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Seventy-fourth year

8638th meeting

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New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Matjila	(South Africa)
<i>Members:</i>	Belgium	Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
	Dominican Republic	Ms. Morrison González
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Mbengono
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	Germany	Mr. Heusgen
	Indonesia	Mr. Djani
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Peru	Mr. Ugarelli
	Poland	Mr. Lewicki
	Russian Federation	Mr. Repkin
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Mrs. Craft

Agenda

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization
Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2019/776)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2019/776)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Leila Zerrougui, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to participate in this meeting.

Ms. Zerrougui is joining the meeting via video-conference from Wilton Park, United Kingdom.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2019/776, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I now give the floor to Ms. Zerrougui.

Ms. Zerrougui (*spoke in French*): I wish to thank the Security Council for having invited me to participate in today's discussion, which is taking place soon after the closing of the general debate of the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session, during which the Democratic Republic of Congo and the members of the Council themselves — its partners — were highly active.

A new positive dynamic has been established that is likely to eventually lead the Democratic Republic of the Congo to lasting peace and stability, following the peaceful transition of power that we witnessed at the beginning of the year. Regional diplomatic initiatives have been launched. A coalition Government has been

set up, with an ambitious agenda that aims to stabilize the country, improve its governance and lead it towards economic development. It is now incumbent upon the entire Congolese political class to support that dynamic and work towards its consolidation. The establishment of the National Assembly, the Senate and provincial assemblies — the parliamentary sessions of which started last week — as well as the recent formation of the Government that I have just mentioned, mark the starting point for the consolidation of democracy in the country.

Finding a balance in the functioning of those institutions remains fragile. The United Nations is working closely with the presidency, the Government and all Congolese institutions to help them to prioritize options for the consolidation of stability and ensure that the activities of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), as well as agencies, funds and programmes, are aligned with national priorities, thereby serving to enhance their impact. While continuing to support the Congolese authorities in neutralizing the armed groups, which pose an unacceptable threat to the civilian population, we must together strengthen the sovereign functions of the State and its ability to manage the country by promoting the rule of law.

(spoke in English)

The opportunities offered by the advent of a new political dispensation bring a wind of hope, as the Secretary-General said during his recent visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Yet seizing that opportunity is not without risks and challenges, and it must also urgently translate into sustainable improvement and relief for the many Congolese who continue to live in a state of insecurity, dependency on humanitarian aid and economic exclusion. As described in the report before the Council (S/2019/776), the recent escalation of intercommunal and armed group violence — at times running along ethnic lines — and egregious human rights violations have led to significant population displacements in several areas in Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu provinces. A large number of armed groups — both national and foreign — including notably the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), Nduma défense du Congo Rénové (NDCR), the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) and splinter groups, continue to exact an intolerable toll on civilians, adding to an already

dire humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I am particularly concerned regarding the level of brutality used against civilians in a number of recent incidents. The killing and post-mortem decapitation of 14 civilians, including 11 children, in Bukatsele, Ituri, as well as reported cases of female genital mutilation in Fizi territory, South Kivu, are unacceptable and deeply troubling. We will make every effort to ensure that the perpetrators are apprehended and held accountable. Another troubling incident occurred in the form of a cross-border attack by a FDLR splinter group in Kinigi village in Rwanda, resulting in civilian casualties and threatening regional stability and security. The expression of support from bilateral and multilateral partners of the Democratic Republic of the Congo with a view to finding common security responses to the situation in the east of the country is therefore both timely and encouraging.

I believe strongly that, in addition to addressing these security threats through military means, further strengthening the core function of the State, including through the professionalization of the defence and security sector and the empowerment of the judiciary, will enable the Government to better respond to these threats. While further addressing the root causes of this conflict, MONUSCO places great emphasis on supporting the Government, including encouraging local and national mediation and reconciliation efforts and responding to incitement to ethnic hatred through target strategies against hate speech. The ongoing process involving the Force de résistance patriotique de l'Ituri illustrates that efforts to ensure conducive security contacts, coupled with sustained political and community engagement, can yield tangible results. Currently, more than 900 elements are pre-cantoned awaiting a peace agreement, expected to be concluded later this year.

