

Security Council Debate on the Situation in the Great Lakes Region: DRC and the Great Lakes, July 25th 2013, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Carrera, Permanent Mission of Guatemala to the United Nations.

Thirteen years have passed since the United Nations first established a peacekeeping operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. My own country has participated in that Mission as a troop contributor since 2005; in fact, we lost eight troops in a well-known incident in Garamba National Park in January 2006. I would like to honour their memory by reciting their names here: Abelino Pop, Ramón Xi Che, Edgar Morales Guzmán, Valeriano Rax Hul, Calixto Gómez Pérez, Mario Enrique Tee Caal, Teodoro Tilom Paau, and Orlando Augusto Hernandez Alonzo. Five of those soldiers were Guatemalans of Mayan descent — Mayans fighting for peace and security in the Great Lakes region.

In spite of this long history, the signing on 24 February of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region has opened the possibility of injecting renewed momentum into the efforts to achieve peace, stability and prosperity in the Great Lakes region in general and the Democratic Republic of the Congo in particular. For that reason today's debate is timely and relevant, and for that we are grateful to the delegation of the United States, and in particular to Secretary of State Kerry, for proposing it and for circulating the concept note on the matter (S/2013/394, annex). We also appreciate the gesture of Secretary Kerry of personally presiding over today's meeting.

We also greatly value the presence of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and President of the World Bank Jim Yong Kim, and we would like to thank them for their presentations. We also appreciate the briefings of Ms. Mary Robinson, United Nations Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, and the Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union.

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2013/387), which serves as a background document to this meeting, refers to the relatively encouraging expectations that exist today that the protracted crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, especially in the eastern part of the country can, be resolved in the broader context that shapes the future of the Great Lakes region. Despite the many obstacles to be overcome, which the report also openly describes, we agree with the assessment of the Secretary-General and with the words of Special Envoy Robinson. I would like to underscore some of the elements that undergird our cautious optimism.

First, although the Framework for Peace, Security and Cooperation for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region involves commitments both for the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and for the other countries of the region, as well as for the international community, it is clear that the primary responsibility falls on the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as it should. That model, with the host country serving as the main protagonist and the international community in a complementary role, has emerged as a paradigm of development in recent times, in particular since the Paris Declaration.

Secondly, the commitment to address the root causes of the conflict in a comprehensive and holistic manner, including the economic, social, political, governance and security issues, also appears to be essential if we are to restore stability and overcome the violence that afflicts the country.

Thirdly, it is encouraging to see the presence of 11 countries and four multilateral institutions involved in the Framework for Peace, Security and Cooperation. It is our view that the establishment of the so-called 11+4 oversight mechanism shores up expectations that commitments undertaken by

all parties will be met.

Fourthly, we commend the partnerships that the United Nations has built with the regional and subregional entities of the African continent, in this case with the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the Southern African Development Community. We consider the synchronized and cooperative work of the multilateral entities, each with its own specific purview, to be of special importance.

Fifthly, along the same lines, we commend the joint initiative of the Secretary-General and the President of the World Bank to undertake a joint mission to the Great Lakes region and to appear together again before us. It is difficult to conceive of economic and social progress without the involvement of multilateral financial institutions. We are pleased that, in addressing the problems in a holistic and comprehensive manner, we are assigning the duties to be addressed, not only within the United Nations, according to the speciality of each entity, but also within the United Nations system and between the latter and other multilateral bodies. We also continue to hope that the new manifestation of cooperation between the United Nations and the World Bank will extend to the agendas of the Economic and Social Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and the General Assembly. We see the World Bank as not only the financial arm of development, but also the financial arm of peace.

Sixthly, as is known, my delegation has expressed its reservations about the new trend of the Council to assign peace-enforcement duties to missions conceived under the cardinal principles that have shaped our peacekeeping operations, including especially the principle of impartiality. However, in spite of those reservations, ultimately we accepted the incorporation of the so-called Intervention Brigade into the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as the lesser of two evils, given the imminent threat to the civilian population by the Mouvement du 23 mars and other militant groups in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, and with the understanding that this would be a stop-gap measure. In any case, it is important to not forget that State-building, democracy building or even more so with regard to nation building is not a job for the international community; it is the job of sovereign States.

In conclusion, I would like to refer to the fact that, just a month ago, we met here in the Chamber to adopt resolution 2106 (2013), on sexual violence against women and children in armed conflict (see S/PV.6984). In line with resolution 2098 (2013), that meeting, which was held under the presidency of the United Kingdom, was fundamental. We should not forget the words expressed then, which would serve as a guide for peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I hope that we are now on the path towards peace and that we will continue advancing towards the prosperity and development of a region that truly needs it.