

The [African] Great Lakes Region:

FROM THE ERA OF TURBULENCE AND VIOLENCES  
TO STABILIZATION

**Presentation by President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya to the Meeting of  
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## INTRODUCTION

**1.** The Great Lakes Region [Africans] has been placed at the front of the international scene by the tragedies which have been experienced during the last two decades: the assassination of the first Head of State democratically elected in Burundi history the 13<sup>th</sup> of October 1993 and the civil war of more than ten years that it caused, Tutsi genocide in Rwanda in 1994 and the “African world war” which took place on the soil of the Democratic Republic of the Congo from 1998 to 2003, hardly a year after the “liberation war” from 1996 to 1997.

**2.** It is also a region of which natural wealth, the environment relatively still healthy and the dynamism of its populations arouse much covetousness and make it an area of confrontations between strategic interests often antagonistic. Today as in the past, this region betrays and compromises each day strategies of domination and exploitation which, unfortunately, handicaps the necessary stabilization which could enable and make beneficial for the peoples of the region, the economic and social development.

**3.** Whereas in Rwanda a former armed political movement won the war of which peak has been the genocide of Tutsis in 1994, in Burundi and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, negotiated peace processes are under way since 1998. The international diplomacy deployed in order to help so as to definitely put an end to conflicts which destroy the region. This dynamic of peace has been crowned by the signing of the “pact on security, stability and development in the Great Lakes Region” that was reached in Nairobi on 15 December 2006.

**4.** Through that Pact, the eleven countries signatories committed themselves among other things to “fight against genocide in the Great Lakes Region” in deciding notably to “neutralize, disarm, arrest and refer to international courts actors of genocide, including forces which perpetrated the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 and all other similar forces

which may form in the future, in accordance with the 1948 convention on the genocide and relevant Resolutions of the United Nations Security Council". Can we think and believe that the Region goes from now through deadly turbulence to a more humanity and a healthy management?

## **THE EPICENTRE OF TURBULENCE:**

### **POLITICO-ETHNIC CRISES OF RWANDA AND BURUNDI**

5. The [pre-colonial] kingdoms of Burundi and Rwanda, rival powers at the time, had positively astonished explorers, missionaries and European colonizers who crossed or settled in the region since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They found the well-structured societies on politico-administrative, judiciary and military plans to the point that they thought that it was the result of external influences and not of dynamics typically domestic [local].

6. These two countries had remained and still remain inhabited by three components considered as ethnic groups: the hutus, the Tutsis and the twas. In their analyses and behaviors with regard to these components, colonizers and missionaries have greatly played on differences instead of favoring contributions of each others in the edification of solid Nation-States. The twas whose number does not exceed some tens of thousands, were portrayed as "under men" looked down on and excluded by the other two components. On their part, the hutus were portrayed and managed as a group of "serfs and exposed to fatigue duties for mercy", "men with limited mind". As far as the Tutsis are concerned, they were considered, portrayed and managed as the component among which were recruited the leading aristocracies. As the Germans first (1896-1916), then the Belgians (1916-1962) had opted for an indirect [colonial ] administration, their policy consisted in choosing almost exclusively their collaborationists in the tutsi component from which were chosen the large majority of people in

charge of administrative matters. It was equally among that “ethnic group” that developed small elite trained at colonial school as well as at [catholic] missionary school. In their strategy of domination, colonizers used a strategy appearing contradictory: they had to rely on the “mututsi caste” although some of them equally held that as long as that “caste” keeps its influence, no progress would be possible in the two kingdoms they dominated.

7. Whereas from 1925 to 1933, the rare hutu elements present in indigenous administration were systematically eliminated by Belgian colonizers, in the mid of 1950s, the same colonizers, concerned with containing the independent movement which took the form, led among others by leaders stemmed from indigenous aristocracy, tried to support or to launch on political scene leaders they thought to be less hostile to the “civilizing” work of the colonization. Analysts or political actors of the region believe that the “Social Revolution” conducted in Rwanda by hutu modern elites in 1959 would not have been conceived and succeeded if it did not benefit from ideological and moral encouragements of Catholic Church, from unequivocal political and military support of the colonial administration. In addition to the change of the regime that followed –the monarchy of Rwanda became a Republic-, the political superstructure was henceforth dominated by hutu elements and this “revolution” was the source of the first movements of refugees in the region. Tens, even hundreds of thousands of Tutsis, threatened in their physical integrity, went to exile in Burundi, Uganda and Congo-Kinshasa and Tanganyika. The independence of Rwanda occurred in this way in pain the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 1962, the same day as the “twin kingdom of Burundi”.

