



Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

8491st meeting

Tuesday, 26 March 2019, 3.30 p.m.

New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Delattre (France)

Members:

Belgium	Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve
China	Mr. Wu Haitao
Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Moriko
Dominican Republic	Mr. Trullols Yabra
Equatorial Guinea	Mrs. Mele Colifa
Germany	Mr. Schulz
Indonesia	Mr. Syihab
Kuwait	Mr. Almunayekh
Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
Poland	Ms. Wronecka
Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
South Africa	Ms. McBride
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hickey
United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

The situation in the Great Lakes region

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region (S/2019/229)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Great Lakes region

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region (S/2019/229)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Said Djinnit, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2019/229, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region.

I now give the floor to Mr. Djinnit.

Mr. Djinnit (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to present the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region (S/2019/229), which covers the period from 1 September 2018 to 28 February 2019.

At the outset, I would like to welcome the recent positive developments in the region, in particular the holding of peaceful elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan and the reaching of the peace agreement between the Government of the Central African Republic and 14 armed groups, facilitated by the African Union (AU), as well as the ongoing efforts to consolidate those gains. Moreover, I would like to take stock of some important initiatives that my Office has pursued during the reporting period, in collaboration with the other guarantors of the Cooperation Framework, namely, the

African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the Southern African Development Community.

(spoke in English)

First, as a follow-up to the decision of the eighth summit of the Regional Oversight Mechanism, held in October 2017 in Brazzaville, the protracted presence of disarmed Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) combatants located in transit camps in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was decisively addressed and resolved. As a result of efforts of the Joint Follow-up Mechanism, facilitated by my Office, 98 former combatants of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda and their dependants were voluntarily repatriated from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Rwanda, as well as 80 ex-Mouvement du 23 mars (M-23) elements and their dependants from the camps in Uganda and one former M-23 member from Rwanda to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Moreover, building on the momentum created by the Follow-up Mechanism, in November 2108 all FDLR camps in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo were closed by the Congolese authorities and 1,634 disarmed FDLR elements and their dependants were successfully repatriated to Rwanda through bilateral arrangements.

That shows that progress can be made even on the most protracted issues when political will is displayed by the leaders of the region. I seize this opportunity to commend the three countries concerned — the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and Rwanda — for their commitment and cooperation. I encourage them to sustain that positive momentum to conclude the repatriation of the remaining former M-23 members in camps in Rwanda and Uganda. It will also be important to monitor and support the effective reintegration of the former combatants into civilian life.

Secondly, during the ninth Regional Oversight Mechanism summit, held in Kampala, leaders of the region stressed the need to strengthen existing security and confidence-building mechanisms and explore avenues to further strengthen the bonds of friendship and cooperation among the core counties of the region. Accordingly, we have been working assiduously with the ICGLR to support the operationalization of those mechanisms, notably the Joint Follow-up Mechanism on the Allied Democratic Forces and the Expanded

Joint Verification Mechanism, as important platforms to exchange information and enhance regional cooperation on the neutralization of negative forces. I have also been encouraging leaders, including during my most recent meetings with President Sassou Nguesso of the Republic of Congo, President Museveni of Uganda, President Lourenço of Angola and AU Commission Chairperson Faki Mahamat, to assist in defusing current tensions between some core countries of the region. In that regard, I welcome the recent initiatives taken by some leaders.

Thirdly, in extended consultations with all stakeholders, we have been highlighting the urgency of addressing the protracted refugee crisis in the region and promoting a common regional approach on that important issue. Those efforts culminated in the holding, on 7 March, of a ministerial meeting on the refugee situation in the Great Lakes region, which I co-chaired together with the Prime Minister of Uganda and the Executive Secretary of the ICGLR. The Ministers stressed the importance of addressing the drivers and root causes of forced displacement, while noting that over 4 million out of the 6.3 million refugees on the African continent originated from countries in the Great Lakes region. They reviewed options for durable solutions, including local integration of refugees in host communities. The ICGLR was further requested to develop a regional strategy and an action plan for durable solutions for the region.

As this will be my last briefing as Special Envoy for the Great Lakes region, allow me to use this opportunity to take stock of progress and challenges encountered during my tenure.

The region made important steps towards durable peace and stability since the 1990s and early 2000s. Despite persisting insecurity in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and South Sudan, the region today is largely peaceful. Where cross-border clashes frequently occurred, differences between Member States are now mostly addressed through dialogue, albeit not always conclusively. Serious efforts have been initiated to promote regional cooperation and socioeconomic integration, which need to be vigorously sustained and supported by international partners.

That progress notwithstanding, the continued presence of negative forces in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo perpetuates

insecurity and mistrust between some countries. Allegations of support by Governments of the region, or their proxies, to such groups and cross-border interference continue to threaten cordial relations and stability. They are compounded by the continuing illegal exploitation of, and trade in, natural resources. The re-emergence of tensions between some countries of the region have further hampered efforts to yield the full potential of cooperation.

Those issues require our sustained attention. Greater regional cooperation will be necessary to effectively neutralize the negative forces operating in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and transform natural resources into vehicles of shared prosperity. In addition to strengthening existing confidence-building mechanisms, there is a continued need to create opportunities for dialogue among the countries concerned to address differences, where they exist, and strengthen the trust and cooperation among them.

Politically, significant opportunities for consolidating regional peace and stability have emerged, including with the recent developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and the Central African Republic. In that regard, I welcome the recent visits by President Tshilombo Tshisekedi to the countries of the region in an effort to strengthen ties with his country.

That progress, however, remains fragile. We need to capitalize on the opportunities and not waver in our support to the respective parties to live up to their responsibilities. Sustained efforts are required in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to ensure that differences across political parties are addressed and consensus is promoted on ways to achieve peace and development throughout the country.

On Burundi, we need to provide continued support to the East African Community to promote effective decisions on next steps in the facilitation process to ensure a peaceful and inclusive political process towards elections in 2020, in full respect of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi.

In recognizing those continuing challenges, and in line with the road map that I developed after assuming the functions of Special Envoy, which the Council endorsed, I have focused my engagement on key priority areas to support the signatory countries in the

implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework in the following ways.

First, there is the matter of strengthening regional ownership and the implementation process. Upon assuming my functions, I realized that the summit meetings of the Regional Oversight Mechanism, held regularly on the margins of the AU summit and the General Assembly, were facing diminishing interest and participation by leaders of the signatory countries. In efforts to reinvigorate the Mechanism as a forum for a regular exchange among leaders and the main vehicle to govern the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, I recommended that the summit be held in the region and be convened and chaired by one of the signatory countries on a rotating basis. Since the endorsement of that reform initiative by the Heads of State in 2016, the chairmanship of the Regional Oversight Mechanism has been held by the Heads of State of Angola, the Republic of the Congo and Uganda successively. The next summit of the Mechanism is scheduled to be hosted in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in October, followed by Zambia in 2020. The reform was successful in promoting renewed interest and ownership on the part of the signatory countries in the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework implementation process. The annually rotating responsibility affords the respective Chairs an opportunity to provide leadership in addressing key outstanding issues related to the regional commitments under the Framework.

Secondly, there is the issue of maintaining regional and international focus on the need to strengthen cooperation on countering the negative forces and building confidence among all countries. On every occasion, I have encouraged creating opportunities for dialogue among the leaders concerned to address differences where they exist and promote cooperation, most notably on the neutralization of negative forces. That is particularly important in the light of persisting mistrust and tensions among some countries of the region. As a result of those commitments, in October 2018 in Kampala the ninth summit of the Regional Oversight Mechanism reviewed in a closed-door session the issues that contributed to mistrust among some of the leaders and reflected on ways to resolve them. At the summit, President Sassou Nguesso and President Museveni were asked to take initiatives in that regard. I am encouraged by ongoing efforts by leaders of the region to help address the causes of tensions and

promote dialogue in the region. International partners should stand ready to support those commitments in a concerted manner.

