

# A credible and legitimate political process needs to be the foundation of any lasting settlement in DRC

Thank you Mr President,

I thank SRSG Keita and Professor Mudinga for their briefings. We commend SRSG Keita and MONUSCO for their continued efforts in what is increasingly challenging and sometimes deadly circumstances. I also thank the Representative of Gabon for his briefing on the behalf of the 1533 Committee and I welcome the participation of the representatives from the DRC, Rwanda and Burundi in this meeting.

I will focus on the security and humanitarian situation in eastern DRC, regional efforts, and MONUSCO.

The United Kingdom remains deeply concerned by the security situation in eastern DRC. The redeployment of resources to tackle M23 has undermined the protection of civilians and created a vacuum that armed groups, like the Allied Democratic Forces, have exploited. We again call for the withdrawal of M23 from their current positions.

Since 2017 UK funding has provided over 2.5 million people with humanitarian assistance in the DRC. We urge all actors to address humanitarian impacts of the violence, ensuring those affected, including the 1.29 million newly displaced this year, receive the assistance they need.

President, we condemn recent violent protests against MONUSCO, which undermine its ability to implement its mandate, including civilian protection. We call on MONUSCO and the Government of DRC to engage in a structured dialogue which clarifies roles and responsibilities for a responsible, conditions-based drawdown of MONUSCO.

A military solution alone cannot bring peace. A credible and legitimate political process needs to be the foundation of any lasting settlement. Diplomatic efforts and dialogue through existing regional processes should continue, to help de-escalate tensions and end violence in the East.

Whilst military pressure has a role, it is important that international and domestic efforts complement, rather than contradict each other. The East African Community Force and DRC Armed Forces must substantively engage with MONUSCO on de-confliction of forces to ensure the protection of civilians, safety of peacekeepers and effectiveness of operations.

Implementation of the Government of DRC's Demobilization, Disarmament, Community Reintegration and Stabilization Programme (P-DDRCS) should be accelerated to ensure willing armed groups are disarmed, to protect civilians, and bring stability to the East. We call on MONUSCO to continue

supporting P-DDRCS to overcome internal coordination issues and agree appropriate fiduciary arrangements to facilitate donor funding.

Finally President, as Professor Mudinga has reminded us, the DRC and the Congo Basin are central to tackling climate change. At COP26 in Glasgow, the UK committed £200 million to the Congo Basin Pledge and will become chair of the Central African Forests Initiative in June 2023.

Thank you.