



OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL ENVOY FOR THE GREAT LAKES REGION



TAKING STOCK – THE YEAR 2021 IN REVIEW



Participants at the 9th meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism for Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, Kampala, Uganda, 8 October 2018 (Photo: Penangnini Toure/UN).

The year 2021 concluded on a challenging note. Hopes that the COVID-19 pandemic would finally end were put on hold again with the spread of the Omicron variant. Yet, despite the persistent health crisis and its socio-economic consequences, the countries of the Great Lakes region made further strides in implementing the Peace, Security and Cooperation (PSC) Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the region.

The positive trend of political dialogue and enhanced efforts to strengthen bilateral and regional cooperation continued and, in some instances, intensified, as illustrated by the frequency of visits among senior officials from countries in the region and the reinvigoration of bilateral cooperation commissions. The past year also witnessed largely peaceful elections and transfers of power in several countries, including Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.



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Countries significantly stepped-up efforts to enhance security and economic cooperation through joint initiatives on cross-border infrastructure, energy, trade, as well as military operations. Examples include the East Africa Crude Oil Pipeline and the launch of joint military action between the DRC and Uganda against the Allied Democratic Forces at the end of November.

The United Nations (UN) also enhanced its engagement in support of the region. The UN Security Council reaffirmed its support to the region during a high-level debate organized by Kenya, in its capacity as Council President. The debate resulted in the adoption of a Presidential Statement on the region.

In addition, following the endorsement of the United Nations Strategy for Peace Consolidation, Conflict Prevention and Conflict Resolution in the Great Lakes region by the UN Secretary-General in October 2020, the Strategy's Action Plan was adopted in July 2021. As detailed in this Newsletter, the Office of the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region remained committed in its support to the region and will further enhance its efforts over the course of this year, in the spirit of the PSC Framework and the Strategy.