

**STATEMENT OF H.E. FERNANDO CARRERA CASTRO
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF GUATEMALA IN THE OPEN DEBATE OF
THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL**

**THE SITUATION IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION:
SUPPORTING THE PEACE, SECURITY AND COOPERATION FRAMEWORK
FOR THE RDC AND THE REGION**

(New York, July 25, 2013)

Mr. President,

Thirteen years have transpired since the United Nations established a Peacekeeping Operation in the Democratic Republic of Congo. My own country has participated in this Mission as a troop contributor since 2005; indeed, we even lost 8 soldiers in a well known incident that took place in Garamba National Park in January of 2006. Allow me, Mr. President, to recall their names: Abelino Pop, Ramón Xi Che, Edgar Morales Guzmán, Valeriano Rax Hul, Calixto Gómez Pérez, Mario Enrique Tec Caal, Teodoro Tilom Paau, and Orlando Augusto Hernández Alonzo.

In spite of this long history, the signing of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the RDC and the Region on February 24, has opened the possibility to inject renewed vigor to those efforts aimed at achieving peace, stability and prosperity in the Great Lakes region in general and in the RDC in particular.

It is for this reason that we find today's debate timely and relevant, and for this we thank your delegation, Secretary Kerry, for having proposed it, and for having circulated a concept note on the matter. We also appreciate your gesture of personally presiding our meeting.

We greatly value the presence of Secretary-General Ban ki-moon and the President of the World Bank, Jim Yong Kim, and thank them for their presentations. We also appreciate the Presentations of Ms. Mary Robinson and of the other distinguished personalities that have joined us.

Mr. President,

The Report presented by the Secretary-General as a background to this meeting refers to the relatively heartening expectations that exist today that the protracted crisis in the DRC, and especially in the Eastern part of the country, can be resolved, in the broader context that shapes the future of the Great Lakes region. In spite of the numerous obstacles that stand in the way, which the Report also describes in a frank manner, we agree with the assessment of the Secretary-General. I would like to highlight some of the elements that support our cautious optimism.

First, although the Framework involves commitments both for the Government of the DRC as well as for other countries of the region, and also for the international community, it is clear that the prime responsibility falls squarely on the former, as well it should. This model, with the host country as the main protagonist and the international community playing a complementary role has emerged as a paradigm of development in recent times, and even inspires the Millennium Development Goals.

Second, the commitment to address the root causes of the conflict in an integrated and holistic manner, including the economic, social, political, governance and security issues, also appears to be indispensable if our aim is to restore stability and overcome the violence that afflicts the country.

Third, it is comforting to note the presence of 11 countries and four multilateral institutions involved in the Framework. It will be recalled that since the 1990s and up to the recent months, opposing views between different countries of the region became part of the problem that the DRC faced. The plural nature of the Framework could signal that all countries of the region could now become part of the solution, which obviously is of great benefit for the region as a whole. It is also our view that the setting-up of the oversight mechanism, called the “11 plus 4 mechanism”, gives greater strength to the expectation that commitments taken on by all parties will be met.

Fourth, we applaud the partnerships which the United Nations has built with regional and sub-regional entities of the African Continent; in this case, specifically with the African union, the International Conference of the Great Lakes, and the Southern African Development Community. We view the synchronized and cooperative work of these multilateral entities, each in its own specific purview, as something of special importance.

Fifth, and in the same vein, we applaud the joint initiative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the President of the World Bank to undertake a joint Mission to the region of the Great Lakes, and to newly jointly come before us. This goes way beyond symbolism, since it is difficult to conceive of progress in the economic and social spheres without involving the multilateral financial institutions. We are pleased that in addressing problems in a holistic and integrated manner, we can assign our responses in accordance with the specialty of each entity, not only within the United Nations (it is not necessary to recall that the mandate of this Council is limited to international peace and security), but within the United Nations System, and between the latter and other multilateral bodies. We also hold out the hope that the new expression of cooperation between the United Nations and the World Bank will spill-over into the agendas of ECOSOC, the Peacebuilding Commission and the General Assembly.

Sixth, we also applaud that efforts are being made to adapt MONUSCO’s mandate to changing circumstances. As is known, my delegation has expressed its reservations regarding the new trend of this Council to assign peace enforcement duties to missions conceived under the cardinal principles that have shaped their peacekeeping mandates, including especially the principle of impartiality. However, in spite of those reservations, we ended up accepting the incorporation of the so-called “Intervention Brigade” into MONUSCO as the lesser of two evils,

given the imminent threat posed to the civilian population by the M23 and other militant groups in Eastern DRC, and under the understanding that this was a stop-gap measure until the armed forces of the DRC were capable of fulfilling their responsibility of offering security to their civilian population and guaranteeing the territorial integrity of their country. This, in turn, is critical for the stability of the whole Great Lakes region.

To conclude, I invoke the popular saying (in Spanish) “for great ills, great remedies”. The DRC has suffered not only great ills, but prolonged ones. This is especially germane for the civilian population, and, within it, the most vulnerable groups, which include women and children. It is high time that the magnitude of the tragedy of the DRC be addressed with a great remedy, such as the renewed impetus such as the one subject of this debate, and whose outcome, we trust, will yield the results we seek for the whole of the Great Lakes region.

Thank you.