**
- **The High Representatives of the Chairperson of the AUC in the Great Lakes Region & DRC**
- **Representatives of the UN system**

Good morning.

My name is Alhaji Sarjoh Bah, and I am the Director of the Conflict Management Directorate in the AU Political Affairs Peace and Security Department. On behalf of the African Union Commission, I would like to welcome you all to the majestic city of Luanda and thank our Host, Angola, and my brother Ambassador Jorge Cardoso for the warm welcome accorded to all of us since our arrival.

I would like to thank all of you for participating in this meeting despite the short notice. Your presence here clearly demonstrates your commitment and determination to support efforts to find a lasting solution to the challenges facing the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

As you know, the objective of the Summit we are preparing for is to agree on the best ways and means to coordinate and harmonize the various initiatives deployed by your respective institutions in Eastern DRC.

You will agree that our meeting this morning has a very critical role in informing and guiding the Ministers and Heads of State and Government deliberations on 26 June and 27 June 2023. In this vein, our discussions should be focused and results-oriented to come up with recommendations centered around improving collaboration and harmonization of several peace efforts in Eastern DRC by namely, the East African Community, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the United Nations (UN), as well as the support by the concerned Member States, namely the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Republic of Rwanda. You will recall that the Peace and Security Council also called for this harmonization during its 1140th meeting held in February 2023 under the Chairship of H.E. President Cyril Ramaphosa. We are therefore pleased to have the Republic of Zimbabwe at this meeting as the current Chairperson of the AU PSC for the month of June 2023.

Colleagues, in the Concept Note shared with all of you, we have proposed that the Summit adopt a Consolidated Master Plan to enhance coordination, harmonization and foster complementarity. In this regard, today's meeting of experts needs to come up with concrete proposals for the Consolidated Master Plan.

In this light, we would kindly request that your presentations should focus on the following:

i. Existing peace processes of the respective RECs/RMs in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (political and military track)

ii. Identifying potential areas for enhanced collaboration between the countries concerned, the AU, RECs/RMs and UN, including mobilization of resources. Proposed way forward.

From the AU Commission, we strongly urge and support all the peace efforts and the imperative to harmonize them to ensure unity of efforts and coherence as we accompany the process for the restoration of "PEACE, SECURITY, STABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT" in Eastern DRC.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to pose several questions to guide our deliberations. We need to assess and define our roles in order to avoid and prevent duplication on the basis of the comparative advantages of each regional mechanism. We should therefore ask ourselves the following:

i. Have we consistently fulfilled our responsibilities as institutions?

ii. Are our institutional arrangements in the region adequate?

iii. How can we define the role of the AU and UN in a manner that complements and strengthens regional initiatives?

iv. How do we coordinate in providing humanitarian support to the population in need?

v. How can we coordinate operations between all the forces deployed in the area?

vi. How should we define or redefine the areas of action of each of the military actors in operations without affecting the role of each of the actors?

vii. How can we unify the command and control of forces under the same leadership or harmonize practices for greater efficiency? and

viii. How can we achieve the establishment of predictable and sustainable funding to support peace operations?

Colleagues, with these few words, I once again thank you for your participation in this important technical meeting. Our principals expect us to come up with clear and tangible ways of meeting the political and security challenges in Eastern DRC. I am confident we will be able to achieve this goal. I wish you fruitful and productive deliberations.

I thank you.