Besides those processes, the reintegration of former members of armed groups following the wave of voluntary surrenders in early 2019 remains a critical task. I strongly believe that that will impact on stability in the country, and I therefore call on the international community to support the Government in delivering on sustainable, locally anchored and flexible community-based approaches that will deliver justice and set the basis for long-term peacebuilding and development.

I am encouraged by the overall downward trend in the number of new Ebola cases throughout September and early October. That is linked to the strengthened coordination of overall response efforts and an enhanced and integrated approach to create an environment conducive for the response and a sharper focus on building community acceptance to ensure full access to areas affected by the virus.

We must, however, not waver in our support, as the battle is far from won. Creating acceptance for the response remains a daily challenge in areas more recently affected by the virus. That serves to remind us of the importance of not only addressing Ebola, but also responding to the broader needs of the population, including safety, health-care, sanitation and education. That is in line with population's clear message sent during the electoral period, calling for sustainable development, health-care, education and, above all, peace.

I reiterate the readiness of MONUSCO to assist the Government in supporting the protection of civilians, advancing stabilization and further strengthening key State institutions. We collectively need to take advantage of this wind of hope and navigate towards a future that corresponds to the hopes and expectations of the Congolese people. I would like to thank the Council and Member States for their continuing support in that regard.

The President: I thank Ms. Zerrougui for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mr. Ipo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes the holding of this meeting and commends Ms. Leila Zerrougui, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), for her excellent briefing.

Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the positive developments in the sociopolitical situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular with regard to the appointment of the Prime Minister, the formation of the new Government and the National Assembly's approval of the Government programme on 6 September. The programme represents a framework for concerted action that will enable the Government to undertake

political, economic, social, defence and security reforms. My country therefore urges international financial institutions, development assistance agencies and bilateral partners to provide further support for the Congolese Government in order to consolidate peace and stability.

My delegation notes that, despite the efforts of the Congolese authorities, supported by MONUSCO, the security situation in the eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains a matter of concern. Activities involving the illicit exploitation of natural resources carried out by foreign and local armed groups unfortunately continue to destabilize the provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri. Albeit the primary responsibility of the Congolese Government, the neutralization of those negative forces cannot be achieved without the involvement of all regional actors, in particular neighbouring countries.

In that regard, my delegation commends the holding of the quadripartite presidential summit held in Luanda on 12 July among the Presidents of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, Uganda and Rwanda, the outcome of which underlines the importance of economic integration and enhanced cooperation on peace and security in regional efforts to combat armed groups in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. My country also encourages the Congolese Government to redouble efforts to complete the process of disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration, as part of the implementation of its programme of action.

The humanitarian situation, which has been exacerbated by the persistence of the Ebola epidemic in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is also a matter of great concern for my delegation. The humanitarian crisis is compounded by the difficulties faced by humanitarian agencies in accessing people in need owing to the precarious security situation. Added to that is the low level of funding that has been secured to meet the amount required to finance the humanitarian response plan, which is estimated at \$1.65 billion.

In that regard, my country expresses its appreciation to the members of the response team, who are on the front line in combating the Ebola epidemic, and to the humanitarian workers for their exemplary work in particularly challenging security and health environments. My country also urges all donors to honour their commitments, which is key to maintaining

and stepping up humanitarian assistance to refugees and displaced persons.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the commitment of the international community in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular the specialized United Nations agencies operating on the ground. We view the recent visit by the Secretary-General to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, from 30 August to 1 September, as a sign of his willingness to reaffirm international support for the Congolese authorities and of his solidarity with, and support for, the victims of violence by armed groups and the populations living in the areas affected by the Ebola epidemic.

Mr. Ugarelli (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the useful briefing by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Leila Zerrougui, to whom we reiterate our support for her efforts to bring about lasting peace to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

At the outset, we welcome the progress achieved in the political arena in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, under the leadership of President Félix Tshilombo Tshisekedi, which includes the formation of a coalition Government, the appointment of Mr. Sylvestre Ilunga Ilunkamba as Prime Minister and the approval of the Government programme. As such, the necessary foundations that will lead to stabilization in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are being laid.

We also welcome the resumption of political and diplomatic relations between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the countries of the subregion, such as Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi and Angola. Nevertheless, we continue to be concerned about the deterioration of the security situation owing to the activities of both Congolese and foreign armed groups in the eastern part of the country and about pockets of intercommunal violence, which have continued to cause fatalities and forced displacement.

