

The multidimensional challenges facing the Great Lakes region require a multidimensional response: UK Statement at the UN Security Council

Let me begin by thanking Special Envoy Xia, Ambassador Caholo, and Mr Mahtani for their briefings today, as well as the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission for the written advice provided to the Council on the Great Lakes region. I will focus this intervention on the security dynamics in the region.

The United Kingdom remains extremely concerned by the fragile security situation in the Great Lakes region – in particular, increased violence as a result of greater activity by armed groups including, the ADF, CODECO, RED Tabara, and the re-emergence of the M-23, and the reported links between the ADF and IS Central Africa Province. These are all stark reminders of the need to address the security vacuum in the eastern DRC.

We also remain concerned about the humanitarian situation in the Great Lakes region, with large-scale displacement of over 16 million persons, violations of international humanitarian law and human rights, mainly as a result of violence in eastern DRC. And, we are particularly concerned about the protection of civilians as a result of intercommunal violence in DRC's Ituri province, including the recent targeting of IDP camps.

The multidimensional challenges facing the Great Lakes region require a multidimensional response. The United Kingdom welcomes the positive trend of enhanced diplomatic outreach and dialogue among countries in the region. This includes steps towards normalisation between Rwanda and Uganda and the recent regional heads of State Conclave on Eastern DRC hosted by President Kenyatta in Nairobi.

We call upon countries in the region to intensify these efforts in order to improve regional cooperation, and turn commitments into tangible action to address shared security challenges, improve humanitarian access, and to reduce violence.

I also call upon Special Envoy Xia and the ICGLR to continue to work in close coordination, including with MONUSCO, in support of the countries of the region to tackle the threat posed by M23 and other armed groups, to foster confidence building amongst the states of the region, and to enable the implementation of the UN action plan for the Great Lakes.

The final point I would like to make is on natural resources, whose illegal exploitation, as we've heard across the Council today, are a source of funding for armed groups and a driver of conflict across the Great Lakes region. We strongly support the designation of sanctions on those individuals

and entities who are found responsible for the exploitation of natural resources.

We will continue to work with the international community, including through the DRC sanctions committee, to ensure those individuals and entities are held accountable for their actions.

Thank you.