Thirdly, on the matter of promoting regional cohesion and international attention with regard to the situations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi, recognizing the importance of political stability at the national level for regional stability, and in line with my mandate, support for peaceful, credible and inclusive political and dialogue processes has been one of my key priorities and a major area of political engagement. I was given an opportunity from April to June 2015 to promote a promising dialogue process between the parties in Burundi, which, had it been effectively supported by all, could have provided the Burundian stakeholders with a better forum to address their differences. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, I was initially requested to explore avenues for the United Nations to facilitate dialogue in that country. In addition to frequent visits to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi to encourage commitment to dialogue and compromise, I promoted a concerted regional and international approach to the situations in those countries. I also facilitated joint action by the guarantor institutions, which resulted in the holding of six ministerial-level meetings, as well as working visits to Kinshasa in May 2017 to engage national stakeholders on the need for inclusive dialogue. The role of the Special Envoy, working in collaboration with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi, will continue to be crucial in highlighting the importance of peaceful and inclusive political processes in the region and promoting sustained concerted support for the countries concerned.

Fourthly, with regard to putting women's participation in peace and political processes at the centre of advocacy efforts, I am pleased with the momentum we have achieved in promoting women's participation in political and peace processes in the region through strengthened advocacy with the support of the Advisory Board of the Women's Platform for the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. Effective follow-up is now required to the joint United Nations-AU-ICGLR solidarity missions to Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the

Congo and South Sudan, including the implementation of the decisions of the gender ministers' meeting held in Uganda in November 2018. I call on the Council to support the region in efforts to achieve a minimal quota of 30 per cent women's representation in political and peace processes by 2020, in the lead-up to the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000).

Fifthly, there is the issue of encouraging a political conversation on ways to transform natural resources into vehicles of shared prosperity. In view of the lack of tangible progress in curbing the illicit exploitation of, and trade in, natural resources, addressing their role in fuelling insecurity and building on the efforts by the ICGLR, signatory countries agreed to our proposal to initiate a political dialogue on ways to transform the exploitation of natural resources into a driver of peace and shared prosperity. Consultations to that effect have been initiated with the countries concerned.

Lastly, there is the matter of promoting the rule of law and respect for human rights. Recognizing the centrality of respect for human rights, I am pleased with the operationalization of the Great Lakes Judicial Cooperation Network, which supports collaboration between prosecutors and judicial authorities in the region on cross-border crimes and serious human rights violations. In efforts to further foster political commitment and advance the fight against impunity, I am also pleased to announce that my Office, together with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the ICGLR, is organizing a high-level conference on justice and good governance in May in Nairobi. The support of the Council for that initiative would be much appreciated.

(spoke in French)

Let me conclude by thanking the Council for the support extended to me during my tenure. I sincerely hope that the regional and international partners will continue to work closely together for the establishment of lasting peace and shared prosperity in the Great Lakes region.

The President *(spoke in French)*: I especially thank Mr. Djinnit for his briefing because, as he mentioned, this will be his last one before the Security Council in his current capacity. Allow me, on behalf of everyone, to express our gratitude for his outstanding work and exemplary commitment and to wish him every success in his professional future.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) *(spoke in Russian)*: We are grateful to Mr. Said Djinnit, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, for his comprehensive briefing. We thank him for his great personal contribution to the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, as well as for his contribution to the settlement of a number of acute crisis situations in the Great Lakes region.

We believe that the Framework continues to serve as a the cornerstone of regional stability. We note progress in the implementation of that document, in particular the launching of the Joint Follow-up Mechanism for the repatriation of former combatants. We call on all signatories to unconditionally uphold all their obligations, including respect for sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs of others and the strengthening of confidence-building measures. We are convinced that the full implementation of the provisions of the Framework will have a positive impact on the overall situation in the region, which remains tense. In that context, we supported the appointment of Mr. Huang Xia, of the People's Republic of China, as the new Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region, and hope that he will be able to continue his productive cooperation with the leaders of the countries of the region, accelerate the implementation of the Framework and make a significant contribution to normalizing the situation.

One of the major factors in ensuring security in the Great Lakes region is the stabilization of the situation in its largest country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Unfortunately, the successful holding of elections has so far not resulted in any perceptible strengthening of the country's stability or improvement in its socioeconomic situation. Militants from neighbouring countries, particularly from the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda and the Lord's Resistance Army, have been taking advantage of the overstretched army and police, which have been busy at polling stations, to become more active in the eastern regions of the country. The Congolese army's operation, supported by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, against the Allied Democratic Forces, which has been going on for several months

now, has had no tangible results either. Opposition from illegal armed groups is complicating the ongoing fight against the Ebola epidemic in two of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's eastern provinces. We hope to see effective cooperation between the countries of the region in preventing the virus from spreading across their borders, and we are working on the issue of supplying the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo with a Russian-made vaccine against the disease.

We share the Secretary-General's concern about the difficult humanitarian situation in the Great Lakes region. However, we can point to some positive developments in addressing the refugee problem, in particular the gradual repatriation of Burundian refugees from neighbouring countries that has begun thanks to the stabilizing situation in their homeland. The first reports of citizens of the Central African Republic and South Sudan who had previously fled to the Great Lakes region returning home are also grounds for optimism. We welcome the measures being implemented within the framework of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) to harmonize national strategies for repatriating and reintegrating refugees and eradicating the underlying reasons for the problem. These efforts are being implemented in the spirit of the Year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement in Africa proclaimed by the African Union, and reflect the commitment of the countries of the Great Lakes region to finding collective responses to the challenges facing it.

We hope that the continuing differences between the leaders of some countries of the Great Lakes region will not affect their commitments to the principles outlined in the Framework. We call on the States of the region to set aside their differences and continue to cooperate on the key issues that affect the stability and security of the entire region. We believe that lasting solutions to all these problems can be found only independently, with support from the ICGLR and other regional mechanisms, in accordance with the principle of African solutions to African problems.

Mr. Cohen (United States of America): I thank Special Envoy Djinnit for his dedicated service of nearly five years. His efforts have been deeply appreciated, and we wish him every success in his future endeavours.

We are all aware not only of the enormous potential of the countries of the Great Lakes region but also of

the history of conflict there that has destroyed millions of lives and deepened the distress that has endured for decades. Since 2013, the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region has provided a road map for rebuilding confidence and mutual respect at the State level. Reviewing many of the commitments made six years ago, such as to respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of neighbouring countries and strengthening regional economic integration, we see this agreement as every bit as relevant today. In fact, it may have new importance in the Great Lakes.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, President Tshilombo Tshisekedi is providing new hope that the status quo of insecurity and impunity will cease and that the Democratic Republic of the Congo will keep its commitments to further reconciliation, tolerance and democratization. The United States welcomes President Tshisekedi's announcements on key Congolese commitments in the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, including security-sector reform, the consolidation of State authority and economic development. We are committed to working with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to seize this once-in-a-generation opportunity to replace conflict with commerce and help permanently transform the Great Lakes region into an interconnected hub of prosperity.

Now is the time for regional leaders who are also parties to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework to live up to their commitment to adhering to the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of neighbouring countries and denying support or safe harbour to armed groups. Working together, the countries of the region can use the tools at their disposal, with the support of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Security Council and the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to tighten their grip on destabilizing actors, not simply to protect civilians or provide humanitarian aid, but to eliminate conflict from the Great Lakes region altogether.