8. Whereas Rwanda was already set on fire, in Burundi on the other hand, hutu and tutsi elites managed to proclaim “united” the independence of the country. However, the country did not resist for long to the effects of colonial politics, to politico-ethnic turbulence

experienced in Rwanda and to the implication of “tutsi” refugees that followed in the country of the same ethnic structures as Rwanda, to strategic confrontations between capitalist and communist blocks and to internal dissensions within the national leadership.

**9.** The first crisis broke out in Burundi in October 1965 through an attempt of a coup d’Etat led by hutu officers of the army and gendarmerie, probably in complicity or on solicitation of hutu political people. The expression of that coup d’Etat, through on one hand the confrontations between mutineers and loyalists and, on the other hand, and more tragically, the first attempts of “ruralization” of politico-ethnic violence as well as the repression that followed set up, in radical manner, ethnic dimension in political and social life of Burundi.

**10.** In 1972, a “hutu revolt” led from the bush organized in Tanzania was expressed by the attempt to systematically eliminate tutsi populations in some communes of the south of the country on the border of the region where the revolt in question was spreading out. The reaction of the power and its army was the systematic “eradication” of hutu elites. “The massacres of Tutsis and some hutus by rebels between 29 April and 5 May have been estimated between 800 and 1200 persons by missionary sources. The same sources point out that military operations and the repression essentially led by the army helped by groups of RRY (JRR) have been extremely bloody”. According to some evaluations, “they estimate to almost 150,000 the number of persons liquidated in the main extermination centers of the country, and to some 80,000 the number of victims during the raking by the army of the coastal band”. The genocidal temptation and logics appear in the attacks of the Hutu rebellion but also and still dreadfully in the repression carried out by the Government. Supported by the army, its militia and its administrative and judiciary apparatus, the ruling power carried out a policy of veritable political purification and

destruction of the Hutu elite in order to set up a permanent system over many decades not to say centuries. In fact, when people are arrested in their homes or where they work, depending on their birth and out of military context, especially when children and teenagers are systematically executed in schools( preventing hereby their community from any promising social future), there is a reversal in absolute horror of extermination, which rends the jurisdictions derisory and which excludes the feeble. Even though the planning appears more extempore than the Rwandese case of 1994, the bureaucratic aspect of 1972 is outstanding.

**11.** In august 1988 there occurred in Burundi what is called “Ntega and Marangara events” which major effect was the beginning of the opening, timid indeed, of the system which has dominated the country since the independence in 1962. In Rwanda, on October 1<sup>st</sup> 1990, the Rwandan Patriotic Front launched, from Uganda, its offensive against the second republic of the General Major Juvénal Habyarimana. That attack marked very likely a veritable turning point in the history of the whole region and many analysts have not hesitated to see in it the first step of a concerted plan intending to modify gradually political equilibriums of all the Great Lakes Region of Africa.

**12.** Hence there had begun a long period of turmoil and violence in the Great Lakes Region which was going to attract the world’s attention. The assassination of the first Head of State democratically elected in Burundi on October 21<sup>st</sup> 1993, hardly 100 days after his tenure of office and the civil war which began thereafter were to crystallize the attention of the whole world which, some months earlier, had praised the democratic process of Burundi in which they thought to have found a good example for the region. The assassination of President Melchior Ndadaye, of the Hutu ethnic group origin, has contributed to the radicalization of Hutu extremists fringes from various parties who were progressing in Rwanda and who were involved in the genocide that

some people believe to have begun with the attack against the airplane which was carrying the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi on April 6, 1994. That genocide has ended on July 4, 1994 with the occupation of Kigali by the Rwandan Patriotic Army. The genocide made hundreds of thousands of Tutsi victims. Furthermore, during the war, crimes against humanity carried out by the two belligerent parties have been identified. Also, the arriving of the Rwandan Patriotic Army in Kigali was followed by huge movements of refugees (Tutus) toward neighboring countries, namely Tanzania, and the former Zaïre( DRC-Democratic Republic of Congo). In Zaïre, we have counted 2,5million refugees. For the regime of Kigali, the latter constituted threat for its security given that they were located near the border of Rwanda and were administratively, politically and militarily controlled by remains of the Government which had lately committed the genocide of Tutsis.

**13.** It is in those respects that in September 1996, the “Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo” (ADFL) conducted by Joseph Désiré Kabila and highly inspired and supported by Rwanda and Uganda launched an attack against the Government of field marshal Mobutu Sese Seko from the east of the former Zaïre. Its first targets were camps of Rwandan Hutu refugees. Less than a year after that offensive, Kinshasa was controlled by the rebels and the latter set up a regime which was strongly supported by Kigali. It was on May 17, 1997. In 1988, a quarrel between Kinshasa and Kigali broke out and it was the starting point of what has been called later “the first African world war” in which the regular armies and rebel movements which were fighting against the established powers in some countries were involved. Those cases of violence put the Great Lakes region in the headlines of the world. Millions of human lives have been their victims, massive motions of populations have been observed, economic and social infrastructures have been destroyed and pillage of national natural resources have been pointed out.