In that regard, we approve of the initiative by President Tshisekedi launched at the thirty-ninth summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Southern African Development Community, held in Dar es Salaam, to establish a regional coalition to eradicate armed groups from the eastern provinces in reaction to the acts of extremism and terrorism in the Beni area.

Accordingly, we believe that it is extremely important to intensify synergies between the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the Congolese security forces in order to neutralize the activities of those groups, which include the forced recruitment of child soldiers. That should be complemented by effective steps relative to the disarmament, demobilization and social reintegration of former combatants.

We believe that the current environment makes the civilian component of MONUSCO's operations even more relevant, especially with regard to promoting dialogue, preventing cases of sexual violence among community members, building trust among the various actors in the country and coordinating support from international partners. We also encourage the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to work together with the various political forces to facilitate reform of the justice system focused on transforming it into a cornerstone of the fight against impunity and corruption in the country and combating the continuing alarming situation regarding human rights violations.

The focus on ending the violence should not in any way overlook the urgency of dealing immediately and simultaneously with the worrying humanitarian situation that is threatening the Democratic Republic of the Congo and that appears to be worsening on the ground. About 10 per cent of the population is living with food insecurity. In addition, the population has been dealing with severe problems in the form of outbreaks of diseases such as cholera, measles and Ebola, of which the last has been declared a public health emergency of international concern by the World Health Organization. We particularly commend the Government's commitment to addressing the scourge of Ebola by setting up a multisectoral expert committee to oversee the various national, regional and local outbreaks. We also welcome international support, such as that of the United Nations and MONUSCO, which is providing security to response teams, including in mining areas.

In conclusion, we reiterate the commitment we have made to the Mission to continue contributing decisively to the efforts aimed at overcoming the humanitarian crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, furthering its inclusive economic development and, especially, combating sexual violence and promoting the participation of women in peace processes.

Mr. Esono Mbengono (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would first like to thank Ms. Leila Zerrougui for her usual comprehensive and detailed briefing to the Council.

Equatorial Guinea has been following the positive developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo with great interest. We thank the Secretary-General for his recent report (S/2019/776) and reiterate our gratitude to the Special Representative. We also thank all the personnel of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the United Nations country team, the troop- and police-contributing countries, regional organizations, bilateral and multilateral partners and non-governmental organizations for their efforts and commitment to their work. And I commend the political will of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Thanks to all those actors, positive winds are blowing in the country.

It is as a result of the efforts of the international community and the determination of the Congolese people that today we are celebrating the recent positive developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, such as the holding of peaceful elections, a peaceful transfer of power, the formation of the Senate and Parliament, the appointment of the Prime Minister and the formation of a new coalition Government. Those are unquestionably steps in the right direction towards lasting stability in that great country, whose importance to every aspect of life in our subregion we have emphasized on many occasions.

We should ensure that the international community helps the Congolese Government so that it can secure full control of the country's military forces and thereby exercise its authority throughout its national territory in order to defend its independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity. At the same time, we also call for ensuring an atmosphere in the region of good-neighbourliness, regional cooperation and non-interference in the affairs of other countries, as stipulated in resolution 2424 (2018). The cooperation between MONUSCO and the Congolese armed forces constitutes an important relationship that is essential to the fight to eradicate armed groups in the country.

The presence of fighting and armed groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo has resulted in serious human rights violations, the forced displacement of persons and a chronic humanitarian crisis with serious

consequences. Despite the assistance provided by the Government and its international partners, we remain concerned about the large number of people who continue to be exposed to malnutrition, cholera, measles and Ebola. The latter in particular requires technical and financial assistance from the international community. In that regard, we commend the Secretary-General's recent visit to the country.

Given that the Democratic Republic of Congo possesses a vast array of natural resources and significant mineral reserves, it is crucial to ensure that it receive major support in the fight against the illegal exploitation and commercialization of its natural resources and in the consolidation and implementation of certification mechanisms and protocols, so that the benefits of those resources can contribute to the country's development and the welfare of the Congolese people. The Democratic Republic of Congo should be able to maximize its massive potential, which would undoubtedly have a very positive impact on our subregion.