Recent examples suggest that such outreach is already paying dividends. For example, the December agreement, highlighted in the Secretary-General's report (S/2019/229), between military officials from Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to

conduct joint border patrols in insecure areas along their shared border, could serve as a new beginning for constructive cross-border cooperation. The repatriation of combatants from the Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda and the Mouvement du 23 mars is an additional positive example of intra-regional cooperation made possible by support from United Nations missions. New opportunities for regional economic integration and foreign direct investment could also be in sight. Regulators will need to tackle endemic corruption, particularly in the mining sector, to help stop the financing that fuels armed groups and makes peace so hard to achieve.

At previous Council meetings this year the United States carefully described the threat of rising tensions in the Great Lakes region. I will not rehash them now, but it is important to remember that despite those challenges, a remarkable opportunity has been presented to the people of the Great Lakes, the United Nations missions working in the region and the Council. Let us build trust and confidence, and let us seize this opportunity for peace together.

Mr. Pecsteen de Buyswerwe (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Special Envoy for his briefing this afternoon, and above all for the work that he has done over the years in implementing his mandate.

I will focus my statement on two aspects, the first of which concerns the security, political, humanitarian and human rights situation in the Great Lakes region. Despite the excellent work done by the Special Envoy, the overall situation in the Great Lakes region remains complicated. On the security front, the progress made through the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme should not distract from the fact that the number of cross-border incidents is increasing, particularly around Burundi but also between Rwanda and Uganda.

Eliminating the threat posed by various negative forces will continue to require an integrated regional approach and strong political engagement on the part of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region as a whole. In the current political context, we welcome the peace agreement recently signed in the Central African Republic and hope that the upcoming presidential and legislative elections in Burundi will be credible, transparent and inclusive.

On the humanitarian front, the overall picture in the most recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/229) is still extremely gloomy, with more than 11 million persons forcibly displaced in the Great Lakes region. We remain deeply concerned by the epidemics such as Ebola that have spread in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. While Ebola has so far not claimed any victims across the border, we must continue to be very vigilant. We are also still deeply concerned about the human rights situation, particularly in Yumbi in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is unfortunate that Secretary-General's report does not adequately reflect the situation there.

On the other hand, some new opportunities are emerging. We welcome the fresh political momentum initiated in the Democratic Republic of the Congo by President Tshilombo Tshisekedi. We hope that that momentum can also help to give new impetus to the full implementation of the agreement.

My second point concerns economic cooperation in the Great Lakes region. Economic cooperation, including in the area of natural resources, remains one of the key elements of the framework agreement. The report cites several initiatives proposed by the Special Envoy, such as the holding of a conference in Kigali to promote peace, security and shared natural resource management in the Greater Virunga Landscape or the organizing of the second Private Sector Investment Conference for the Great Lakes Region in November. In that regard, we note that the level of cross-border investment in the Great Lakes region unfortunately remains too low, while the informal economic sector continues to be widespread. We should perhaps consider how the Framework Agreement could contribute to improving that situation.

In conclusion, we believe that regional integration is essential and, in reality, the only way forward in order for the countries of the region to draw the maximum benefit from all their resources while, at the same time, strengthening peace.

Mr. Hickey (United Kingdom): I would like to thank Special Envoy Djinnit for his briefing today, for the report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/229) and for all his very diligent work and strong personal dedication to these issues since 2014. We appreciate all that he has done, and we wish him every success for the future. It was particularly welcome today both to hear about his recent successes and to be reminded

of all that he has achieved over that past five years. We particularly welcome his success in securing the voluntary repatriation of fighters from Rwanda and combatants of the Mouvement du 23 mars from Uganda. That is an important achievement. As Mr. Djinnit said, it shows that we can make progress on these very difficult issues.

In setting out today the six areas on which he has focused over the past five years, I think that he helped set the agenda for his successor when he takes over. I would like to highlight three of those areas in particular.

First, we warmly welcome the emphasis that the Special Envoy placed on promoting the participation of women in political life and peace processes. We strongly agree with the call that he made just now to support the region's efforts to achieve a minimum quota of 30 per cent representation of women in political processes by 2020 in time for the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000).

Secondly, we very much agree with the Special Envoy about the importance of the rule of law and human rights. In that regard, we strongly support his plans for a high-level conference on justice and good governance in May. The Special Envoy will have our full support for that conference.

Thirdly, and this is a point that my colleague from the United States also touched on, we very much agree about the importance of tackling the exploitation of natural resources, in particular by armed groups in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is very good that Mr. Djinnit initiated political discussions with the countries in the region on that issue. I think that it will be very important that that dialogue continues under his successor.

Let me just touch very briefly on three of the country-specific issues that are mentioned in the report. First, with regard to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we of course join the Special Envoy in our commendation of the Congolese people for exercising their democratic right to vote in a peaceful manner in the recent elections. But we all know that democracy is a process, not an event, and that it is vital that all stakeholders in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remain focused on supporting a more stable and inclusive physical environment in the country. We fully agree with the conclusions in the Secretary-General's report regarding the importance of resolving the issue of foreign armed groups and their dependents in the

Democratic Republic of the Congo and regional issues involving refugee populations. Regional dialogue will be vital to finding solutions that respect the fundamental human rights of all those involved in or affected by conflict.

Secondly, turning to the Central African Republic, we attach great importance to ongoing efforts by the parties to implement the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation and would encourage all stakeholders to consider what role the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region may be able to play in supporting that process.

Finally, with respect to Burundi, we think that an inclusive dialogue will be a vital precursor to credible and inclusive elections. We welcome all the work that the Special Envoy has done on that issue. All international partners should continue to support the East African Community in its efforts to end the political crisis in Burundi and preserve the Arusha accords. Again, we encourage all stakeholders to consider whether the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework could play an enhanced role in promoting dialogue in Burundi and to coordinate their efforts with the Framework in that regard.

In conclusion, we look forward to hearing the plans of Mr. Djinnit's successor to further engage with regional Heads of State and Government, picking up on the six themes that he outlined, but in particular the three on which I focused on. As he has shown during his tenure, the role of Special Envoy has an invaluable part to play in supporting and strengthening the partnerships that will underpin greater regional stability. I thank him for all that he has done.

Ms. McBride (South Africa): At the outset, let me join others in thanking Mr. Djinnit for his briefing and for his excellent work during his time as Special Envoy.

South Africa welcomes the progress registered in the implementation of the commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, which was signed on 24 February 2013. We further welcome the cooperation between the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and Rwanda, as well as the support provided by the guarantors in the repatriation of a large number of disarmed combatants of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda and dependents. South Africa encourages those

Governments to complete the repatriation of the former combatants of the Mouvement du 23 mars in accordance with human rights principles and international and refugee law. South Africa underscores the importance of the cooperation of all countries in the Great Lakes region in eliminating armed groups, which continue to pose a persistent threat to regional stability and integration.

My delegation welcomes the consensus reached by the signatories to the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic through the mediation of the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, Mr. Smaïl Chergui. We are particularly heartened by the agreement of the formation of an inclusive Government in the context of article 21 of the Agreement (see S/2019/145, annex). We further welcome the peaceful holding of elections and the peaceful transfer of power in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In that regard, South Africa supports the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) as part of the efforts to deliver greater stability to the country and the region. South Africa hopes that the new MONUSCO mandate will help the new Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to determine its priorities, assert its authority throughout the entire territory, including the eastern part of the country, concentrate on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and encourage reconciliation in the country. Accordingly, South Africa calls on the international community to provide assistance to the newly inaugurated Government of President Félix Tshisekedi and to help in building that nation's institutions, which are critical to peace and security as well as democracy and development.