**14.** Here are two countries, Rwanda and Burundi which history, especially that of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, is at the origin of crises which is shaking the Great Lakes Region. However, the history of Burundi and that of Rwanda have not begun with the genocides of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century...What strikes observers is the repeating of mass massacres in that region of Africa. Rwanda and Burundi have been periodically echoing each other in that choice of horror. 1972 has been preceded by 1965 in Burundi, by 1959-1961 and 1963-1964 in Rwanda. 1972 in Burundi precedes 1973 and still 1994 in Rwanda, but also 1988 and 1993-2003 in Burundi. Those successions of killings seem to generate one another theoretically practically, with the similar atrocities every time, with gunshots or machetes.

## **II. THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO IN THE EYE OF THE STORM**

**15.** Nevertheless, even though Burundi and Rwanda constitute the epicenter of crises that the Great Lakes region has undergone during these two last decades, it is essential to mention other issues which were prevailing in the evolution of Congo since 1960 up to now in order to have a full idea. The place and role of that country in the crisis of the Great Lakes region can be analyzed under three levels: strategic issues in connection with the immense richness of that country, identity issues especially in the eastern part of the country (the two Kivu) and the impact of Rwandan and Burundian refugees.

**16.** Strategic issues around the democratic Republic of Congo are fundamentally tied to the huge and multiple natural resources of that country, especially the mining resources of Katanga and those of the eastern part of the country. The country has huge reserves of copper, cobalt, diamond, gold and other related products like uranium. It is in those respects that the uranium which was used in making the atomic bombs which the United States have launched on Hiroshima and

Nagasaki in 1945 came from Congo, exactly from Katanga. Many attempts of cessation or the various wars which have devastated that province from 1960 to 1965, from March 13 to May 28, 1977 and the one which took place in May 1978 are in connection with the uranium. Today, the crisis in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo can be explained both by the need of real integration of the Tutsi Kinyarwanda-speaking communities in the whole nation, security issues in Rwanda but also and possibly the covetousness which is sparked off by the natural resources that that part of the Democratic Republic of Congo is provided with: coltan, diamonds, gold and petrol (Lake Albert).

**17.** Identity issues are regularly evoked in connection with Kinyarwanda speaking communities, especially Tutsis. There was the need for their effective integration since the colonial epoch. It is in 1937 that the Belgian Governor General of Congo and Rwanda-Urundi had signed a decree authorizing the immigration and implantation of the populations of Rwanda-Urundi in the territories now known as Masisi and Walikale in the north of Kivu. In 1948, a “mission of integration of Banyarwanda” was undertaken in order to “regularize the flux of the populations of Rwanda-Urundi in the North-Kivu, especially in the area of Masisi and Rutshuri”. At that epoch, the number of nationals was estimated at 170,000, most of whom Rwandan, who were established there. On November 6<sup>th</sup> 1959, when many Rwandan Tutsis fleeing the so-called “social revolution” of November 1<sup>st</sup> were arriving in that region, a legislative ruling concerning municipalities and granting the right to vote to some categories of people coming from Rwanda-Urundi was signed. By that epoch, the Kinyarwanda speaking populations were already involved in the war which was devastating Congo. Hence in 1964, when the bavira communities, the babembe and the bafulero who dominate in the south of Kivu were supporting the so-called “lumumbist” rebellion conducted by Gaston Soumialot and Laurent

Désiré Kabila, attacking from Bukavu and Uvira, the banyamulenge were supporting government forces conducted by the general Joseph Désiré Mobutu. At that time, in the north of Kivu, it was also said that there was a war so-named “kinyarwanda” opposing the Banyarwanda and the other communities of the north of Kivu. It is presumably as an award for that support that in 1971, the Political Bureau for the Popular Movement for the Revolution (PMPMR) decided to issue the Congolese nationality to Rwandans living in Congo on June 30<sup>th</sup> 1960, the date of independence of that country. That political decision had been followed on January 5<sup>th</sup> 1972 by the promulgation of the Act no.72/002 upon nationality. Almost 10 years later, on June 29<sup>th</sup> 1981, the Act no. 81/002 related to nationality was promulgated and was repealing, with a retroactive effect, that of 1972. At the same epoch, a letter intending to organize a referendum of auto-determination in Kivu was addressed to the Secretary General of the UNO (United Nations Organization) by five Rwandan intellectuals! We realize hereby that the issue of nationality of Kinyarwanda speaking communities living in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo is at the center of the turbulences in that region since the 1960s. During the National Conference of 1991, that issue was outstanding in the debates. Later on after the first Congolese war (1996-1997), whereas the project of constitution was planning to recognize once for all the Congolese nationality for those populations, a bill adopted on January 2<sup>nd</sup> 1999 waxed more restrictive in the management of that issue. Even though, the issue was constitutionally solved with the recognition of nationality to the Kinyarwanda speaking populations. It was also a task of protecting Tutsi populations that the perfidious general Laurent Nkunda has evoked in 2007 when he restarted war in that part of the country.

