



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STATEMENT OF SUPPORT

Washington Accords for Peace and Prosperity Between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda

from

ISOKO Partners for Peace and Gender Equality, USA
ISOKO Working Group of Women and Youth for Peace and Security in Africa, Great Lakes Regional Chapter

In serving conflict-affected persons and communities with ISOKO (Integrity, Solidarity, Openness, Kindness and Ownership) core values, our partners, staff, interns, volunteers and allies are actively building peaceful and prosperous communities, where vulnerable populations including refugees, survivors of human trafficking, sexual and gender-based violence, women and youth live in dignity and provided with opportunities to thrive and contribute to the well-being of their communities.

The signing of the Washington Accords for Peace and Prosperity between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda mark a significant milestone in the pursuit of stability, reconciliation, and sustainable development across the Great Lakes Region of Africa. As organizations deeply committed to advancing peace, gender

equality, and inclusive governance, ISOKO Partners for Peace and Gender Equality and the ISOKO Working Group of Women and Youth for Peace and Security in Africa warmly welcome this historic commitment. These Accords represent a renewed opportunity to address long-standing grievances, promote regional cooperation, and empower communities to build a peaceful and prosperous future.

The Washington Accords are the result of a collective endeavor supported by both Congolese and Rwandan governments, the East Africa Community, the African Union, and brokered by the United States to position the Great Lakes Region on a trajectory of stability and inclusive growth. These Accords build paths to deconstruct structural causes of regional tensions, engage stakeholders in trust-building processes, and expands opportunities and support for regional economic integration.

We call upon all signatories of the Washington Accords to fully uphold and implement its provisions, without reservation, and in steadfast good faith, to promote peace and foster regional economic integration.

We urge the United States and all partners to provide financial assistance and technical support to both parties, as well as to neighboring countries, to address the root causes of conflict, foster trust, and promote economic cooperation, thereby building a brighter future for ordinary citizens in the region.

We call on the United States and its partners to invest in the entrepreneurial skills of women and youth, broaden their access to quality education, and provide meaningful financial support for sustainable income-generating projects. Such investments foster cross-border exchange and commerce, reduce vulnerability, and strengthen long-term socio-economic resilience.

Prioritizing these strategies will enable policymakers and development partners to transform conflict-affected areas in the Great Lakes Region of Africa into thriving hubs of stability, inclusive development, and enduring peace.

Quotes from Civil Society Leaders:

“For the last 30 years, despite continued engagement by national and regional stakeholders including the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region of Africa (ICGLR), alongside coordinated diplomatic and security-sector efforts by the governments of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda, and neighboring states, the Great Lakes Region, particularly the eastern provinces of South Kivu and North Kivu in the DRC remains characterized by persistent sociopolitical and intercommunal violence. These enduring conflict dynamics undermine state authority, weaken institutional resilience, and constrain prospects for economic recovery within an already fragile macrostructural environment. The resulting governance deficits continued to impede the development of coherent, inclusive, and sustainable policy frameworks”. **Theresa Dionne**, Senior Director of Programs and Operations of ISOKO Partners for Peace and Gender Equality.

“Recurrent cycles of political, ethnic, and gender-based violence continue to entrench discriminatory social norms and institutionalize practices that sustain gender inequality, social exclusion, and the widespread persistence of sexual and gender-based violence. Yet too many of the region’s peacebuilding, stabilization, and economic-reform initiatives still lack meaningful gender-responsive and youth-inclusive approaches, and they seldom create pathways for substantive engagement of international and local civil society.” **Douce Namwezi**, Co-Founder of UWEZO Africa Initiative and Regional Focal Point of the ISOKO Working Group of Women and Youth for Peace and Security in Africa, Great Lakes Region chapter.

“The steps taken by leaders of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda will help to create an environment in which community-led initiatives, civic engagement, and regional cooperation can effectively contribute to sustainable peace and economic prosperity not only for DR Congo and Rwanda, but also the entire great lakes region, the United States and the World.” **Passy Mubalama**, Executive Director of AIDPROFEN and Focal Point of the ISOKO Working Group of Women and Youth for Peace and Security in Africa, in North Kivu Province.

“When communities, particularly women’s and youth organizations are excluded from shaping these processes, policy solutions lose relevance, legitimacy, and impact.” **Joseph Akilimali**, Executive Secretary of the Youth for Peace DRC and Focal Point of ISOKO Working Group for Peace and Security in Africa, in South Kivu Province.

“Women and youth in conflict-affected regions are not only among the most vulnerable but also hold the potential to drive peace and economic recovery. Their meaningful participation in governance, peacebuilding, and community-led economic initiatives is critical to ensuring local ownership and the effective implementation of the Washington Accords.” **Martha Nghambi**, Senior Director of Programs and Partnerships at ISOKO Working Group for Women and Youth for Peace and Security in Africa.

“To build lasting peace and equitable development in the Great Lakes Region, these mechanisms must urgently prioritize inclusive participation, strengthen accountability, and uphold the leadership of those most affected by insecurity and structural inequality”. **Martha Nghambi**, Senior Director of Programs and Partnerships at ISOKO Working Group for Women and Youth for Peace and Security in Africa.

“ISOKO Partners for Peace and Gender Equality remains steadfast in supporting these initiatives, fully recognizing that the Great Lakes Region’s immense economic potential

can be realized only through the thorough and sustained implementation of peace and security commitments.”**Theresa Dionne**, Senior Director of Programs and Operations of ISOKO Partners for Peace and Gender Equality.

“Our Organization commits to supporting capacity building, policy engagement, and grassroots peace structures that reinforce the Accords’ objectives and contribute to a more secure and economically vibrant Great Lakes Region”.**Theresa Dionne**, Senior Director of Programs and Operations of ISOKO Partners for Peace and Gender Equality.

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