Burundi remains an important part in the stability of the Great Lakes region. As such, South Africa continues to support the intra-Burundi dialogue, including the facilitation process led by the East African Community in the spirit of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, with the support of the African Union and the United Nations. In that regard, the efforts of the mediator, President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, and the former facilitator, former President Benjamin Mkapa of the United Republic of Tanzania, are acknowledged and commended. My delegation calls for the continued support and mediation efforts of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Mr. Kafando. South

Africa also calls for the global ceasefire agreement and the Arusha accords to be implemented together, in pursuit of a lasting solution to the current impasse.

Ultimately, a region that is politically stable serves as a foundation for regional economic integration. There is therefore a need to curb the persistent illicit exploitation of, and trade in, natural resources, which undermines the proper management of those resources. South Africa commends the progress towards economic and regional integration, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo-Zambia road project, the joint development road-rail bridge project linking Kinshasa to Brazzaville, as well as the completion of 12 of the 15 one-stop border posts aimed at boosting regional trade.

In conclusion, we call on the Security Council to reaffirm calls for all signatories to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework to implement their commitments under the Framework to ensure long-term sustainable peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): At the outset, I would like to thank the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, Mr. Saïd Djinnit, for his very informative briefing. Allow me to express our gratitude for his dedication, commitment and the quality of his work during his tenure. We also welcome the nomination of the new Special Envoy, Mr. Huang Xia, and wish him every success in the discharge of his responsibilities in that important post.

Six years after the signing of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, Poland welcomes progress made in the fulfilment of several commitments, such as improving cooperation on the repatriation of foreign combatants, raising the profile of the women and peace and security agenda in the region, as well as greater economic cooperation.

Nevertheless, achieving stabilization in the entire region will require reliable and inclusive electoral processes, the restoration of the rule of law, respect for human rights and good governance. Despite some positive developments in that regard, violence, human rights abuses, violations of international humanitarian law and further displacement of people still impact countries of the Great Lakes region. Poland is also concerned about the increasing tensions between the signatories to the agreement, especially given the recent attacks at the borders of the Democratic Republic of the

Congo, Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda — tensions that are fuelled by the threat posed by armed groups and the illicit exploitation of natural resources. Poland believes that countering illegal cross-border activities is an integral part of responding to challenges in the region, as it is an essential condition for curbing the activities of armed groups and the successful submission of the combatants to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes.

We also stress that the reform and efficiency of the justice and penal systems are key elements without which efforts to achieve stability in the region will not succeed. We commend the work of the Great Lakes Judicial Cooperation Network and encourage all the signatories to further coordinate their efforts on that matter. In that regard, Poland welcomes the announcement of the high-level conference on justice and good governance to be held in Nairobi in May.

The root causes of the situation in the region lie also in the weakness of State institutions. That highlights the importance of building the capabilities of national security services so that they can both take on the responsibility for protecting civilians and also safeguard their civil rights and freedoms. In addition, all efforts aimed at improving the situation and provide urgent humanitarian aid to the region need to be complemented by long-term development programmes for all conflict areas.

Poland considers the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework to be an essential mechanism for achieving peace in the region. We call on all signatories to promptly and in good faith fulfil their respective commitments under the agreement. Poland welcomes the outcome of the ninth high-level meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism, held in Kampala in October of last year, and calls on all the signatories to fully implement the decisions reached there. Building trust among the leaders and the peoples of the region is necessary. We therefore encourage the signatories to take all the necessary steps to reinforce cooperation and foster good-neighbourly relations.

We appreciate all the efforts made by the Special Envoy. We encourage his Office to further engage in preventive diplomacy and the promotion of good practices in the region. Moreover, Poland strongly believes that one of the key elements of effective United Nations support for the implementation of the Framework is the close cooperation of the Office of the

Special Envoy with the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, mainly through actively coordinating their strategies and information-sharing. We welcome the role that the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the Southern African Development Community have played in strengthening the implementation of the Framework. We therefore encourage the Special Envoy to focus his good offices on supporting those efforts.

In conclusion, the regional dimension of the Great Lakes crisis must not be overlooked. New regional developments create a unique opportunity to effectively address the challenges facing the region, but that will require a strong political commitment on the part of all parties.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the convening of this meeting and Mr. Said Djinnit's briefing. We acknowledge his significant efforts to promote peace and generate synergies in the Great Lakes region. We wish him every success in future.

Peru is closely following developments in the region and is concerned about the continuing cycles of violence, which create a fragile and volatile environment that poses a serious risk to the civilian population. In that precarious context, we reiterate the relevance of the Framework for Peace, Security and Cooperation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region. We also underscore its importance in defusing current tensions and ultimately promoting the achievement of sustainable peace. We believe that the regional approach it provides is essential and that, by identifying common trends, it promotes complementary and joint action alternatives in the political and social spheres, while helping boost economic integration and cooperation, particularly in cross-border regions.

We welcome the engagement of the Framework countries in recent political processes, such as elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the promotion of the inter-Burundian dialogue. Those forums for joint dialogue, starting with the meetings of the Regional Oversight Mechanism, go hand in hand with establishing confidence-building measures aimed at overcoming potential conflicts and taking decisions to increase economic integration and strengthen institutions. Regional coordination and cooperation should also be bolstered to ensure respect for

international humanitarian law and combat impunity in the face of reports of recurring human rights violations.

The humanitarian situation in the Great Lakes region is also of great concern. The statistics are alarming, with 22.7 million people in need of food assistance and more than 11 million internally displaced persons and refugees, who are exposed to serious shortages and risks. In that regard, we welcome the efforts made to allow for the repatriation of combatants of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda. We hope that the international community, in particular those countries committed to peace and stability in the region, will continue to provide stable and predictable funding for the relevant humanitarian response plans. We would also like to stress the importance of adopting a regional approach to the Ebola virus crisis in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which is now the second outbreak ever recorded.

Peru reaffirms its commitment to achieving sustainable peace in the Great Lakes region, including by taking firm action against armed groups and the illegal exploitation of resources, ending the humanitarian crisis, promoting stability and guaranteeing inclusive political processes in which women and young people are duly represented. That should all be based on coordinated action among the various components of the United Nations system, in particular the regional development group aimed at advancing the implementation of the Great Lakes Regional Strategic Framework, the Peacebuilding Commission, regional organizations, humanitarian agencies and civil society.

Mr. Schulz (Germany): First of all, I, too, would like to thank the outgoing Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Said Djinnit, for his tireless efforts and dedication over the past five years and for all of the success he has achieved. We also welcome the appointment of Mr. Huang Xia and wish him a steady hand in his new and important position.

We are pleased to note the successes and positive developments outlined in the Special Envoy's briefing today. At the same time, we must also note that many threats to peace and stability in the Great Lakes region remain on the agenda. Such threats are rooted in unresolved political crises, the volatile security situation and regional tensions.

Many of the previous speakers mentioned the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Against that backdrop, let me also say that we consider

it to be of critical importance that President Tshilombo Tshisekedi implement the political and economic reform measures that he announced and set out a comprehensive and sustainable reform programme. Let me also mention that, like many others, we are also deeply concerned about the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and strongly condemn attacks against Ebola treatment centres. We must prevent the politicization of the Ebola and humanitarian crisis.

Turning now to Burundi, let me also emphasize that we count on the Presidents of the countries in the region to lead the inter-Burundian dialogue and guide it on a successful path. The Special Envoy reminded us today that progress can be made even on the most protracted issues when political will is displayed by the leaders of the region. We, too, would like to stress that point. One good example that I would like to highlight in that context is the repatriation of disarmed combatants and dependants of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Rwanda. It shows how successful the region can be when countries work together to advance common peace and security objectives.

Germany remains committed to supporting regional efforts. As Chair of the International Contact Group for the Great Lakes Region, we convened consultations on the region in New York and Berlin at the end of last year. We also support the Special Envoy through earmarked funding to the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs.