**18.** Another important factor in the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo is tied with the impact of the Rwandan and Burundian

refugees in that country. The Various crises which have characterized Burundi and Rwanda in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have constrained hundreds, not to say millions of populations to exile. Between 1959 and 1994 hundreds of thousands of Rwandan Tutsis have found their refuge in Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania and Zaïre. Concerning Burundi, there were waves of departure for exile for Hutu populations, especially after the genocide of Hutus in 1972, the massacres of 1988 following the assassination of the first Head of State to be democratically elected and the violence which followed in 1993 and in 1996 after the coup which overthrew the remains of the institutions issued from the elections of June 1993. The victory of the Rwandan Patriotic Front after the genocide of Tutsis caused a departure of millions of Hutus toward Zaïre and Tanzania in a time when Tutsi refugees were coming back from Burundi, Tanzania, Uganda and Zaïre. In their departure, Burundian Hutus who had found their exile in Rwanda had no other choice than either returning to Burundi, or to flee toward Tanzania or Zaïre.

**19.** Those refugees have been in the centre of the crisis which took place in the Great Lakes Region as victims, but also as crucible from which begun political restructuring which occurred or are occurring now in some countries: Uganda in 1986, Burundi since 1993 and Rwanda in 1994. Therefore; in the scope of the geopolitics of central and eastern Africa, the conjunction of national crisis, taking as support or excuse ancient or recent phenomena of forced mobility, had taken place and has produced a general conflagration. Civil wars of Burundi and Rwanda have served as epicenter in destabilizing the Great lakes Region. Then the exportation of those conflicts toward the territory of Zaïre (now DRC) has caused the collapsing of the regime of president Mobutu Sese Seko until then irremovable, which itself caused the involvement of half a dozen neighboring countries, by complex and fluctuating alliances. Most of those countries had already established

close and reciprocal relationships by means of great numbers of spontaneous migrants (Zaire-Congo or Angola-Zaire, Burundi and Rwanda- Tanzania, etc).

## **COMPLEX AND LABORIOUS PEACE PROCESSES**

**20.** Everyone had hoped that the democratization processes engaged at the beginning of 1990s in the three former Belgian colonies would help to put an end to deadly crises they had experienced. Whereas Rwanda was linded in civil war which delayed to find a way out and that in Zaire the national conference was at a standstill, Burundi was successfully organizing its first democratic elections since a quarter of a century. It was in the course of the 1993 half-year. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of the same year, Rwandan government signed a peace accord with its armed opposition of Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). The implementation of that accord should on its turn enable the country to stabilize progressively. All sank in the 20 to 21 October 1993 night when elements of Burundi Armed Forces, largely dominated by tutsi component, attacked the elected President and assassinated him together with several of his collaborationists. A second country caught fire in the Region because it followed a civil war of which settlement went through a laborious process which, at the time being, is not yet completed.

### **At national levels**

#### **◇ Rwanda**

**21.** In Rwanda, hesitations between two parties to apply rigorously and honestly the terms of the peace accord concluded in Arusha on the 4<sup>th</sup> August 1993 led to the re-opening of war, the commission of tutsi genocide and the military victory of the Rwandan Patriotic Front. The latter imposed then its order in Rwanda post-conflict and post-genocide.

#### **◇Burundi**

**22.** In Burundi, the way of negotiation made it a rule to sort out the conflict that country experiences since four decades.

**23.** During two years (1993-1995), the conflict political protagonists tried, with the support of the United Nations Special envoy, to reach compromises for the putting back in place and the effective functioning of the institutions. On 14 September 1994 was then signed a “Government Convention”. That “Convention” was confronted to a double problem: on one hand, the persistence of the conflict between the political legitimacy of the “Front for Democracy in Burundi” (FRODEBU) having a double victory (to presidential and legislative elections) of June 1993 and an army hostile to the new elected power and upon which leaned the opposition parties on the top of which was the former unique party ruling the country since the independence and, on the other hand, the birth of the National Council for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD), a political movement which came within the armed fight against that “tutsi mono ethnic army” the origin of the 21 October 1993 coup d’Etat and the assassination of the First hutu Head of State and above all democratically elected. Other new avenues should therefore be explored to integrate these data in the process of peace search.

