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Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the ICGLR Member States: The ICGLR remains an important mechanism for resolving conflicts and consolidating Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region

The Regional Inter-Ministerial Committee (RIMC) comprising of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) met in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo on 21st July, 2018, under the chairmanship of H.E. Jean Claude Gakosso, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Congolese Abroad of the Republic of Congo. The meeting was convened to analyze the political and security situation in the region, and organisational matters of the ICGLR.

In his statement at the opening ceremony, H.E. Firmin Ayessa, Vice Prime Minister of the Republic of Congo and Guest of Honor, enumerated challenges facing the region and the work done so far in the implementation of the Pact, and noted that the ICGLR remains an important mechanism for resolving conflicts and consolidating Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region.

He expressed his gratitude to the Executive Secretary and his team for the dedication and commitment exhibited in the implementation of its mandate, and pledged the sincere commitment of the Republic of Congo to steer the ICGLR in its efforts to sustain regional security and stability.

In his statement, the Chair of the RIMC, H.E. Jean Claude Gakosso, welcomed his colleagues to Brazzaville and wished them a safe stay. He extolled positive developments in the peace process in South Sudan and the prospects for the electoral process in the DRC, and called on the region to build on this progress to ensure ultimate success.

He reiterated the Republic of Congo's continued commitment to the implementation of the Pact and advancing the ICGLR objectives of cementing peace, stability and development in the region. He called upon the RIMC to keep supporting the Conference Secretariat to enable it coordinate the implementation of the Pact.

On his part Amb. Zachary Muburi-Muita, the Executive Secretary of the ICGLR, expressed his gratitude to H.E. Denis Sassou Nguesso, President of the Republic of the Congo, for his steadfast commitment to the ICGLR Mechanism. He reiterated the commitment of the Secretariat and all of its organs to support the Chair in advancing the objectives of consolidating Peace and Security in the region. He briefed the meeting on ongoing progress in strengthening collaboration with the African Union and the United Nations, and recent discussions with the European Union on improving the framework of their support to ICGLR projects.

The opening session was also addressed by Amb. Said Djinnit, Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General to the Great Lakes Region, who highlighted the recent joint efforts with the ICGLR under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework.

The Special Representative of the AU to the Great Lakes Region, Mr. Basile Ekouebe, delivered remarks on behalf of the Commissioner for Peace and Security, emphasizing the importance of working collectively to help the region consolidate stability and deliver peace dividends to the people. He surveyed recent positive developments in South Sudan, Burundi, the electoral process in

the DRC, and the breakthrough in relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Having received the report of the National Coordinators, and a comprehensive briefing by the ICGLR Executive Secretary, the Ministers resolved as follows.

1. Took note and welcomed the decision of the President of the Republic of Burundi not to run for another term, and called on the European Union to lift the sanctions on the Republic of Burundi;
2. Noted the DRC's determination to hold elections as scheduled by the electoral calendar, and affirmed support to the ongoing progress in the electoral process in the country.
3. Expressed support to the ongoing peace negotiations in the Republic of South Sudan and saluted the regional efforts by IGAD Member States, and in particular, H.E. President Omer Al-Bashir of Sudan, who has been mandated by them to bring the Government and the Opposition in the Republic of South Sudan to the ongoing face to face talks in Khartoum. Called on all parties to negotiate in good faith to achieve lasting peace and appealed to all parties to respect the Ceasefire Agreement and expedite the conclusion of the comprehensive accord that will usher sustainable peace to the people of South Sudan;
4. Welcomed the political courage exhibited by H.E President Uhuru Kenyatta in meeting and agreeing with former Prime Minister Raila Odinga on reconciliatory steps to consolidate stability in the Republic of Kenya;
5. Appreciated the face to face meeting between President Salva Kiir Mayardit and Dr Riek Machar that led to a breakthrough in the peace process in South Sudan;

6. Called for humanitarian assistance to Member States hosting huge numbers of refugees, and called for addressing the root causes of refugees fleeing their home countries, and commended the Governments of DRC and Uganda for peacefully resolving the incident that happened on Lake Edward;
7. Called on the ICGLR Troika to undertake diplomatic efforts towards normalising the bilateral relations between Burundi and Rwanda;
8. Called for the removal of the Republic of Sudan from the US list of State Sponsors of terrorism and the lifting of all American unilateral economic sanctions against the country;
9. Directed the ICGLR Executive Secretary to proceed with the restructuring process of the ICGLR with periodic written updates to the RIMC.