Let me also say a few words about regional stability issues, which are also of critical importance. The security situation in the region remains volatile. We are concerned about persistent tensions, the activities of armed groups and continuous cross-border security incidents, especially in the cross-border regions of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Burundi. We are also concerned about the deterioration of relations between Uganda and Rwanda. The closing of border crossings has consequences for guaranteeing supplies and has a direct impact on the population. We call on all actors to refrain from violence and from engaging in any kind of proxy conflicts in the region. Furthermore, we urge countries in the region to cooperate to neutralize negative forces and strengthen the relevant mechanisms of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. Sustainable peace and the ensuing space for economic development are achievable only through regional cooperation. We

encourage regional actors to play an active role in conflict resolution. We trust in our regional partners to make effective use of existing mediation tools and confidence-building measures.

Lastly, with regard to human rights and the women and peace and security agenda, which was also mentioned by the Special Envoy, we are concerned about the shrinking political space and violations of political freedom in the region. We strongly condemn human rights violations by all actors, including State security forces. The protection of children in conflict situations must be a priority. However, we are also encouraged by the progress achieved in raising the profile of the women and peace and security agenda in the region. We welcome the adoption of the regional action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Nonetheless, sexual and gender-based violence remains a source of deep concern. All perpetrators must be brought to justice. Fighting impunity remains key to delivering peace and security.

Mrs. Mele Colifa (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Republic of Equatorial Guinea congratulates Mr. Said Djinnit, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, for his detailed briefing on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region. We appreciate the efforts of the various United Nations peace missions in the countries of the region during the period from 1 September 2018 to 28 February 2019.

Equatorial Guinea, faithful to the spirit and commitment of resolution 2457 (2019), on building a conflict-free Africa, a responsibility that falls essentially to the member States, civil society and institutions of the African Union, expresses its support for all initiatives aimed at finding African solutions to African problems, while recognizing the need for effective and satisfactory partnerships for regional and international cooperation. We consider compliance with, and respect for, sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity, the principles of non-interference, good neighbourliness and regional cooperation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and countries of the region to be the foundation for their stability and development and, as such, should be taken on board.

Along the same lines as the briefing, we, too, welcome the recent positive developments in the region, such as the holding of peaceful elections and transfer of

power in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan, under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the peace agreement between the Government of the Central African Republic and 14 armed groups, facilitated by the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation, and the current situation and return to normalcy in Burundi, after the country approved a new Constitution and took measures to hold elections by 2020. Its considerable contribution of troops to peace missions reflects Burundi's spirit of reconciliation and tolerance.

Equatorial Guinea values the efforts made and the support and contributions provided by the international community to the countries of the region. We encourage all other parties that are directly involved to promote confidence-building measures and uphold their commitments in general, in particular those under the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance.

We commend the work that the Advisory Board of the Women's Platform for the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework is doing to ensure women's genuine participation in the political, peace and security processes in the region. We appreciate the approval by ministers responsible for gender issues of the regional action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). It is a well-known fact that violent conflict disproportionately affects women and girls and intensifies existing gender inequalities and discrimination. We value the regional efforts undertaken by the Great Lakes Judicial Cooperation Network to achieve peace and security, safeguard the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all the peoples of the region and combat impunity.

We condemn the activities of the illegal armed groups in the region, foreign and domestic, and their frequent or sporadic clashes with States' military and security forces, which result in cross-border security incidents that have a negative impact on peace and stability in the region. We commend the Special Envoy's good offices in the region with regard to monitoring and ensuring dialogue on the effective implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes for ex-combatants and people associated with armed groups, activities that align with the African Union agenda for promoting political, social and economic integration and its pledge to end all wars

on the continent by 2020, as cited in resolution 2457 (2019), and to achieve the goal of a conflict-free Africa, as stated in the Solemn Declaration adopted on 26 May 2013, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the African Union.

We appreciate the measures that the Governments of the region have taken to address the humanitarian situation. However, we are concerned about the region's 11.2 million forcibly displaced persons, including 7.2 million who are internally displaced, and its more than 4 million refugees and asylum seekers. We are also worried about the destabilizing activities of armed groups and the ongoing conflicts between communities that continue to be exposed to malnutrition, cholera, measles and Ebola and need adequate technical and financial assistance.

The efforts of the international community should be aimed at promoting regional cooperation and socioeconomic integration and providing sufficient funds for carrying out the various regional humanitarian response plans for refugees from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan. We condemn the frequent attacks on humanitarian personnel and their transport and equipment, which are violations of international humanitarian law. All parties to armed conflicts must ensure and facilitate full, safe, immediate and unhindered access for humanitarian and medical personnel.

My delegation supports the collective efforts of the United Nations, the African Union and other regional and subregional organizations to address the conflicts in the region properly, which has resulted in the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the two organizations as a concrete step towards implementing their joint framework for enhanced partnership in peace and security. We urge the African Union, the International Organization of la Francophonie, the Southern African Development Community and international partners to continue to develop synergies with the member States of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region for implementing the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region and promoting effective cooperation and good-neighbourly relations among all countries in the region, including in combating armed groups and the illegal exploitation of natural resources and pursuing economic integration.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Special Envoy Djinnit for his briefing. He has been proactive in carrying out his duties with regard to promoting peace and stability in the Great Lakes region for more than four years. China appreciates his hard work and tireless efforts. We welcome Mr. Huang Xia, the newly appointed Special Envoy, and are ready to continue to engage closely with all the parties involved and to support the Secretary-General and the Special Envoy in their work.

The Great Lakes region is located at the heart of Africa, and the ability to maintain peace in the region has a bearing on the overall stability and development of the entire continent. Thanks to the joint efforts of the international community and the countries of the region, the political and security situation in the Great Lakes region has seen many positive developments since the second half of last year. The major parties in South Sudan signed a revitalized peace agreement. Presidential and parliamentary elections were successfully held in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The main party in the Central African Republic signed a peace agreement and formed a Government. The situation in Burundi has remained stable.

The countries of the region have continued to promote the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region and to strive to cooperate in the areas of disarmament, demobilization and repatriation and Africa's economic integration. These positive developments are not only conducive to promoting peace, stability and development in the Great Lakes region but also demonstrate that the countries of the region can find African solutions to African problems through regional cooperation. China welcomes those efforts. At the same time, however, the Great Lakes region is still dealing with multifaceted challenges. The international community should continue to provide assistance and work to actively maintain the current positive momentum in the region. Right now we should focus on the following three aspects.

First, we should continue to help safeguard regional peace and stability. The international community, including the countries of the region, should abide faithfully by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, respect one another's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity as well as the ownership and leadership of the countries concerned in handling their internal affairs, and refrain

from external interference. It is important to support the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, the East African Community, the Southern African Development Community, the Economic Community of Central African States and other regional and subregional organizations so that they can continue to act as mediators and help the parties concerned to resolve disputes peacefully. The United Nations should leverage its full strength and provide support for conflict prevention, mediation, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

Secondly, we should support the countries of the region through capacity-building. In their efforts to implement the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, especially in response to the threats posed by armed groups, the countries of the region, as we have seen, are confronted generally with problems such as a lack of resources and insufficient capacity. The international community should strengthen its communication and cooperation with the countries of the region and regional and subregional organizations, provide the necessary funding and technical and material assistance, according to their requirements, and focus on helping them improve their capacities in the areas of security, governance, the management of natural resources and border control.

Thirdly, it is crucial to address the root causes of conflicts. Poverty and underdevelopment have seriously undermined sustained peace and stability in the Great Lakes region. The international community should fulfil its commitments in a timely fashion by increasing humanitarian assistance and official development assistance and helping the displaced and refugees in the region to return home. In the meantime, it is important to increase assistance and investment in health, education, interconnectivity and other infrastructure areas for the countries in the Great Lakes region, effectively improve youth employment in Africa and raise the living standards of the local populations.