The delegation of Equatorial Guinea firmly believes that we need concerted efforts on the part of the United Nations, the African Union and regional and subregional organizations to address adequately and in a coordinated manner the conflicts in the region in general and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in particular. We commend the renewed political will that the leaders of the region have shown in strengthening ties between their countries, addressing their differences through trust and dialogue and working constructively to manage cross-border incidents in order to advance cooperation and integration, with a view to achieving the stability that is essential to enabling the development and renewal that will lead to prosperity in this key subregion of Africa.

In conclusion, we urge the African Union, the International Organization of la Francophonie, the Southern African Development Community and international partners to continue to develop synergies with the member States of the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region aimed at implementing the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region. We should not conclude without reiterating our gratitude to MONUSCO for its arduous and excellent work in a complex context. We wish it success in adapting to the new circumstances, dynamics and positive developments that are currently taking place in our

great brother country in Central Africa. In this place and moment we can see the political class and the Congolese people coming to maturity at the same time.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China thanks Special Representative Zerrougui for her briefing.

The very fact that a coalition Government has been formed in the Democratic Republic of Congo shows that the country has achieved a smooth transfer of power since the December 2018 elections. The new Government has outlined a programme of work, already approved by Parliament, that focuses on political defence, security, economic and financial reconstruction and the social and cultural sectors. President Tshisekedi is pursuing an active and packed diplomatic agenda. He has met with the Presidents of Angola, Rwanda and Uganda. He also attended the Southern African Development Community summit in an effort to resolve the issue of armed groups in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo by strengthening regional cooperation.

Those positive trends show that the Congolese Government has both the ability and the will to safeguard national security and stability and achieve sustainable economic and social development. The international community can further assist the Democratic Republic of Congo in various areas of domestic and foreign affairs, in accordance with the priorities of the new Government programme. China welcomed the Secretary-General's successful visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo on 30 August and 1 September. In defiance of fears of the Ebola epidemic and security threats, the Secretary-General ventured deep into the Ebola area in the eastern part of the country, where he met with medical staff working to combat the epidemic and with recuperating patients, and to inspect camps of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), in a strong demonstration of United Nations support in the fight against the Ebola epidemic and the security problems in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Today I would like to focus on three issues, the first being MONUSCO, which has long played an important part in promoting peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The report of the Secretary-General (S/209/776) indicates that MONUSCO still has a key role to play in responding

to the security and humanitarian challenges facing the country and that it should cooperate more effectively with the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in tackling armed groups. In accordance with resolution 2463 (2019), the Secretary-General must submit to the Council a strategic review report on the recent reform and drawdown of MONUSCO. It is hoped that the Secretariat will continue to strengthen its communication and consultation with the Congolese Government and troop-contributing countries so as to make recommendations on the future direction of MONUSCO on a basis of full respect for the wishes of the country concerned and in keeping with developments on the ground.

Secondly, China believes that regional cooperation is key to responding to foreign armed groups and stopping the illegal flow of weapons. MONUSCO can strengthen information-sharing and strategic coordination with the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, support the signatories to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region in fulfilling their respective commitments, and strengthen regional cooperation and tackle the root causes of conflict in a bid to promote lasting peace and sustainable development in the region.

Thirdly, owing to intercommunal conflicts, violence by armed groups and epidemics, the humanitarian situation in parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has deteriorated, with approximately 11 million people facing food crises and 4.5 million children malnourished. China has also continued to follow the development of the Ebola epidemic closely. Since its outbreak in 2018, we have provided \$1 million in cash assistance to the Congolese Government and \$2 million in funding to the World Health Organization (WHO) through the United Nations Fund for South-South Cooperation. China will also provide emergency humanitarian assistance to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other countries in the near future and cooperate with the WHO and the African Union to control the epidemic and prevent it from spreading further. We call on the international community to step up humanitarian assistance, fulfil its aid commitments and mitigate funding shortfalls.

Mrs. Craft (United States of America): I thank Special Representative Zerrougui for her briefing today.

