



## PRESS RELEASE

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Ministers in charge of Youth Affairs from the Great Lakes Region agree on a regional approach to tackle youth unemployment.

**Livingstone, Zambia, 9 June 2017:** Ministers in charge of Youth Affairs of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) met in Livingstone, Zambia on 9 June 2017 to discuss ways to advance youth employment in the region. The meeting was jointly promoted by the ICGLR and the Office of the Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region (OESG). The meeting was held under the theme « Accelerating the implementation of the 2014 Declaration of the ICGLR Special Summit of Heads of State on the fight against youth unemployment through infrastructure development and investment promotion» and was a follow-up to the Special Summit held in Nairobi, Kenya, in July 2014.

The Ministerial session was preceded by a two-day expert meeting which brought together, on 7 and 8 June, youth representatives and national experts from the region, policy makers, and representatives of the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, regional organizations including the ICGLR Levy Mwanawasa Regional Center for Good Governance, the World Bank Group and the African Development Bank. The two-day Expert Meeting took stock of progress and challenges in advancing youth employment issues in the Great Lakes region. The national experts and representatives exchanged views on progress in advancing the youth employment agenda at the national and regional levels. They also discussed and validated the strategy and action plan developed in support of the implementation of the Heads of State recommendations emanating from the 2014 Special Summit on youth unemployment. In line with the « Delivering as One » UN policy, the United Nations system in the region presented their joint analysis of the status of youth in the region, along with their interventions aimed at tackling youth unemployment, within the context of the youth pillar of the UN Great Lakes Regional Strategic Framework, adopted by the UN Security Council in March 2016.

The opening ceremony of the ministerial meeting was presided over by the Guest of honour, Honorable Chomba Freedom Sikazwe, Minister in charge of Presidential Affairs representing the President of the Republic of Zambia, His Excellency Edgar Chagwa Lungu. The session was attended by Ministers of youth from the region and their representatives, the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General for the Great Lakes region, Said Djinnit, the ICGLR Executive Secretary, Zachary Muburi-Muita, representatives of the United Nations and regional organizations as well as members of the diplomatic corps.

The guest of honour expressed the gratitude of his Government to the ICGLR and the Office of the UN Special Envoy for convening the youth ministerial meeting. He invited the principals of the two institutions as Guarantors of the Peace, Cooperation and Security

Framework for the DRC and the region to continue supporting programmes aiming at fostering sustainable peace and stability in the region. « The region has a role in ensuring that every young has access to quality education and employment opportunities ».

The UN Special Envoy, Said Djinnit, noted the impact lack of access to socio-economic and political opportunities has on durable peace and reconciliation and underscored the importance of establishing inclusive policies to tap into the unique demographic dividend that youth represents for the region. The ICGLR Executive Secretary, Zachary Muburi Muita further highlighted the critical importance of the meeting and noted that the growing menace of unemployed youth in the region is being manifested in disturbances to law and order in urban settings, proliferation of negative forces that prey on disillusioned youth.

The Ministers then reviewed the report of the experts on the outcome of their meeting and exchanged on best practices for strategies and policies at national level to tackle youth unemployment. The Ministers agreed on the need for a coordinated and participatory approach, and endorsed the 2017-2022 regional strategy for the implementation of the 2014 Special Summit of ICGLR Heads of State on youth unemployment. The strategy focuses on eight key areas including infrastructure development, investment promotion; education and training ; youth entrepreneurs access to funding ; mobilization of additional resources for youth issues ; youth representation in decision-making organs ; monitoring, evaluation and coordination of policies and interventions; and good governance and transparency. They further recommended that the regional strategy be submitted for adoption at the next ICGLR Summit of Heads of State and Government in December 2017.

The ICGLR youth ministerial meeting was organized with the financial support of the Office of the UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes region and the World Bank.