China has consistently supported countries in the Great Lakes region in advancing their peace processes and has actively participated in United Nations peacekeeping operations in the region. At the same time, China provides assistance to countries in the Great Lakes region in areas such as infrastructure and agriculture. We stand ready to work with the rest of the international community in our continued effort to contribute to achieving peace, stability and development in the region.

Mr. Moriko (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation commends Mr. Said Djinnit, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, on his excellent briefing on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region.

Côte d'Ivoire is pleased to note the positive signs and progress made in the various peace processes under way in a number of countries in the Great Lakes region, which is suffering recurrent crises, in particular in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and Burundi. Therefore, my country welcomes the successful conduct of the electoral process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, leading to a peaceful presidential election on 30 December 2018. We urge the Congolese authorities to build on that progress to further strengthen the country's stability.

Similarly, Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the signing, on 5 February in Khartoum, of a peace agreement between the Government of the Central African Republic and 14 armed groups. We call on the Central African stakeholders to fully implement their commitments to meet the aspirations of the Central African people for peace, security and development.

With regard to Burundi, my delegation welcomes the decision of President Pierre Nkurunziza not to run in the 2020 presidential election and the opening of the Burundian political playing field to a new opposition party. We call on the Government, the opposition and all the Burundian people to work together to put an end to the political crisis and restore stability in Burundi.

My delegation notes, however, that this progress should in no way make us forget that the Great Lakes region continues to face multifaceted challenges that require a collective response, including the activities of illegal armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic, intercommunal violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, clashes in South Sudan and the humanitarian crisis and the resurgence of Ebola virus disease in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Côte d'Ivoire believes that the strengthening of bilateral and regional cooperation will make it possible to effectively fight those threats to peace and security.

In that regard, my delegation endorses the conclusions of the ninth high-level meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic

Republic of the Congo and the Region, which recommends closer cooperation among the States of the Great Lakes region to put an end to the activities of armed groups destabilizing the region. In that respect, we commend the exemplary cooperation among Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda in the repatriation of foreign former combatants, as well as the cooperation among all the countries that are signatories to the framework agreement with regard to crimes against humanity.

For the countries of the region, regional organizations and the international community, the Addis Ababa Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region remains the frame of reference for addressing, in a concerted manner, the structural causes of instability and putting an end to the cycles of violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region. My country therefore calls upon the entire international community to increase its support to the States of the Great Lakes region with a view to ensuring the full implementation of that Agreement, which is essential to restoring peace and stability in the region.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire would like to warmly thank Mr. Said Djinnit, the outgoing Special Envoy and his team, for their outstanding work in restoring peace and stability in the Great Lakes region.

Mr. Syihab (Indonesia): Indonesia would like to thank Special Envoy Said Djinnit for his comprehensive briefing. Let me also take this opportunity to commend Mr. Djinnit's tireless efforts in and resolute commitment to creating peace in the Great Lakes region. We wish him well and every success in his future endeavours.

I will focus my comments on three pertinent points.

First, the root causes of the conflict should be addressed. The Great Lakes region has been marred by conflicts, distrust and humanitarian difficulties for years. The Secretary-General's report (S/2019/229) notes that insecurity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and Burundi have had a negative impact on peace and stability in the Great Lakes region, which remain fragile, in particular with regard to threats by armed groups, illicit exploitation and trade of natural resources and the outbreak of Ebola virus disease in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The lack of development is also one of the leading causes of instability in the region. Nevertheless, we recently saw peaceful general elections and a peaceful transfer of power in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the signing of a global peace agreement in the Central African Republic. That forward momentum is indeed an improvement in the political situation of the Great Lakes region. I echo the Secretary-General in recognizing the importance of a comprehensive approach to addressing the root causes of conflict in the region. Trust is important and partnership is key.

Secondly, relief for the humanitarian situation must be prioritized. At the end of last year, about 11.2 million people in the Great Lakes region were forcibly displaced and more than 22.7 million people needed food assistance. However, in 2018, the funding of humanitarian responses in the region was at less than 50 per cent of requirements and in one country was as low as 33 per cent of requirements. That cannot go on much longer. We cannot hope for a peaceful Great Lakes region while failing to provide the means of assistance. That is like expecting a tree to grow while there is a drought and no rain. The international community should honour its commitment to assist the countries of the region and improve its humanitarian assistance to them in a timely fashion, including through the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund.

Thirdly, the work of regional organizations and United Nations missions in the region should be supported by the Security Council. We recognize the role played by the regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the Southern Africa Development Community, who, together with the United Nations, are the guarantors of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, which was signed by 13 countries of the region.

Indonesia welcomes the cooperation among the countries of the Great Lakes region in responding to the threat from armed groups and encourages those countries to promote disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. Nevertheless, assistance is needed to enable them to do it.

United Nations peacekeepers, through engagement with local communities, are able to disarm and demobilize members of armed groups, as evidenced

by Indonesian peacekeepers on the ground in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), who have received weapons from armed groups in recent weeks. United Nations peacekeeping missions, such as MONUSCO, the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, play crucial roles in the region. We call on the members of the Council to continue their support for the United Nations peacekeeping missions in the Great Lakes region.

Addressing the complex peace and security challenge in the region is not easy, but let us strive to reach that goal together to ensure that peace will not merely be a pipe dream but a reality for all.

Mr. Trullols Yabra (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, we thank Mr. Said Djinnit, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region, for his briefing on the report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/229). We also commend his efforts and initiatives for peace and stability in the Great Lakes region during his tenure.

The Dominican Republic commends the positive processes that have taken place in the Great Lakes region, in particular the peaceful holding of presidential, legislative and provincial elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; the peace agreement between the Government of the Central African Republic and 14 armed groups, which was facilitated by the African Union Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation; the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan; and the outcome of the East African Community summit, held in Arusha on 1 February, which recognizes the urgency of ensuring a peaceful and inclusive political process towards the holding of elections in 2020 in Burundi, in full compliance with the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi that was signed in 2000.

We also note the progress made in the strengthening of the region's commitments, such as advances in economic reintegration and judicial cooperation, the repatriation of unarmed combatants and bilateral collaboration among the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda to address cross-border security. We encourage the full implementation of those agreements, the holding of future peaceful and transparent elections and continued regional cooperation

to complete the repatriation of the remaining members of armed groups.

We emphasize the role played by the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the representatives of the Secretary-General in the region, among others, for their efforts and cooperation in the quest for a peaceful and stable coexistence in the region.

Despite those positive developments, the Dominican Republic is concerned about the fragile security situation, especially in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where armed groups, such as the Allied Democratic Forces, have intensified their attacks against civilians, the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo and MONUSCO, resulting in the death of hundreds of civilians, including women and children.

Such activities create insecurity and have a negative impact on peace and stability across borders and throughout the region. We therefore urge the affected countries to combine their efforts to dismantle armed groups; control illegal trafficking in natural resources, which is the source of financing for armed groups, and trafficking of illegal arms and ammunition; and invest in development plans for the population, thereby providing more opportunities for young people affected by armed conflict and help them develop their skills and meet the demands for labour by providing relevant educational opportunities.

That climate of insecurity, among other factors, adds to the worrying humanitarian situation in the Great Lakes region, in particular the high number of displaced persons in Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan. As the Secretary-General notes in his report, as of 31 December 2018, approximately 11.2 million people had been forcibly displaced, including 7.2 million internally displaced persons and more than 4 million refugees and asylum-seekers.

