

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (spoke in French):

The delegation of Senegal is pleased to see the Minister for External Affairs of Angola presiding over today's meeting of the Security Council. We also welcome the briefings of the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, and those of Mr. Said Djinnit, Mr. Smail Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union and Mr. Vijay Pillai, Adviser to the Office of the Vice President for the Africa region of the World Bank.

The delegation of Senegal greatly appreciates the opportunity provided today by the Angolan presidency to discuss the burning issue of the prevention and resolution of conflicts in the Great Lakes region. The subject is important in that it directly concerns a dozen countries in the heart of Africa in a sensitive region that for decades has unfortunately been afflicted by multidimensional crises with diverse causes resulting from the convergence of historical, demographic, economic, social and political factors. It is also important for the numerous initiatives that are currently under way with the aim of halting this crisis-provoking dynamic and turning it into a virtuous cycle of stability, prosperity and inclusive, sustainable development.

A review of the situation in the Great Lakes region points inevitably to how closely the issues are tied to the land, to natural resources, to the division of power, the rule of law and good governance, all factors that create fertile ground for intercommunal clashes. We recall the genocide that occurred in Rwanda in 1994 and the intra-communitarian wars in Burundi, which were tragedies that culminated in a spiral of instability in that important region of the continent.

In addition to the evolving aftermath of those tragedies, other regional conflicts have exacted a heavy toll on the trust and relations among States, creating challenges and substantial limits to necessary regional cooperation. Indeed, various reports on the subject, including those of the Secretary-General, reveal an emerging pattern in the the causes and manifestations of the crises wracking the region. Without being exhaustive, we can identify the following, inter alia: the growing number of armed non-State entities; inter-community or ethnic tensions; problems pertaining to governance and democracy; the illegal exploitation of natural resources that fuel conflicts; the cyclical flows of refugees and internally displaced persons, and their resulting humanitarian consequences; the high number of civilian victims in that context of insecurity; sexual and gender-based abuse, particularly against women and girls; and lest we forget, the poignant case of children who are often recruited by warring parties.

Given those crucial challenges, the momentum launched by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region is of critical relevance, in that it allows us to establish a holistic regional approach that, above and beyond providing localized and necessarily piecemeal responses to conflicts and crises, takes into account of the need for prevention, integration, and the promotion of peace and sustainable development in the region. Similarly, the Senegalese delegation believes that the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region, which was signed in 2006 by members of that organization, represents a reference point for stimulating and coordinating regional efforts in the following areas: peace and security; democracy and good governance; economic development and regional integration; and humanitarian and social issues.

A similar approach seems to justify the conclusion of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, which, as its name suggests, is specifically designed to handle the challenges raised by the chronic insecurity in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I take this opportunity to call on the signatory countries to

strengthen their commitment and cooperation in promoting the effective implementation of that important regional instrument.

Analyzing several crisis situations in Africa teaches us that, when duly assumed, regional leadership can be a decisive factor in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. It is therefore important to work to better harmonize the policies initiated by the various subregional, regional and international organizations with regard to the Great Lakes region with a view to effective and coordinated action on the ground at every stage, from early warning to the lasting resolution of conflicts, including peacebuilding, which is in and of itself a considerable tool for preventing the resurgence of crises. Moreover, taking into account the importance of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, the delegation of Senegal stresses the importance of strengthening of a partnership with greater synergies between the Security Council and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, which your country, Sir, is leading so effectively. We are convinced that sharing efforts and resources will build the capacities and effectiveness of regional entities in preventing and resolving conflicts.

The security challenges facing the region require the reinforced commitment of the international community and optimal regional cooperation in order, among other things, to end the threat of armed groups in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and effectively combat the illegal exploitation of raw materials. We also need a strong commitment of the States of the region and regional and subregional organizations, supported by the relevant international bodies, to assuming responsibility for electoral processes in an effective and sustainable manner, which very often take place against a background marked by tension that can lead to devastating conflict.

We also take this opportunity to commend the outstanding contribution of women in the region to peace and reconciliation, in particular through the Great Lakes Women's Platform, which allows women to make their voices heard and to participate more actively in the decisions and social and economic development of the region. The programme is a concrete embodiment of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, and has already chalked up significant achievements that draw in further support at regional and international levels.

In conclusion, I should like to stress the importance of the development aspect of the search for solutions to the challenges facing the Great Lakes region, and call for the full inclusion not only of women, but also of young people, who need to be included in the private sector of the Great Lakes region.

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