



A FRAMEWORK OF HOPE: The Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Region

On 24 February 2013, recognising the recurring cycles of conflict and violence that permeate the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), eleven countries of Africa signed a Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the region¹. This agreement represents an avenue of hope for the people of the region to build stability by addressing the root causes of the conflict and fostering trust between neighbours.

It is important that not only governments but a wide cross-section of the population in each country – parliamentarians, women’s groups, human rights organisations, young people, business groups, trade unions, faith-based organisations, academics and others – know the details of this Framework of Hope. It is they who will benefit if this Framework is implemented fully, so they should be active in encouraging each of their governments to make special efforts to ensure full implementation, and they should be ready to hold their governments accountable for any failure to respond adequately.

The Framework outlines national, regional and international actions that aim to end violence:

For the DRC	For the region	For the international community
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To deepen security sector reform.• To consolidate State Authority, particularly in eastern DRC.• To make progress in decentralisation.• To further economic development.• To further structural reform of public institutions.• To further reconciliation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To respect the sovereignty of neighbouring countries in terms of international affairs and territorial integrity.• To neither tolerate nor provide assistance to armed groups.• To strengthen regional cooperation, including economic integration and judicial cooperation.• To neither harbour nor provide protection to any person accused of war crimes or crimes against humanity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For Security Council to remain engaged in seeking long-term stability for the DRC.• A renewed commitment of bilateral partners to remain engaged with the region.• To support economic integration and revitalise the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries.• To review the United Nations Organization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO).• To appoint a UN Special Envoy to foster durable solutions.

The Framework also calls for the establishment of a **regional oversight mechanism** involving the eleven countries and the leaders of four international organisations². Signatories agreed to jointly develop a **plan of implementation for the Framework**, which includes the establishment of **benchmarks and follow-up measures** to deliver on commitments made under the Framework. The DRC also agreed to put in place a **national mechanism** to oversee the implementation of its national commitments.

¹ The eleven signatories of the Framework are: Angola, Burundi, the Central Africa Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

² The leaders of the four international organizations are: the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the Chairperson of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, the Chairperson of the Southern African Development Community and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.



The Framework and the Security Council

The Security Council's concern over the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation in eastern DRC has increased in recent years. In November 2012, the Security Council adopted Resolution 2076 which requested the Secretary-General to report on options for high-level dialogue between parties to the conflict, including the possible appointment of a UN Special Envoy for the Region.

The Security Council recognises the importance of the Framework and the potential it represents to bring about a process that will create stability in the region. On 28 March 2013, the Security Council adopted Resolution 2098, which welcomed the adoption of the Framework and the appointment of Mrs. Mary Robinson as the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes. In this resolution, the Security Council stressed the importance of urgently implementing the Framework to protect the people of the region and formally put its full weight behind the implementation of the Framework by "demanding that the signatory States of the Framework fully implement their commitments". The Council encouraged the **prompt establishment of the regional oversight mechanism** as well as a **national oversight mechanism in the DRC**. The Council called on the **Special Envoy to lead, coordinate and assess the implementation of national and regional commitments**, including the **quick establishment of benchmarks to assist countries in meeting their Framework obligations**. The Council also **encouraged the Special Envoy to lead a comprehensive political process to address the root causes of conflict**. The Security Council will continue to be involved in supporting the implementation of the Framework through the quarterly reports of the Special Envoy, in coordination with MONUSCO, to the Council.

The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region

On 18 March 2013, the Secretary-General appointed Mrs. Mary Robinson (Ireland) as his Special Envoy for the Great Lakes region of Africa. Mrs. Robinson's mandate focuses on stimulating the parties to the Framework to deliver on their commitments and supporting efforts to reach durable solutions for the region. To implement her mandate, the Envoy will use her good offices to strengthen relations between the countries, encouraging steps to bring an end to the conflict, and to revitalise the implementation of existing accords that promote regional integration. She will focus on the development of benchmarks that provide measurable steps to stimulate the full implementation of the Framework.

The mandate of the Special Envoy links security with wider development by focusing on two key areas: women's empowerment and regional economic integration. The Special Envoy will aim to **build accountability in the region, expanding her activities beyond intergovernmental discussions by focusing also on civil society**, which is an integral part of a modern, dynamic and democratic state. She will consult with and seek help from organizations such as parliamentarians, women's groups, human rights organisations, young people, business groups, trade unions, faith-based organisations, academics and others by **creating a platform where these groups learn about the Framework, actively participate to encourage its implementation and, ultimately, hold their governments accountable for fulfilling their commitments**.

In addition, addressing common economic challenges, reducing economic vulnerability and improving human development indicators, as part of the benchmarks, will **help promote regional integration** as a way of **building trust** between neighbours.



Shared responsibility

This time a different approach is needed. There have been agreements between the governments of the region in the past, which have failed to bring about peace, security and economic progress.

Peace, security and economic progress are also the responsibility of citizens and organisations within the countries concerned. The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General will listen carefully to the widest possible constituency of people and organisations in each country, and look to them to help encourage their governments to fulfil the commitments they have made, and to hold them accountable for any failures or shortcomings.

Together, the governments and international organisations concerned, donors and peoples of the region can give hope of real change – of a true peace dividend – which provides peace, security and progress for all.

In the words of Irish Nobel Laureate Seamus Heaney, taken from “The Cure at Troy”:

History says, don't hope
on this side of the grave.
But then, once in a lifetime
the longed for tidal wave
of justice can rise up,
and hope and history rhyme.

So hope for a great sea-change
on the far side of revenge.
Believe that a further shore
is reachable from here.
Believe in miracles
and cures and healing wells.

Call the miracle self-healing:
The utter self-revealing
double-take of feeling.
If there's fire on the mountain
Or lightning and storm
And a god speaks from the sky

That means someone is hearing
the outcry and the birth-cry
of new life at its term.