**24.** A bend occurred on 25 June 1996. At the time of an ultimate summit dedicated to Burundi crisis organized in Arusha in Tanzania, Burundi President requested his counterparts of the Region to assist the country to face up to the crisis it was going through. It was agreed that the Region deploy troops to protect the population from attacks of belligerent parties at the same time as negotiations between different political and military protagonists to the conflict would be organized under auspices of the former President of Tanzania, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere. The coup d’Etat operated by the army on 25 July 1996 did not manage to break that surge. Since, burundian peace process has been

trained by the “Regional Initiative for Peace in Burundi” of which Uganda and Tanzania managed respectively the presidency and the vice-presidency.

**25.** Since July 1998, political protagonists to Burundi conflict began negotiations in Arusha, in the North of Tanzania. The negotiations put under the facilitation of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere who, to his death in 1999, was replaced by the South-African President Nelson Mandela. These negotiations suffered from the absence of the two main [hutu] rebellions which faced up to the “tutsi mono ethnic army”: the CNDD-FDD and the PALIPEHUTU-FNL. Nevertheless, they resulted in, on 28 August 2000, signing of the “Arusha accord for Peace and Reconciliation in Burundi” which will serve as the base and political reference to further negotiations, notably between the Government and armed political movements.

**26.** After having negotiated with factions without influence, the Government, under the pressure of the region and the international community, decided to negotiate with the CNDD-FDD. On 16 November 2003, an overall peace accord negotiated during several months, under the auspices of the south-african Vice-President, Jacob Zuma, was signed between the Transitional Government and the CNDD-FDD. The latter integrated transitional institutions and, between June and September 2005, a real electoral marathon took place. The former armed rebellion of CNDD-FDD won and became the dominant political force in all institutions of the country.

**27.** It remained another armed political movement: the PALIPEHUTU-FNL. At the beginning, strong military pressures were exerted on that movement at the same time as the Government, from now integrated in the “Tripartite Plus One”, tried to marginalize it diplomatically. Nevertheless, doors of negotiation have never been totally closed. It is

in this respect that on September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2006, peace agreement has been signed between the Government and the PALIPEHUTU-FNL under the auspices of a south-African mediation led by the Ex-President Jacob Zuma, later on replaced by the South-African Public Security Minister, Charles Nquakula. The implementation of that agreement was at a standstill for several months. It was very recently, by the end of the year 2008 that last obstacles have been put away by a vigorous implication of the regional peace initiative for Burundi. Today, the PALIPEHUTU-FNL became a political party named “Forces Nationales de Libération” (FNL) and it will surely participate in the 2010 elections.

### **The Democratic Republic of the Congo**

**28.** In Burundi, if the peace process fundamentally only concerns national actors, in Democratic Republic of the Congo, foreign powers, Congolese military and political organizations and armed oppositions from other countries are involved in the conflict. Which makes the peace process complex.

**29.** It is in July 1998 that the President Laurent Désiré Kabila deported Rwandese officers operating in the Congolese army. Some days after, on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1998, a war was launched by the Congolese Union for Democracy in Kivu. After less than twenty hours, Rwandese and Ugandan armies engaged a military offensive for the second “liberation” of the Congo. The offensive was only stopped thanks to the Angolan army’s intervention. The re-opening of fighting at the East of the country for restraining the advance of Rwandese and Ugandan forces reinforced the involvement of Angolan, Zimbabwean and Namibian forces. The first peace attempt intervened on September 8<sup>th</sup>, 1998, at the time of a Summit organized at Victoria Falls, gathering, under the chairmanship of Zambia, countries militarily involved in the Congo. Aggressor countries refused any kind of cease-fire. The latter will finally intervene on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 1999 through the signing of a cease-fire agreement which engaged six countries involved in the conflict: the



Democratic Republic of the Congo and its allies, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Angola on one hand and the “aggressor countries” on the other hand, that is: Rwanda and Uganda. Nevertheless, while different foreign armies would rather withdraw from the country, the conflict complexity and many interests in balance led to the military confrontations between Rwandese and Ugandan armies, yesterday allied against Kinshasa, for the control of Kisangani town.

**30.** From 25 February to 19 April 2002, the first meetings for inter Congolese dialogue have been held at Sun City in South Africa. At that opportunity, around 70% of 350 delegates who attended the meeting have signed the «agreement for a concerted management of the transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo”. That dynamic has been completed on 30<sup>th</sup> of July 2002 at Pretoria in South Africa by the signing of an agreement between Joseph Kabila, President of DRC and Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda, an agreement planning the disarmament and repatriation of Rwandan armed groups installed in DRC in exchange of the withdrawal of Rwandan Patriotic Army from Congolese territory. On 21<sup>st</sup> of October 2002, Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe ended the withdrawal of their last armed forces from the DRC. Finally, on 17<sup>th</sup> of December 2002, Congolese parties involved in the conflict signed, at Pretoria in South Africa, an overall agreement for the power sharing in the perspective of creating a Government for national unity and put an end to the four years of war. This has been followed, on 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2003, by the adoption, at Sun City, of a transitional Constitution by the delegates of inter Congolese dialogue. On 2<sup>nd</sup> of April, a peace agreement has been signed by all parties involved in the war. On 4<sup>th</sup> of 2003, the President Joseph Kabila promulgated a new Constitution of power sharing. This has been followed by the swearing in of the President Kabila as the transitional Head of State. On 16<sup>th</sup> of July 2003, a transition Government coming