The Meeting of the Regional Inter-Ministerial Committee (RIMC) expressed profound gratitude to H.E. Denis Sassou Nguesso, President of the Republic of Congo and Chair of the ICGLR, and to the government and people of the Republic of Congo for the generous hospitality and excellent facilities accorded to the delegates, which enabled the successful conduct of the meeting.

ICGLR Executive Secretary pays a Courtesy Call on the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs



ICGLR Executive Secretary, Amb. Zachary Muburi-Muita and Hon. Dr. Chitalu Chilufya, MP, the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs

The ICGLR Executive Secretary, Amb. Zachary Muburi-Muita paid a Courtesy Call on Hon. Dr. Chitalu Chilufya, MP the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs on 7th August 2018 in Lusaka, Zambia. The Executive Secretary is in Zambia to open the 13th Meeting of the ICGLR Oversight Audit Committee on the Regional Initiative on Natural Resources. He was accompanied by Dr. Frank Okuthe, the Executive Director of Levy Mwanawasa Regional Centre. Present at the meeting were the Permanent Secretary for Administration Dr Ronald Simwinda and the Acting National Coordinator Mr. Hassan Banda.

The Executive Secretary hailed Zambia's support to the ICGLR Secretariat including the hosting of the Levy Mwanawasa Regional Centre. He confirmed that Zambia's membership dues were up to-date and that Zambia was among the very few Member States with no outstanding contribution.

He further informed the Minister that the Summit in Brazzaville had ordered for the assessment of the Secretariat's role 10 years after the signing of the Pact in Nairobi.

The situation had since moved from that of interstate conflicts to internal conflicts resulting in instability and refugees fleeing from some Member States thereby posing a threat to peace and security in the region. The assessment is being undertaken by Ernest & Young who will visit Member States to consult on what needs to be done to make the ICGLR Secretariat and its organs more effective in the fulfilment of the mandate.

The Executive Secretary in addition requested Zambia to put peer pressure on Member States that were not up to-date with their contributions and to also participate in the assessment process. He further explained that there was an on-going process to fill vacant positions at the Secretariat that would facilitate the inclusion of Zambia that was not currently represented at a professional level in the Secretariat.

On his side, the Executive Director of the Lusaka Centre underscored the role of LMRC as a Think Tank and a Research Centre undertaking research on critical issues within the Region to inform policy, and contributing to the building of the capacity of institutions in the Member States.

The Acting Minister thanked the Executive Secretary for finding time to pay him a courtesy call and commended the Executive Secretary for efforts he had undertaken to promote peace and security in the region. The Minister further thanked the Executive Secretary for the kind words spoken of Zambia and pledged the Government of Zambia's unwavering commitment and full support to the ICGLR, the Secretariat and the Regional Centre that Zambia hosts. He reiterated that Zambia was ready to host many more meetings as was evidenced by the previous hosting of the Ministers of Youth

Affairs and the Ministers of Justice Meetings and currently the ongoing 13th Audit Committee Meeting.

He expressed Zambia's concern over the deteriorating security situation in conflict torn Member States such as South Sudan and Central African Republic, adding that Zambia was ready to contribute to and support the quest for a lasting solution. The Minister expressed further concern at the political impasse in Burundi and Democratic Republic of Congo, emphasizing that it was extremely important to preserve and promote democracy within the region.

The Minister reiterated that the ongoing conflicts and Ebola outbreak in Eastern DRC posed a threat to the health of the populations within the region. He also informed the Executive Secretary that Zambia was hosting 41,000 refugees from neighbouring countries posing a problem of coming up with a solution to the root cause of the refugee problem. He commended the Centre for its research activities and urged the Centre to provide analysis on DRC to pinpoint a predictable outcome of the prevailing situation.

The Executive Secretary thanked the Minister for finding time to receive him and underscored the vital role Zambia plays as it is geo-strategically placed to influence events in the Region on matters of peace and security.

ICGLR Executive Secretary pays a Courtesy Call on the Zambia Army Commander



The ICGLR Executive Secretary, Amb. Zachary Muburi-Muita with Lt. General Paul Mihova, the Commander of Zambia Army at the Army Headquarters at Arakan Barracks in Lusaka

The ICGLR Executive Secretary, Amb. Zachary Muburi-Muita paid a courtesy call on Lt. General Paul Mihova, the Commander of Zambia Army at the Army Headquarters at Arakan Barracks in Lusaka. The Executive Secretary was in Zambia to open the 13th Meeting of the ICGLR Oversight Audit Committee on the Regional Initiative on Natural Resources. He was accompanied by Dr. Frank Okuthe, Executive Director of Levy Mwanawasa Regional Centre for Democracy and Good Governance.