Last December, the Congolese people cast their votes for change and for a peaceful transition of power, stability and a brighter future. The United States applauds the recent formation of a Government in the Democratic Republic of the Congo that embraces new leaders who could help realize such a future. We commend President Tshisekedi for the commitments he and his Government have made and for the first steps they have taken to curb the Ebola outbreak, address insecurity in the eastern part of the country and fight corruption. Only concrete action can prove to the Congolese people that this Government represents the change they voted for.

We commend the efforts of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations and non-governmental organizations to fight Ebola, especially the unique support and capabilities provided by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). As the largest single-country donor to the response, the United States is deeply committed to global health. Still, we urge others to contribute generously to the latest strategic response plan, which calls for \$376 million in donor funding.

While the Government has rightly focused on the chronic insecurity in the east of the country, we remain deeply concerned about the human rights abuses in the region by armed groups and local militias. We are also alarmed at the continued reports of attacks by those groups across North Kivu, as well as the resurgence of violence in South Kivu. We acknowledge MONUSCO's efforts amid the unrest to increase security through an intensified troop presence as well as its support of reconciliation efforts in the east. While an end to violence is a necessary condition for peace, it is no guarantee. We therefore urge the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the President to work closely with the Mission and provincial authorities to establish a long-term plan for justice and reconciliation, one that addresses long-standing grievances and structures that permit violence.

We also expect to see the Government reform its security sector, including by improving standards in the national police and armed forces, holding violators of human rights to account, and demobilizing and disarming willing armed groups and reintegrating them into civilian life. In the east, provincial authorities have already created an investigation commission and two intercommunal dialogues with MONUSCO's

support. These are small but commendable steps. We similarly recognize the President's recent overtures to his neighbours in the Great Lakes region, and we hope those meetings will yield a new pattern of good-faith dialogue aimed at lasting regional peace.

The stability of democratic institutions depends on citizens being able to trust their elected officials. We are therefore encouraged by the recent efforts of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to fight corruption, including a pledge to pass new legislation to address impunity and ratify the African Union's Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption. The United States strongly supports those efforts, including through its own bilateral programmes. Because we understand that good governance is essential for a society to flourish, and because we want the Democratic Republic of the Congo to flourish, the United States is launching a new anti-corruption programme in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in support of our bilateral partnership initiated during President Tshisekedi's visit to Washington.

We also look forward to seeing the MONUSCO strategic review later this month. We expect to receive the full text of the review in accordance with the commitments made by the Secretariat. We also welcome any additional documents that the Secretariat would like to provide, though we recognize that the report will not oblige the United Nations or Security Council members to take any particular course of action.

It is ultimately the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo that has the power to deliver resources and security to its citizens, and just as the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo marked their ballots in favour of change, the new Government has a vote of its own to cast — a vote against corruption and violence and, most importantly, a vote for a better future for the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We urge the Government to make the choice that is best for all whom it represents.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): At the outset, I would like to join others in thanking Special Representative of the Secretary-General Leila Zerrougui for her briefing. We welcome the progress that has been made in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including the establishment of a new coalition Government. We join the Secretary-General in welcoming this sense of hope across the country, as mentioned in his latest report (S/2019/776). We also commend his visit to the

Democratic Republic of the Congo in late August and early September, which showed his support for the country. Nevertheless, challenges remain, including the dire situation in Kivu and Ituri provinces. To that end, I would like to focus on a few points.

First, regional cooperation remains key to addressing the threat posed by foreign armed groups. The Democratic Republic of the Congo, like other countries in the Great Lakes region, has been marred by conflict and humanitarian difficulties for years. The root causes of those problems should be addressed. We welcome the steps that President Tshisekedi has taken to strengthen relations with neighbouring countries and that led to a confidence-building meeting in Kinshasa. We also encourage the signatories to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region to honour their respective commitments under it and to work together to promote lasting peace and sustainable development in the region. It is time to place the needs of the Congolese people above the pursuit of partisan interests.

Secondly, the humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo should be addressed as a matter of urgency. While progress is being made on the political front, it is disheartening that lives are still being lost to violence and disease. Since 1 June, at least 197 civilians have been killed in Ituri and at least 230,000 people displaced. Cooperation between the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) is important to the prevention of further violence.

