

**Joint Statement on Behalf of A3 (Niger, South Africa and Tunisia) and Saint
Vincent and the Grenadines**

Delivered by

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Open VTC on the Situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

United Nations Security Council

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Mr President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the A3 +1 members of the Council namely, Tunisia, South Africa and Niger + St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

We would like to thank you for convening this important and timely meeting on the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). We would also like to thank and commend the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the situation in the DRC and the activities of United Nations Stabilisation Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO). Similarly, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of MONUSCO, Ms Leila Zerrougui for her comprehensive briefing.

Mr President,

We recognize the encouraging political developments in the DRC despite the existing security and humanitarian challenges. Our delegations commend the governing coalition's continued commitment to resolving their differences through dialogue. We are fully convinced that a constructive dialogue amongst all Congolese, is required for the realisation of their national priorities. In this regard, the A3 +1 echo the sentiments by the Secretary-General that dialogue remains the only solution to resolve differences.

On the security front, our delegations are concerned by the continued instability in the Eastern DRC owing to the destabilizing activities by armed groups and the persistent intercommunal tensions. We thus underscore the centrality of the PSC Framework as a long-term solution to create stability in the Eastern DRC and the wider region. Our delegations also emphasize the importance of MONUSCO's role in stabilizing the Eastern DRC and recognize the efforts of the FIB in addressing the threat posed by the armed groups. The FIB requires the continued support of the Council in this regard and needs to be fully capacitated to remain effective in addressing the threat on the civilian population in the Eastern DRC.

The A3 +1 condemn all violent attacks on civilians and MONUSCO in the DRC which often results in casualties and call for MONUSCO overall to be more responsive to the requirements to fulfil its mandate to protect civilians and in order to effectively address such attacks. In relation to the recent attacks against MONUSCO, we express our deepest condolences to the family of the deceased peacekeeper and to the Indonesian authorities. We also wish the injured

peacekeeper a speedy recovery. To this end, our delegations reiterate calls to the international community and partners to mobilize the necessary resources to support the DRC in its efforts to strengthen its institutions as well as to advance the SSR and DDR processes. In that regard, we call on the DRC authorities and the country's partners to include a community-based approach among the SSR and DDR priorities, especially as it relates to the reintegration of demobilized combatants.

Mr President,

On the humanitarian situation, the DRC continues to experience a concerning humanitarian crisis and the COVID19 pandemic exacerbates the situation. The unintended consequences of the pandemic response have increased vulnerabilities to other public health issues while the re-emergence of the Ebola virus cases are also a cause for concern as they delay the progress of the important stabilization work by MONUSCO and other partners to the DRC.

Nevertheless, we commend the on-going swift response and decisive efforts undertaken by the DRC, MONUSCO, other UN Agencies, the African Union and the WHO. Our delegations call on sustained international support to the DRC authorities to mitigate the negative impact of these diseases on the people of the DRC and the economy. We also emphasize the need for flexible financial arrangements to bolster the development efforts within the country in line with national priorities, and in accordance with the aims of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Turning to the situation in the region; our delegations wish to underline the importance of fostering strong and effective regional relations and cooperation and within this context commend President Tshisekedi's continued outreach to the regional heads of state. We support SADC's continued commitment to assist the DRC to achieve sustainable peace, security and stability. SADC's response to recent calls by the DRC and Zambia to help mediate the border issue attests to this commitment. Furthermore, our delegations are encouraged by the AU and the UN cooperation and undertaking to continue engagement in support of the consolidation of stability and democratic governance in the DRC.

The A3+1 also commends the Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region for their efforts alongside MONUSCO in pursuing a regional strategy to address the illegal exploitation of

natural resources. The illicit extraction and trade of minerals remain a major source of revenue that sustains armed group activity in the East of the DRC. To this end, we commend the recent efforts of regional member states to improve traceability in the gold sector, namely Rwanda's adoption of a national certification mechanism, and Burundi and Tanzania's implementation of domestic ICGLR certification processes in accordance with the Lusaka Declaration. Our delegations encourage further efforts by regional and international partners to tackle illegal supply chains.

Finally, Mr President,

Our delegations commend efforts and commitments by the UN, MONUSCO, Troop Contributing Countries, the DRC Government and international partners on their efforts to stabilize the DRC and protect civilians from ongoing threats despite the prevailing challenges. It is our considered view that any drawdown of MONUSCO should be based on the positive evolution of the situation on the ground for the handover of MONUSCO tasks to the DRC Government. The A3 + 1 are of the firm view that it is imperative for the international community through the AU, the UN and international partners to continue to maintain solidarity with the people of the DRC and provide the necessary political, financial and other support in an effort to ensure there is no reversal of gains made thus far.

I thank you.