



KINGDOM OF BELGIUM

Intervention of Ludovic Bol

First Secretary

Permanent representation of Belgium to the UN

at

The briefing of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

New York, 16/02/2023, 15h00

Madam President,

I thank the Sanctions Committee for the opportunity to attend this briefing.

I have listened very carefully to the presentation of the Mid Term report of the Group of Experts.

Belgium is a principled supporter of the work of all the Panels and Groups of experts, and their reports. This is not the first time and not the only country configuration in which we have taken the floor to express our support to a vital instrument of the United Nations. Experts and their reports bring transparency. They inform the wider membership and the Security Council of the situation on the ground, and report in line with the mandate that the Security Council gave them.

For this reason, Belgium would like to mark its appreciation to the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo for their work and we support it.

Madam President,

I want to add a few reflections in light of today's briefing.

Considering the evidentiary standards recommended by the Informal Working Group of the Security Council on General Issues of Sanctions (and used by this Group of Experts),

bringing credibility to the work of the panels, it is essential that their reports are analyzed in their entirety. **Selective supporting or citing from the report and its recommendations is not helpful.** Not only would it not reflect the holistic approach of such a report; furthermore it would not help achieve the objectives for which these committees were originally established.

In addition to these aspects relating to an unfortunate instrumentalization of recommendations, let me **draw attention to the concrete dangers** of any cherry-picking temptation. This very 1533 Committee has already tragically suffered criticism against it. Some of their experts (not to say way too many of them) have sadly paid the heaviest price, not so long ago. We owe them. For this reason, Belgium would therefore **urge caution regarding any temptation of partial criticism**, given its devastating impact. **We encourage all States to cooperate fully, in good faith, with the Group.**

Madam President,

Belgium is concerned about the continuing violence against the populations of eastern DRC. Belgium calls for peace and pacification in the region. Our Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Lahbib, has just returned from a trip to the region, preceded by various bilateral contacts. She **reaffirmed Belgium's commitment to maintain a constant dialogue with all the countries of the region**, in order to support an end to the conflict. She **renewed Belgium's support for the implementation by all the Parties of the commitments taken within the regional processes.**

We express our gratitude for the continued engagement of States and Organisations that seek to bring peace and stability in the DRC and the wider Great Lakes region.

Thank you.