The current Ebola crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is now the second-largest outbreak on record, with 3,050 confirmed cases and 2,100 deaths since August 2018. Measles, malaria and cholera continue to claim lives and must be addressed with equal urgency. We welcome the international conference on public health to be hosted by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo next month in Goma. It will mobilize the international community to provide sustainable development and humanitarian assistance to the people of the country who are in need. The Council and the wider membership of the United Nations should unite and rally behind those efforts.

Thirdly, support for MONUSCO should be prioritized. As the Special Representative of the

Secretary-General reports, and as is evident from the report, MONUSCO's role in the country is crucial and critical. That is why support for MONUSCO is now needed more than ever. The current financial situation at the United Nations should be managed so that it will not impair MONUSCO's ability to fulfil its mandate. Mandates and resources should work together, and a commitment to a peacekeeping budget should be followed by the realization of that commitment. For its part, Indonesia is continuing its support as one of the countries contributing the largest numbers of troops to MONUSCO, amounting at the moment to 1,044 personnel, including 28 women peacekeepers, and an 850 person-strong rapidly deployable battalion. Our peacekeepers continue to engage with the communities in fulfilling their mandates.

In conclusion, the Democratic Republic of the Congo needs our help, and we will continue to work with the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as a friend and true partner, to ensure lasting peace in their country.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of South Africa.

South Africa joins other delegations in thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Leila Zerrougui, for her briefing on the activities of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). My delegation recognizes and commends the fundamental role played by MONUSCO in addressing the perennial instability in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in protecting civilians. South Africa commends the role and leadership displayed by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Zerrougui with regard to the critical issues in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in ensuring that MONUSCO discharges its mandate effectively. Today I will focus on two key issues — improving the political climate and the state of affairs in the eastern part of the country.

With respect to the political situation, South Africa welcomes the formation of the new coalition Government in the Democratic Republic of the Congo precisely because of the consensus approach to its formation and the fact that the distribution of ministries between the two main political platforms is in line with the undertakings made in July. We especially welcome the emphasis on promoting the role of women

in politics in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as their representation has increased to 17 per cent from 10 per cent.

Since the publication of the last report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/575), we have continued to observe a positive trend in President Félix Tshisekedi's implementation of his strategic approach to conflict resolution and peacebuilding in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. The trust and confidence-building initiatives with neighbouring countries demonstrate his personal commitment to fully implementing the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region. Those positive developments, supported by relative stability in the western part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, are giving impetus to the resolution of other peace and security issues in the region.

With regard to the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a complex military and humanitarian situation persists. As members may recall, the Security Council was briefed on the Great Lakes region last week (see S/PV.8630). As one of the countries concerned, the Democratic Republic of the Congo shared its concerns about the presence and activities of armed groups and about intercommunal clashes and the Ebola epidemic, concerns that are shared by the Southern African Development Community (SADC). However, we are encouraged by the Democratic Republic of the Congo's strategy aimed at addressing its peace and security challenges, which includes capacity-building for the defence and security services as well as the creation of national forums aimed at promoting the peaceful coexistence of local communities, with a view to bolstering national cohesion.

South Africa shares the concerns raised by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2019/776) about the Ebola virus outbreak and its potential impact on the region. The regional and international response efforts continue to be hindered by insufficient funding and poor access to the conflict areas, as well as low levels of cooperation between the community and the Government. Cholera and measles outbreaks are further compounding the already fragile humanitarian situation and weak health systems. My delegation is also concerned about the attacks by armed groups on Ebola treatment centres and staff, which we condemn. Against that backdrop, we welcome the launch of an African Union (AU) mission against Ebola in the

Democratic Republic of the Congo, demonstrating the willingness of African countries to work together to address an important health concern. We also welcome the continued work of the United Nations Emergency Ebola Response Coordinator and the World Health Organization in support of national efforts.

In regard to the general security and humanitarian situation, my delegation recognizes the vital role played by MONUSCO, in collaboration with the Democratic Republic of the Congo's authorities, in addressing the security challenges in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We also recognize the efforts of the Force Intervention Brigade in addressing the threat posed by armed groups, as well as the work done through the good offices of Ms. Zerrougui in meeting with key stakeholders to discuss opportunities to support institutional reform and the ongoing Ebola response.