Of equal concern is the growing Ebola outbreak and its high risk of regional spread in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In that regard, we applaud the response mechanisms that have been launched to eradicate the virus by Burundi, Rwanda, South Sudan and Uganda, among others, and call for

increased funding for humanitarian assistance for those in need.

The Dominican Republic condemns the violations of human rights committed in countries of the region as result of political processes, including the violent repression of demonstrations; the use of force by police and security forces; the prolonged detention of political prisoners; murders and kidnappings; the destruction of goods; the raping of civilians, including women and children; and the climate of impunity. We therefore call on the international, regional and national communities to redouble their efforts to provide practical and cooperative responses to bring the perpetrators to justice.

To conclude, in addition to the situations I have mentioned, the Great Lakes region faces other major challenges, such as overcoming mistrust among some States that are signatories to agreements and achieving the compliance of Governments with the minimum quota of 30 per cent of women's participation in 2020, among others. In order to overcome existing challenges, a common analysis of the problems and opportunities is needed, focused on achieving joint regional solutions through dialogue and cooperation and complying with national, regional and international commitments undertaken in support of peace, security and the socioeconomic development of the Great Lakes region and its peoples.

Mr. Almunayekh (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin by expressing our appreciation to Mr. Said Djinnit, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, for his valuable and last briefing. I wish to thank him for his tireless efforts since his tenure began to engage in dialogue and cooperation with the Governments of the Great Lakes region in order to respond to the challenges it is facing. I also wish to congratulate Mr. Huang Xia on his appointment as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region. I hope that he will be able to build upon the achievements of the previous period.

I wish to address three points today: first, the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region; secondly, the security situation in the Great Lakes region; and thirdly, the humanitarian situation.

First, with regard to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, we welcome the progress

made since the framework agreement was signed six years ago. It summarizes the challenges facing the region and provides solutions. The framework agreement is considered the major factor guaranteeing stability in the Great Lakes region. In that regard, we call on all its signatories to fully honour the commitments contained in the agreement and to implement its provisions in order to address various challenges faced by the region.

Furthermore, we appreciate the role of the Regional Oversight Mechanism, which held its ninth meeting in Kampala in October 2018. We hail the outcome of that meeting, particularly concerning cooperation among the States of the region to neutralize destructive forces and strengthen relevant mechanisms, in concert with the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), in particular the Joint Follow-up Mechanism on the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). We call on those States to strengthen cooperation in order to make even further progress, notwithstanding the challenges faced by them in the areas of security and illegal trafficking in natural resources.

The State of Kuwait supports the vital and important role that the Special Envoy and his Office play in enhancing the mechanisms that contribute to the implementation of the framework agreement. We also support his basic role in the promotion of capacity-building, as well as his good offices in convening consultations among the States of the region, his preventive diplomacy and his role in strengthening cooperation among the States of the region and regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union, ICGLR and the Southern African Development Community.

Regarding the political situation, we welcome the recent positive political progress in the region, such as the first peaceful transfer of power in the history of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We look forward to the formation of the new Government as soon as possible in order to build upon those recent positive achievements. There is no doubt that security and political stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are important catalysts for the economic development of the country and of the Great Lakes region and, as indicated in the Framework agreement, could result in further support from the Security Council and the international community.

Secondly, the security situation remains a concern for the international community because of the continued

deterioration of the situation in the Great Lakes region. Armed groups are more active in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The number of attacks by the ADF has increased in Beni, claiming the lives of 245 civilians in 2018, including many women and children. We condemn those attacks and urge the national forces to confront them and to develop plans to put an end to such attacks in future.

We commend the cooperation among the States of the region, as noted by Mr. Djinnit in his briefing, particularly among the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda, for the repatriation and reintegration of former Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda combatants. We also commend the support provided as part of the follow-up mechanism, which represents a positive contribution to strengthening regional stability.

We agree on the importance of repatriating former Mouvement du 23 mars combatants, as indicated by the Secretary-General in his latest report (S/2019/229) and in accordance with international law. Regarding other positive developments in the region, I welcome the agreement signed between the Government of the Central African Republic and 14 armed groups in Bangui on 6 February. We hope that that agreement will make it possible to achieve stability in the country and strengthen stability in the entire region. We also welcome the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan.

Thirdly, we are concerned at the deterioration of the humanitarian situation as well as at the lack of security and stability in the Great Lakes region, which has resulted in 7 million displaced people and more than 4 million refugees. The burden is growing for the countries of the region, and it is becoming difficult to find solutions to the situation. We call upon the States in the region to make greater efforts to address the humanitarian situation. We also commend the role of the United Nations, through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in responding to the humanitarian crisis.

We must recall the difficulties that the region has been experiencing as a result of the spread of Ebola, particularly in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, especially since the epidemic could spread to neighbouring countries despite its tireless efforts.

To conclude, it is important to address the challenges that the region faces in a comprehensive manner. Such an approach should confront security, political, humanitarian and development challenges, and the United Nations Great Lakes Regional Strategic Framework would also help the Great Lakes region in this respect. The Office of the Special Envoy deals with all these areas, with the aim of harmonizing development efforts with the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework signed by the countries of the region.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of France.

I wish to start by warmly thanking Mr. Said Djinnit, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, for his very informative briefing, as usual. I would like once again, on behalf of France, to convey our deep gratitude to him for his exemplary commitment, which is worthy of the highest praise. I would also like to wish his successor, Mr. Huang Xia, every success and assure him of our full support.

The time is ripe, at the end of his mandate, to take stock realistically of the progress made and of what remains to be done in order to find a way towards lasting peace. Six years after the signing of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, in Addis Ababa, strong political will is being mustered at the heart of the region, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, born of the expectations of the Congolese people. This should serve as an example, because to use an expression that is fully reflective of the efforts made by Mr. Djinnit, destinies there are interlinked — those of the DRC and its neighbours, of the Great Lakes region and our own.

Our dear friend Said endeavoured to generate political momentum through shuttle diplomacy among the capitals of the region, with support from ad hoc regional mechanisms and the relevant regional institutions. He has contributed to underscoring the relevance of the multilateral framework to overcoming existing challenges, which, in this region in particular, cannot be addressed in isolation.

Since Brazzaville, in October 2017, the Regional Oversight Mechanism of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework has been the focus of attention at the highest levels of capitals of the region. Since

Kampala, in October 2018, partners have had the ability to share their assessments on the state of the region and its development.

As I said last October, the Addis Ababa Framework agreement remains a key instrument for building confidence among the countries of the region. This inclusive agreement seeks to harmonize the efforts of all stakeholders concerned: the countries of the region, the relevant regional institutions and external partners. It sets out a long-term vision encompassing all possible pathways towards human and economic development in this very promising region.

However, in order to pool efforts and work together with the same goal, it is important to have the appropriate forums and tools. True to that aspiration, France reiterates its commitment to pursuing a high-quality dialogue among all stakeholders in the Great Lakes region, in line with the spirit of the Framework agreement. It trusts in the ability of the future Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to ensure that this dialogue is an ongoing one and is as effective as possible.

The Framework should serve as a catalyst towards action. However, it is not yet functioning at a level that would allow it to make full use of its considerable potential. France shares the concerns of the Secretary-General regarding persisting tensions between certain signatories. These tensions are exacerbated by the threat posed by armed groups and by the harm caused primarily to communities living in the affected areas as a result of the ongoing illegal exploitation and trafficking of natural resources. However, as has been noted, the recent repatriation of certain members of the Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda and the Mouvement du 23 mars shows that surrenders are possible when they are accompanied by mutual guarantees of social and economic reintegration.

