

BRIEFING

Mr President,

First of all, we would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the President of the Sanctions Committee for their briefings.

Mr President,

Firstly: We welcome the positive new dynamic launched by President Tshisekedi. However, the situation in the DRC remains complex.

- Belgium is still concerned about the security situation, particularly in the Kivus and Ituri. In North Kivu, we strongly condemn the latest attacks against the Ebola early warning teams. In Ituri, we are worried about the inter-ethnic violence which has already displaced more than 300,000 people. We are calling on all parties to reduce tensions and respect the civilian population.
- We also remain concerned about the humanitarian situation. In addition to the Ebola epidemic, there have already been over 87,000 victims of

measles since the beginning of this year. Furthermore, cholera continues to claim many lives.

Respect for human rights and the restoration of the rule of law are still crucial challenges, as the President has declared. In this context, it is of great concern to witness that the FARDC and the PNC have been able to continue to commit human rights violations in the period covered by the last report. The security sector reform (SSR) involving the professionalisation of the security forces must remain a priority.

Secondly: MONUSCO and the new sanctions regime do and must continue to contribute to the protection of civilians, peacemaking and the restoration of the State's authority across the entire region.

- By supporting the Congolese government, MONUSCO continues to play a key role. In the context of its current independent strategic review, Belgium is therefore expecting the development of benchmarks to provide a clear measurement of the Congolese authorities' capacities to take on the various tasks currently performed by MONUSCO. The adequate protection of civilians and respect for human rights in all circumstances remains essential.
- Belgium also welcomes the renewal of the sanctions regime and the new mechanism for updating its list. While applauding the Congolese authorities' cooperation with the expert group of the sanctions regime, and President Tshisekedi's commitment to improve the human rights situation, we also hope that the next renewal of the sanctions regime can be used to make them more effective and more targeted.

Thirdly: as the future of the Democratic Republic of Congo and that of the Great Lakes area remain closely linked, we are calling on all stakeholders to seize the current positive momentum.

- After the recent four-party Presidential summit in Luanda and the latest initiatives to strengthen the Regional Oversight Mechanism of the Framework Agreement and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), we hope that this dynamic will prove sustainable and have tangible effects. Better regional cooperation could have considerable benefits for the Congolese population, not only in the context of the fight against different armed groups, but also within the framework of economic cooperation and even that of the fight against the illegal exploitation of natural resources.

Thank you for your attention.