Going forward, one of the key areas of focus for the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is the importance of ensuring the implementation of effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security-sector reform programmes and of establishing Government authority in areas liberated from negative forces. That is especially important given the progress registered in areas such as Ituri with regard to the signing of a peace agreement and willingness to demobilize armed combatants. South Africa therefore looks forward to the outcomes of the Secretary-General's independent strategic review of MONUSCO. Ultimately, however, we believe that any adjustment of MONUSCO's mandate should be based on developments on the ground.

South Africa supports SADC's continued commitment to assisting the Democratic Republic of the Congo in achieving sustainable peace, security and stability. The communiqué issued after the thirty-ninth Ordinary Summit of the Heads of State and Government of SADC, held in August, highlights the concerns about the security situation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, on the basis of which SADC agreed to collaborate with the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region in consolidating efforts for security stabilization in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. We are also encouraged by the cooperation between the AU and the United Nations, by which they have undertaken to continue to engage in support of the consolidation of stability and democratic governance in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In our opinion, the international community, including the Council, has continued to witness a positive trajectory in the developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo since the peaceful transfer of power in early 2019. To build on the current momentum, the country will need genuine support from bilateral, regional and international partners in implementing its Government programmes, which focus on political, security and socioeconomic efforts. We are of the firm view that it is imperative for the international community, working through SADC, the AU, the United Nations and regional partners, to continue to maintain solidarity with the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and provide the necessary political, financial and other support in an effort to ensure that there is no reversal of the gains made so far.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Gata Mavita Wa Lufuta (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would once again like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting on the Democratic Republic of the Congo only a few days after last week's meeting on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Great Lakes region (see S/PV.8630).

We would also like to thank all the members of the Security Council for their comments and views on the situation prevailing in my country. My delegation is particularly grateful to Secretary-General António Guterres for the report under the Council's consideration (S/2019/776) and for his commitment and personal involvement in seeking ways and means to strengthen peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We would like to express our same gratitude to Ms. Leila Zerrougui, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), who has just presented the report to us. Kindly allow my delegation to make some comments and observations on the report, which will focus on the political, security, social and humanitarian situations.

As the report under consideration points out, after His Excellency Mr. Félix Antoine Tshilombo Tshisekedi, President of the Republic, took office, the political situation was successively marked by the establishment of the National Assembly, followed a few months later by that of the Senate before the President of the Republic appointed the coalition Government, led by Prime Minister Sylvestre Ilunga Ilunkamba. In the same vein, provincial authorities have been set up and are functioning. It is important to note here that this stage was completed with the settlement of the various electoral disputes by the Constitutional Court.

As we pointed out in our statement before the Council on 3 October (see S/PV.8630), during this period the President of the Republic engaged in intense diplomatic activity, which took him to several countries of the region with a view to reaffirming his country's ongoing commitment to good-neighbourly relations and peaceful coexistence, while respecting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of other States. In addition to the summits organized with his peers in Kinshasa and Luanda, he therefore also participated in meetings of the African Union in Niamey and of the Southern African Development Community in Dar es Salaam.

In that context, mention should also be made of the working visit that Secretary-General António Guterres made to the Democratic Republic of the Congo from 31 August to 2 September at the invitation of the President of the Republic. The visit enabled the Congolese authorities to reaffirm their trust in the United Nations and the Secretary-General to show solidarity with the Congolese people following the outbreak of the Ebola virus disease, which has been raging in the Beni area for nearly a year.

With regard to the security situation, the report emphasizes the harmful presence of foreign and national armed groups, which continue to cause desolation and insecurity in the eastern part of my country. That situation remains a great concern for the Head of State, who has made it one of the priorities of the Government's programme. In fact, referring to the situation in his inauguration address, he said:

“The restoration of peace throughout the country is a priority because the survival of hundreds of thousands of compatriots, the stability of established institutions, economic recovery and the climate of peace with all our neighbours are at stake.”

Referring to the same situation from the United Nations rostrum during the general debate of the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session, the President of the Republic said the following:

“Today, the greatest challenge facing my country is ensuring peace, security and stability. Since our inauguration, convinced of the absolute necessity of peace, we have unreservedly committed to achieving that objective, taking into account its full regional and international dimension.”
(A/74/PV.7)

In accordance with that objective, the Government remains mobilized and determined to continue the fight against the negative forces until their total eradication in order to enable our people in that part of the country, who have been aspiring to live in peace for a number of years, to finally see their dream become a reality.