Moreover, new threats have emerged in the region that require joint responses. Here I am referring to the Ebola epidemic, the radicalization of youth and environmental damage related to the illicit exploitation of natural resources. Appropriate means to collectively respond to these challenges are not always available, although some progress has been made. Here we would refer in particular to the lack of regional legal and technical capacity to support the customs authorities, the police and judicial cooperation in combating trafficking and impunity.

The relationship between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its regional environment is at the heart of the Framework agreement process. Political alternation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the wish expressed by President Tshilombo Tshisekedi during his regional tour to pursue closer relations with his neighbours is a sign of normalizing relations between the countries of the Great Lakes region, which is favourable to development. France welcomes this resolve and calls on all countries in the region to come together in this spirit around a revitalized regional road map that could lead to fresh modalities for interaction between neighbours and make it possible to collectively address the remaining challenges.

The solution to regional tensions requires not only a sustained political dialogue among the leaders of the region but also an improvement in the shared management of natural resources. The concerted development of the mining sector would be especially beneficial for all concerned, enabling the region to clean up its export channels and cut off revenues for the armed groups in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. In that regard, France welcomes the action that the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region has taken, particularly with regard to strengthening the traceability of mineral supply chains, and calls on States that have not yet done so to adopt its legislative and regulatory provisions on certificates of origin for minerals. France would like to support the region in that area and will therefore host the Global Conference of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative in June.

France reaffirms the importance it attaches to the Great Lakes region and its solidarity with the countries concerned, and will continue to honour the commitment it made in 2013. We share the common goal of forging long-term regional stability, and we are ready to work with all stakeholders in the region to achieve that goal and overcome the challenges involved.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Gata Mavita Wa Lufuta (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to thank you, Mr. President, for taking the initiative to convene this meeting focused on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for

the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region. I also want to thank all the members of the Security Council for the special attention and interest that they have always shown in considering the situation in my country whenever they are called on to do so.

We appreciate the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region (S/2019/229), presented just now by Mr. Said Djinnit, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region. Its analysis of some of the issues that it raises demands some observation and comment on our part. I would therefore like to refer briefly to some points regarding the security, political, humanitarian and human rights situations, and to conclude by discussing the implementation of the Framework.

Peace and security continue to be essential to maintaining stability in the Great Lakes region. They require the eradication of armed groups, unfailing compliance with the agreements reached and political will on the part of the leadership to work for harmony and understanding in the region. In that regard, the Secretary-General's report emphasizes the activities of armed groups in the eastern parts of my country. It highlights the virulence of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), which is attacking not just civilians but also members of our armed forces and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). The report also mentions that the ADF has continued to strengthen its ranks by recruiting in the countries of the Great Lakes region and beyond. In that regard, I should point out that the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo noted in its most recent midterm report (S/2018/1133) the alarming fact that the ADF has an international recruitment network, and that its recruits come from several countries in the region. The Group of Experts also emphasizes another important fact, which is the ADF's Islamicization of its recruitment efforts, whereby, according to paragraph 10 of the report, "The recruiters focused mostly on Muslims."

That situation warrants the attention of the Security Council and should prompt us to anticipate these armed groups radicalization before it occurs. According to our information, in October 2017 the ADF reportedly declared allegiance to the jihadist Islamic State, from which it is alleged to have received funding for activities aimed at turning the eastern Democratic Republic

of the Congo into the epicentre of the spread of the Islamic State's influence in Central, East and Southern Africa. In any case, the group's conduct, whereby it has systematically obstructed the community response to the Ebola epidemic, is clearly designed to undermine every effort to stabilize the region. As we said when the Council met on 18 March (see S/PV.8486), my delegation would like to see a strategic review of the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo and MONUSCO in order to enable this negative force to be speedily neutralized so as to ensure lasting security in that part of the country.

Paragraph 11 of the Secretary-General's report, which mentions the report of the Group of Experts, also refers to the presence of an armed group known as P5 that is reportedly active in South Kivu and associated with Rwandan opposition groups and received arms and ammunition from a neighbouring country. My country, which respects its commitments under the Framework, condemns that situation, which could draw us into another armed conflict. We hope that the Group of Experts can shed light on it and on the arms and ammunition supply chain so that we can establish which countries have been violating the arms embargo.

We once again reiterate our call to the international community for combining regional efforts for the effective implementation of the Framework. That is the purpose of the visits to the countries of the region by President Félix Antoine Tshilombo Tshisekedi of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who is committed to good-neighbourly relations. As he said on 15 February when he addressed our diplomatic corps,

"The Democratic Republic of Congo, located in the heart of the African continent with nine neighbouring countries, will give priority to the consolidation of regional peace. I will focus on a foreign policy based on good neighbourliness and constructive dialogue with our nine neighbours in order to assume our share of responsibility for regional stability, including within the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region".

The points about the elections made in the section of the Secretary-General's report on political developments are not just out of date but were also the subject of the Council's deliberations on 11 January (see S/PV.8443). I hope the Council will accept that we do not wish to return to the issue again.

With regard to the humanitarian situation, the Government's efforts should be supported in order to meet the needs of the populations in distress. My delegation therefore takes this opportunity to reiterate its call regarding this to all our partners.

As we said in our statement last week (see S/PV.8486), the issue of human rights violations and restrictions on democratic space is at the heart of the work of President Tshisekedi, who made a commitment to working to promote the rule of law when he came to power. To that end, he has committed to humanizing the security services, combating abuses and eliminating detention centres that do not comply with the law. He has begun to open up public media access to all to encourage freedom of expression and assembly and freedom to demonstrate. He has released political prisoners and taken robust anti-corruption measures. He has now set up a national mechanism to combat all forms of human trafficking in our country.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo remains committed to the Framework, which it considers a proof of the international community's determination to find a definitive solution to the instability that has affected the country for several years and for which it continues to pay a heavy price, including several million dead. That is why it has always striven to implement all the commitments made under the agreement and will continue to shoulder its share of responsibility so that peace and harmony are restored to the region.

In that regard, my Government remains committed to implementing the decisions of the ninth High-level Meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, which call for strengthening the Joint Follow-up Mechanism on ADF and the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism, on the one hand, and continuing regional cooperation with a view to the complete and rapid neutralization of all destabilizing forces, on the other hand. However, as noted by the Secretary-General in paragraph 67 of the report, the Democratic Republic of the Congo regrets the lack of involvement of other States in the smooth functioning of the Joint Follow-up Mechanism on ADF and therefore urges the guarantors of the Framework to remind all parties to meet their commitments.

Despite the clear progress made since the adoption of the Framework agreement, it should be acknowledged that in recent years we seem to be approaching an impasse. My delegation would therefore like to ask the countries of the region and the guarantors of the Framework to take the opportunity to hold the tenth high-level meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in October to review our joint resolve to bring peace to the region by combating the threat of armed groups that undermine the development of our States. The Great Lakes region must indeed aspire to a better life, as economic development can be achieved only with the peace and harmony of its populations.

Before concluding, my delegation is of the view that the region should take the opportunity provided by the new era in my country to build trust among the leaders of the region, who must look to the future and work in such a way as to create relations that will lead our States towards regional cooperation. That is very necessary to achieve peace, security and sustainable development in the Great Lakes region.

I cannot conclude my statement without expressing my Government's thanks to Mr. Said Djinnit, whose term as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region of Africa ends at the end of this month, for his valuable contribution during his term of office to the pursuit of solutions to restore lasting peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the entire Great Lakes region.

In the same vein, my Government congratulates Mr. Huang Xia on his appointment by the Secretary-General to succeed Mr. Said Djinnit as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region as of April. My Government already wishes him a fruitful term of office and promises him its full cooperation to enable him to carry out his work successfully.

Finally, I reiterate the gratitude of the Congolese people and their Government to the members of the Security Council for their dedication and commitment to our country's cause.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.