from the outgoing Government, rebel movements, non armed political opposition, Mayi Mayi traditional militia and civil society was formed.

**31.** In 2006, legislative and presidential elections have been organized and successfully held. Everybody believed that they were to be a gateway for the country to get up from crisis. However, in the East of the country, the general Laurent Nkunda, who had refused to integrate the DRC Armed Forces entered the rebellion. However, in these previous months, new developments are under way in the East of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. After victorious offensives of CNDP rebellion of the general Laurent Nkunda, suspected to enjoy the support or serve [in the pay of] Rwanda, alliances seem to be falling over throughout the joint operation of Rwandan Defense Forces (RDF) and the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo so as “to track down and disarm” the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda whose members are suspected to be involved in the Rwandan Tutsis genocide in 1994.

## **b) A TOOL FOR PEACE, SECURITY, DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT: THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE GREAT LAKES REGION**

**32.** The various conflicts having affected the Great Lakes Region on the level of their causes as well as their consequences are concerned have solid interactions between them. In the declaration signed by the Heads of State and Government at Dar-Es-Salaam on November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2004, they recognize that the endemic conflicts and the insecurity persistence are caused or aggravated, among other things by economic stagnation and aggravation of poverty, mistrust and suspicion between Governments, massive violations of human rights and other policies of exclusion and marginalization, disparities between sexes, returning to violence to conquer and keep the power, impunity for genocide crimes,

crimes against humanity, war crimes, unlawful traffic of light and small-bore arms, proliferation of armed groups, organized criminality, illegal exploitation of natural resources". The diagnosis made in this way, the Heads of State and Government declared their "collective determination to make the Great Lakes Region a space of peace and a sustainable security, and for States and peoples, the social and political stability, growth and shared development, a space of cooperation based on strategies and convergence policies in the framework of a common fate". To achieve that view, Heads of State and Government have undertaken the following commitments:

#### **a) CONCERNING PEACE AND SECURITY**

- Support fully the national peace processes and refrain from any action, declaration or attitude likely to affect them negatively, including through the media;
- Strengthen regional and bilateral cooperation thanks to the adoption and effective implementation of the pact of non aggression and common defense;
- Set up a regional framework for prevention, management and peaceful settlement of conflicts;
  
- Fight against genocide by neutralizing, disarming, and deferring to international courts the perpetrators of genocide;
  
- Strengthen the cooperation as far as security is concerned and promote confidence thanks to the setting up of policies, measures and mechanisms whose purpose is to reinforce neighborly relations and multi-sectoral cooperation;

- Promote common policies to put an end to the proliferation and to the unlawful traffic of light and small-bore weapons as well as the anti-personal simpering;
- Maintain the security of common frontiers in the framework of corner management strategies of cross-border issues;
- Prevent every direct or indirect support, every delivery of weapons or every other form of assistance for armed groups operating in the Region and forbid the armed groups to do, from any territory, aggression actions or of subversion against other states members;
- To vote through and set down in an effective and lasting way, national programs of disarmament, demobilization and reinsertion;
- To intensify the fight against border criminality and terrorism, and in this respect, set down measures against impunity.
- To protect vulnerable groups

#### **a) CONCERNING DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE**

- To promote policies and strategies imposed by values respect, principles and democratic and good governance norms and the respect of human rights;

- Fight against all ideologies, policies and discriminatory practices and all genocide, massacre, terrorism, racism, ethnic and exclusion acts and all other forms of violence and crimes;
- To develop policies and common programs in the framework of civic education, personal free circulation, freedom of speech and free exchange of ideas and information;
- To promote policies of national unity based on the multiculturalism, the tolerance, peace culture and dialogue;
- To put in place national and regional policies based on democracy and good governance aiming at legally constituted state's consolidation, the reinforcement of leadership capacities, the transparency of electoral processes, the reinforcement of the effectiveness of legal and security services and the improvement of new technologies of the information and communication;
- To promote the effective participation of different socio-economic actors, in particular the private sector, the civil society, women and the youth in the reinforcement of democracy and good governance;
- To encourage member states of the international conference on Great Lacks Region to belong to the African mechanism of the evaluation by NEPAD peers and to put in place regional equipment looking after the respect of the international conventions on human rights and criminal practices such as the unlawful traffic of light arms and small caliber and the unlawful exploitation of resources in Great Lacks Region;
- To adopt policies and voluntaristic mechanisms to promote equality between men and women at all levels and in all domains, at national and regional levels;

- To encourage political and legal cooperation within countries of the region in order to deal with crimes, genocide in particular, crimes against humanity, war crimes and terrorism acts.

