

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

Statement by Mrs. Perceval, Permanent Mission of Argentina to the United Nations.

I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and ask you to convey our gratitude to Secretary of State John Kerry for having emphasized the importance of this meeting by his presence. I also thank the delegation of the United States for placing this matter at the heart of the Council's consideration and its efforts and responsibilities. It is also encouraging to see the participation of ministers and other officials from the region, as well as that of the international community. We also welcome the participation of the Secretary-General, the President of the World Bank and the United Nations Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, Ms. Mary Robinson.

Argentina believes that the first steps towards the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes Region, signed in February, constitute an opportunity to comprehensively consider the underlying causes of the region's problems, to establish the bases for sustainable political, social and economic development and achieve lasting peace. The principle of shared responsibility, on which the Framework is based, certainly involves the countries of the region; but is also an ethical and political call to the international community in terms of their participation, cooperation and follow-up to the implementation of the Framework.

We reiterate our support for United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in its task of protecting civilians with full respect for human rights and international humanitarian law. Argentina understands that the Intervention Brigade, as the Secretary-General has said, constitutes yet another aspect of a broad, long-term solution to the situation in the region, but that the primary responsibility for protecting civilians and the territorial integrity of States lies with Governments and their armed forces.

Argentina believes that it is an absolute priority for the Governments and peoples of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region to affirm and translate into action the words "never again" in the face of the continuing violations of international humanitarian law and human rights committed in the region by armed groups of various affiliations.

We are particularly concerned by reports to the effect that some of those violations have been committed by some members of Government security forces. We urge the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to expand the institutionally urgent democratic transformations of the security, justice and defence sectors.

We call on the States parties to fully fulfil their commitment to not tolerate or provide support to any armed group and not to offer protection to those whom the commission has accused of war crimes, crimes against humanity, acts of genocide or aggression or those who violate the sanctions regime of the United Nations. The fight against impunity is a necessary condition for lasting peace.

We believe that the vulnerable situation of displaced persons and refugees requires immediate humanitarian action. But the right of all men and women to a dignified life will come about only through initiatives such as that led by the Governments of the region, the United Nations, the World Bank and other partners and donors that will contribute to setting in motion infrastructure and development projects and projects that advance sustainable economic growth and social inclusion that will include, as Ms. Robinson remarked, include human rights, gender perspectives, the integration of youth and child protection. By the same token, the legal, legitimate, just, responsible

and transparent management and exploitation of natural resources is key for peace and sustainable development.

A few days ago we received a report from the distinguished organization Human Rights Watch that included the testimony of a 12-year old girl who had gone to buy sugar with her friends:

“I saw a soldier of the M-23. I began to run. The soldier grabbed me and said that he was going to kill me for trying to escape. I stayed quiet. I was very scared. Then he raped me. I screamed but he covered my mouth.”

Argentina and the international community believe that we will have defeated poverty, fear, insecurity and violence when we no longer hear — and the annals of human history, including those of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the countries of the region are devoid — of such testimonies. We hope that this meeting, convoked by your delegation, Sir, will move us in that direction.