My delegation is pleased to note that, in that struggle, the Forces armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC) and MONUSCO will not only continue their cooperation but also strengthen it in order to overcome all armed groups and restore the long-awaited peace in that part of the country once and for all.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations also shares this view. Indeed, speaking of the situation of insecurity in the east of my country, at the audience granted to him in Kinshasa by the President of the Republic after meeting the people of Beni and Butembo, he made the following observation.

“The first concern is security. I felt a sense of frustration among the population, including towards MONUSCO. MONUSCO must cooperate more with the FARDC to counter the threat posed by armed groups and the Allied Democratic Forces.”

It is therefore fitting that, referring to the Secretary-General's talks in Kinshasa with the Congolese authorities and other figures whom he met, the report under consideration points out in paragraph 17:

“During my visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo from 30 August to 1 September, I had the opportunity to hold meetings with representatives of the major political forces, civil society and institutions of the country, including President Tshisekedi, the Speaker of the National Assembly, Jeanine Mabunda, and Prime Minister Ilunga. The need for MONUSCO and national security forces

to work together more effectively to address the threat posed by armed groups was an important conclusion of my meetings.“ (S/2019/776, para. 17).

It is in the same context that the President of the Republic places the discussions that will continue as part of the strategic review of MONUSCO. he made his position clear from the United Nations rostrum:

“I note a convergence of views with the Secretary-General on the urgent need to readjust the configuration of MONUSCO to the developing situation on the ground by focusing more on the operational response capabilities of United Nations forces alongside the Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo. In other words, the Democratic Republic of the Congo still needs MONUSCO, but a streamlined, well-equipped, robust MONUSCO, with an appropriate mandate, like the Rapid Intervention Brigade that once helped rout the Mouvement du 23 mars.” (A/74/PV.7)

That means that any adaptation of that force must above all take into account the real needs and priorities on the ground rather than any other consideration, particularly financial.

In that regard, the Government, which has just been formed and whose ambitious programme of actions includes restoring calm to the country and promoting reconciliation, cohesion and national unity, as well as strengthening State authority, among other things will need MONUSCO to support it in its efforts to maintain security and to restore State authority in conflict areas in order to establish lasting peace and stability so as to put people back to work and promote development.

In addition, it is important to recall that the President of the Republic’s accession to power has led to a momentum that has driven the fighters of some armed groups to lay down their arms. That ongoing momentum should be encouraged by establishing an appropriate framework to effectively reintegrate former combatants into society. That explains the appeal by the President of the Republic to the Secretary-General, during his visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for consistent financial support to enable the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process of armed groups to be a programme that effectively promotes the reintegration of former combatants.

As the Security Council knows, the situation in the eastern part of my country also remains marked by the

Ebola virus. Given the gravity of the situation, in May the President of the Republic set up a technical unit, comprising international experts, under his supervision. That unit has developed a new response strategy that is already producing results. We have to admit, however, that while efforts have been made to contain the epidemic, it has not yet been eradicated. Nevertheless, my delegation would like to reassure the Council that we will continue to take action to control and eradicate this epidemic with the support of our various partners, including the World Health Organization, the African Union, UNICEF, the World Food Programme and MONUSCO, among many others. My delegation would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the solidarity that all our partners have shown towards our country in the fight against Ebola. I also want to urge the international community to support the international public-health conference to be held in Goma in November.

With regard to the humanitarian situation highlighted in the Secretary-General’s report, and without wishing to dwell on the subject, I want to say briefly that this is mainly due to the armed conflicts recurring in my country and in the region. It is because of them that we are seeing massive displacements of people forced to live far from their homes where the provision of basic needs requires external intervention. The situation is also due to epidemics and natural disasters. My Government is requesting the support of the partners that have always helped to support us in coping with such circumstances.

I would like to conclude by reiterating the gratitude of the Government and the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations and the Security Council for their continued efforts and dedication to my country’s cause. I also want to once again thank Ms. Leila Zerrougui, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of MONUSCO. Finally, I wish to acknowledge the peacekeepers of the United Nations and troop-contributing countries for the human and material sacrifices they continue to make for the benefit of my country.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.