**C) CONCERNING THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND THE REGIONAL INTEGRATION:**

- ◊ To promote the shared point of view about the economic development and the regional integration which supports a sustainable and global development;
- ◊ To reach a regional integration in working for the harmonization of the instruments of an economic cooperation;
- ◊ To adopt strategies for the macro-economic convergence and for the setting up of regional policies with purpose of free circulation of persons, goods and services;
- ◊ To cooperate in order to reinforce the economic growth through economic integration and the search of solutions to major challenges that arise in the country, and the mixing of an integrated strategy of reconstruction at a regional level in production and infrastructures sectors;
- ◊ To create or strengthen at a regional level, legal, administrative and institutional frameworks and develop capacities for regional institution;
- ◊ To create a unique economic space for a reinforced economic effectiveness, to eradicate poverty, and reach a lasting economic development;
- ◊ To promote the growth and the development thanks to the revival and harmonization of existing organizations of regional integration and the establishment of poles/zones on both sides of the frontiers;

- ◇ To adopt regional policies for the promotion of a dynamic private sector, socially accountable, in the framework of a favorable environment to investments, notably through a mechanism of integration of informal sector within the whole economy;
- ◇ To promote policies and regional strategies of diversification and growth of income resources , the competitiveness of producing sectors, the rational management of land resources, good and lasting management of vital natural resources of the nature and the environment such as the aquatic ecosystems, mineral reserves and forests of Congo basin as well as the lasting human settlement;
- ◇ To promote the regional cooperation in the trade, monetary policies, energy, transport, tourism, culture, environment, new technologies of information and communication sectors, as well as within the telecommunications domain, a particular carefulness to be granted to the railways, pipelines, submarine cables and the interconnection by optical fibers of telecommunications networks;
- ◇ To elaborate a regional strategy of agricultural, fishing, livestock and agro-industry development and irrigation policies appropriated to reduce the dependence in the respect of precipitation and climatic changes;
- ◇ To promote the cooperation in the framework of scientific research and in social domains, notably education and health ones, in order to harmonize programs or policies, reinforce exchanges, favor judicious management of human resources, reduce the brain drain and improve life conditions;
- ◇ To formulate national and regional policies in order to favor women and youth employment and develop appropriate financing regional mechanisms, in order to allow them to have more access to micro-finance institutions, to the possibilities of investment in trade domain

and to the control of producing factors such as the land, estate and capital;

◆ To formulate policies and strategies in order to create the added value through the transformation of our raw materials and promote activities based on knowledge as well as service industries such as the tourism, banks and assurances in order to create wealth;

◆ To harmonize policies and regional mechanisms of the environmental management, and notably national parks and protected ecosystems in accordance with the conventions and international norms on the matter;

◆ To follow a collective regional strategy for the better access to international markets and an accelerated integration of the regional market;

◆ To adopt, promote and support the making of strategies and well-regulated national policies of urban and rural development, at national and regional levels;

◆ To involve the international community, notably the United Nations Organization and all its agencies, the African Union, the important regional economic communities, the international financial institutions, the Group of Friends of the Great Lakes Region and other development partners to bring their support to countries of the region by declaring the Great Lakes Region, “specific zone for reconstruction and development” endowed with a Special Fund for reconstruction and, within that framework, mobilize available resources in the region;

◆ To make an urgent appeal to partners for the whole cancellation of the dept, considering specific needs related to the problems of the post conflict reconstruction and development in the region;

◆ To create and strengthen national and regional mechanisms to integrate sexo- specific aspects in all sectors of economic development.



#### **d) CONCERNING HUMANITARIAN AND SOCIAL ISSUES**

◆ To abide scrupulously by obligations and principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, ratify, carry out at a national level and make operational all other international and regional instruments about Human Rights;

◆ To comply with obligations and principles of the 1951 United Nations Convention related to the status of refugees and the 1969 African Union Organization Convention governing specific aspects of problems of refugees in Africa;

◆ To obey and use guiding principles on internal displaced people, as suggested by the United Nations Secretariat, harmonize all relevant legislations and define a national and regional framework for the control and the follow-up of norms which are registered and which have trait to access and protection of stricken populations, internal displaced people, women and children who are the victims conflicts;