Present at the meeting was the Acting ICGLR National Coordinator, Mr. Hassan Banda. Lt. General Mihova was accompanied by all the Heads of Service of the Zambia Army based at the Headquarters.

The Army Commander warmly welcomed the ICGLR Delegation before introducing the Senior Officers present. In his welcome remarks, Lt. Gen Mihova said that the occasion was historic as it was the first time a Head of the ICGLR Secretariat was paying a visit to the Zambia Army HQ. He expressed his delight at the visit, and commended the Executive Secretary for the excellent coordination work he was undertaking at the ICGLR Secretariat.

The Army Commander hailed the work of the ICGLR in bringing together Member States' institutions to collectively agree on solutions to the myriad of problems facing the Region, particularly in matters peace and security.

He reaffirmed Zambia Army's commitment to the strengthening of regional cooperation, adding that the need for closer collaboration between and amongst Member States could not be overemphasized.

Upcoming Events: October - December 2018

- **Kampala, 6th - 8th October 2018:** The Heads of States and Government of the signatory countries of the Peace, Security and Co-operation (PSC) for Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Region will hold its 9th High-level meeting in Kampala, Uganda on 8th October 2018. It will be preceded by the meeting of the Technical Support Committee (TSC) on 6th October 2018.

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Information sharing is critical in enhancing peace and security, he added, giving as an example phenomenon of the porous borders in the region that include waterways such as rivers and lakes.

The latter had made Zambia set up marine units on the Zambezi and Lake Tanganyika. In this regard he proposed that maritime security be on the Agenda of the next meeting of the ICGLR Regional Security Chiefs meeting. The Commander disclosed that Zambia was in the process of establishing a Peacekeeping Institution to build the capacity of its officers selected for peacekeeping missions.

The Executive Secretary in response thanked the Commander for the warm reception accorded to his delegation. He recalled the critical role the ICGLR had played since the signing of the Pact in eliminating inter-state armed conflicts and reducing to the minimum the mistrust among Member states through dialogue. He commended the Zambia Army for the it has been playing in peacekeeping in the region and beyond.

This was a vote of confidence by the international community in the capacity of the Zambia Army to provide protection to civilians and the vulnerable in situations of armed conflict. The Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism, he added, had been well embraced by the Member States and was playing its role of auditing transborder incursions- accidental or otherwise. With the imminent admission of the ICGLR into the African Union's Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), the EVJM was poised to play an even more important role in confidence as well as peacebuilding in the Great Lakes region. Peace and security in the region are key to development, as this would facilitate movement of goods and persons and also enhance development in the Member States. He urged Zambia to expediate the deployment of its officer in order to boost the capacity of the EJVM.

The Executive Secretary congratulated Zambia Army for setting up the Training Institute and concluded by inviting the Zambia Army to partner with the Lusaka Centre and the Kampala Regional Training Facility for capacity building of their officers in democracy/ good governance and SGBV respectively. In his concluding remarks, Lt. General Mihova expressed his delight with the visit and promised enhanced cooperation with the Secretariat in all the areas identified.

The meeting was punctuated by an interesting Q&A session in which the Senior Officers and the ES and his delegation engaged in discussion on topical issues pertaining to the Region.

Workshop on ICGLR'S Thematic Focus on Democracy and Elections

The International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA) facilitated a 2-day workshop in Bujumbura, Burundi from 29th -30th August, 2018 on ICGLR's Thematic Focus on Democracy and Elections. The workshop brought together relevant staff, financial and technical partners of the Democracy and Good Governance (DGG) programme at the ICGLR Secretariat.

The Levy Mwanawasa Regional Centre's Executive Director, Dr. Frank Okuthe made a presentation on the review of ICGLR' Election Assessment methodology.

Other participants were drawn from the ICGLR, EU, EISA, IGAD, Embassy of China, Embassy of German, EAC, ECOWAS, and the Open Society Foundation.

The objectives of the workshop was to strengthen the ICGLR's role in the promotion of democracy in the region as a means to achieving peace and stability and also to strengthen its institutional strategy on DGG by adopting an approach that strengthens the link between the two pillars of the DGG Programme.

The workshop reviewed the ICGLR strategy and developed a plan of action on enhancing the output of its Democracy and Good Governance programme.