

Urging the Government of DRC to spearhead efforts towards lasting peace

Madam President, let me begin by congratulating SRSK Keita on her appointment, and by thanking her and Ms Lusumba for their briefings today. As ever, I would like to commend the continuation of MONUSCO's vital operations despite challenges in the operating environment.

Madam President, I would like to focus my intervention today on three points. First, despite numerous multifaceted challenges, it is important to recognise the progress that is being made in DRC. To that end, I would like to congratulate President Tshisekedi on the establishment of his "Union Sacrée" coalition, and to welcome his efforts towards forming a new government.

It is crucial that the Government of the DRC drives forward urgent reforms – particularly those that will ensure free and fair elections in 2023, improve the economy for all, and establish peace and security in the East. As Ms Lusumba's briefing made clear, gender sensitive approaches in all of these areas are critical. In this regard, I commend the President's commitment to thirty percent female representation in his new government.

Secondly, despite progress in some areas, I must stress again our concern about increased armed group violence in eastern DRC. The number of attacks against civilians so far this year – in Ituri, North and South Kivu particularly – is a pressing and tragic reminder of the need for renewed focus on tackling the threat posed by armed groups.

In this vein, I call on all national, regional and international actors to utilise the levers at their disposal to stop these groups from accessing weapons, from being able to trade and make money, and from receiving political protection while committing atrocities with impunity. I would also like to express my deep concern at DRC's acute humanitarian situation, which is driven in large part by conflict.

Finally, Madam President, a word on MONUSCO's transition. I welcome positive momentum at the provincial level towards the Mission's withdrawal from the Kasais. However, transition can only be sustainable and responsible if the government is engaged fully with the process.

To that end, I urge the Government of the DRC to engage and coordinate at the provincial and national levels. Efforts to address the root causes of conflict in DRC and to build a safer, more prosperous future for its citizens will only succeed if spearheaded by the Government.

Thank you, Madam President.