◆ To observe scrupulously norms and principles of the humanitarian international Law and related relevant Conventions, among other things, the 1949's Geneva Conventions, for the civil protection in the period of conflicts and providing humanitarian assistance, including an integral and free access to all persons in need of assistance;

◆ To guarantee security for humanitarian staff, in accordance with the 1994's Convention on the security of United Nations staff and related staff, as well as the 1502's Resolution of the United Nations' Security Council as the International Humanitarian Organizations observe national laws of countries in which they intervene;

◆ To deal with deep causes and find lasting solutions to the persisting problems of displaced populations and refugees, in particular as far as their peaceful cohabitation with local populations, their repatriation and their free return or their local integration are concerned, with the full participation of local authorities and the welcoming populations and, if necessary, in the framework of tripartite agreements; encourage the mother country to create convenient conditions for the return refugees;

◆ To encourage the international community to help welcoming communities and zones where refugees live and reduce harmful effects of the lengthy staying of refugees, in the vein of sharing the burden;

◆ To put in place a regional mechanism and national systems which allow to identify, disarm and separate the ex-combatants from refugees and displaced persons and settle them in distinct sites in order to prevent them from manipulating refugees and displaced persons for military and political purposes;

◆ Apply Ottawa Convention on antipersonnel mines and assure mine clearance, including zones sheltering refugees, repatriates and displaced persons, and set to a reasonable distance from frontiers, in accordance with African Union Organization (OAU) governing specific aspects of refugees' problems in Africa and to relevant conclusions of the Executive Committee of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees' Programme, approved by United Nations General Assembly;

◆ Create a precocious alert regional mechanism with rapid action to natural disasters and those provoked by human and build capacities for the restoration of environment in zones destroyed by the settlement of displaced and refugees;

- ◇ Forbid recruitment of children in armed forces or their any participation to hostilities, notably as reinforcements;
- ◇ Set up regional mechanisms, and notably various traditional accompanying mechanisms designed to provide for psychosocial, medical and judicial support to women and young ladies victims of rape and other kind of violence and sexual exploitation;
- ◇ Adopt a common regional approach in order to ratify and to implement the United Nations Organisation Conventions on stateless persons, harmonize legislations and related national norms and give to refugees and displaced identity documents which would allow them have access to basic services and enjoy their rights;
- ◇ Make sure that refugees and displaced, when they go back to their native places, get back their properties with the help of local traditional and administrative authorities;
- ◇ Allocate funds from abolition of the debt primarily to the programmes rehabilitation and reconstruction of social and educational infrastructures as well as to the development of rural areas;
- ◇ Promote strategies of prevention and fighting against the spreading of endemic diseases such HIV/ AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis and reduce the impact of the aforesaid diseases thanks to the strengthening of regional initiatives, notably the Great Lakes Initiative on AIDS(GLIA), the initiative of countries bordering Congo-Oubangi and Chari rivers to fight against AIDS, in order to facilitate access to medical interventions and reinforce collaboration, coordination and sharing information between the States of the region;
- ◇ Make Millennium Development Goals, a reference framework for the elaboration of integrated policies aiming at eradicating poverty phenomena;
- ◇ Elaborate and promote, in educational systems, exhaustive school programmes on peace culture;

◆ Promote the use of Kiswahili as work language in Great Lakes Region;

## Conclusion

33. Since December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006, a “pact on security, stability and development in the Great Lakes Region” works as legal framework for the materialisation of stated objectives in the Dar-Es-Salaam statement of November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2004. This pact calls upon States members of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region to instil democracy and good governance in the management of national reports and to seek jointly peaceful solutions to conflicts opposing the States.

Positive progress is real in this part of the world. In Burundi, the last armed political movement has just integrated the constitutional political life. Armed forces of Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and Sudan on the one hand, those of Democratic Republic of the Congo and those of Rwanda on the other hand, nowadays carry out joint operations against armed groups, the Lord Resistance Army of Uganda and Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, which since many years constituted at the same time a problem and an alibi in cloudy relations among concerned countries. These developments took place when the International Penal Court for Rwanda is about to close its doors and where almost all countries of the region are heading for elections that everyone wishes to be prepared and organised in such a manner to avoid disappointments experienced by electoral processes in Kenya and Zimbabwe. If the various military aspects of conflict seem to find a way out, the region is still confronted to problems of consolidation of democracy and good governance, truth on the past and the setting of a truth and equitable justice, and consequently, reconciler. It is obvious that if Rwanda and Burundi, that constituted

the epicentre of the conflict, are totally liberated from destructive and dehumanizing ethnics that they experienced and truly stick in democratic governance, they would constitute, together with the Democratic Republic of the Congo, equally having a democratic governance and guaranteed of its national integrity, a powerful pole of economic development of an Africa of the Great Lakes seeking integration.

Bujumbura, March 2009.

