

Mr President,

Firstly, we would like to thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary General for his briefing this afternoon. This briefing and the latest report of the Secretary General regarding the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework provide us with a clear view of the current situation in the Great Lakes Region.

Mr President,

Today, we would like to focus our speech on two topics:

**Firstly: Our first message concerns the security, political, humanitarian and human rights situations in the Great Lakes region.**

- Despite the fantastic work done by the Special Envoy, the general situation in the Great Lakes remains complex. On the security front, the progress made in the context of DDR cannot hide the fact that the number of cross-border incidents is increasing, specifically those concerning Burundi and also between Rwanda and Uganda. Eliminating the threat of certain adverse forces continues to require a comprehensive and regional approach and strong political engagement by the governments of the DRC and of the region.
- In the current political context, we welcome the signing of the Peace Agreement by the Central African Republic. Furthermore, we hope that future presidential and parliamentary elections in Burundi will be credible, transparent and inclusive.

- On the humanitarian front, the general overview of the latest report remains particularly saddening, with 11.2 million people forced to migrate in the Great Lakes region. We are still worried about the evolution in the DRC of certain epidemics, such as Ebola. This disease has not produced cross-border victims, but we must remain quite vigilant.
- We also still worry about the human rights situation, specifically in Yumbi and the DRC. We regret that said situation was not well detailed in the last report.
- On the other hand, certain new opportunities have become apparent. We welcome the new political dynamic initiated in the DRC by President Tshisekedi. We hope that this will give a fresh impetus to the full implementation of the Accord.

**Secondly: my second message concerns economic cooperation in the Great Lakes region.**

- Economic cooperation, including the area of natural resources, remains an essential element of the Framework. The report mentions various initiatives proposed by the Special Envoy, such as organising a conference in Kigali to promote peace, security and shared management of natural resources in the *Greater Virunga Landscape*, and even organising the second *Private Sector Investment Conference* in November.
- We will state that the level of cross-border investments in the Great Lakes Region is still too low, though the informal economy remains omnipresent. We wonder how the Framework, were it in a modified version, could contribute to improving this situation.

In conclusion, regional integration remains essential.

Thank you for your attention.